A HISTORY OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

EDWARD ALBERT

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This work features some large and wide tables. These are best viewed with a wide screen.

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Let us now praise famous men, ...
Such as found out musical tunes,
And recited verses in writing....
Their bodies are buried in peace;
But their name liveth for evermore.

The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus

A HISTORY OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

A PRACTICAL TEXT-BOOK

BY

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"A PRACTICAL COURSE IN ENGLISH"

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PREFACE

It may be of use to explain briefly the principles underlying the construction of this book.

In the first place the aim has been to make the book comprehensive. All first-class and nearly all second-class authors (so far as such classification is generally accepted) have been included. Due proportion between the two groups has been attempted by giving the more important authors greater space. The complete index should assist in making the book a handy volume of reference as well as a historical sketch.

In accordance with the plan of making the volume as comprehensive as possible, a chapter has been added dealing with modern writers. An attempt of this kind has certain obvious drawbacks; but it has at least the double advantage of demonstrating the living nature of our literature, and of setting modern authors to scale against the larger historical background.

Secondly, the endeavor has been to make the book practical. Discussion has been avoided; facts, so far as they are known and verifiable, are simply stated; dates are quoted whenever it is possible to do so, and where any doubt exists as to these the general opinion of the best authorities has been taken; there are frequent tabulated summaries to assist the mind and eye; and, lastly, there are the exercises.

It would be as easy to overpraise as it is to underestimate the value of the exercises. But in their

favor one can at least point out that they enable the student to work out for himself some simple literary and historical problems; that they supply a collection of *obiter dicta* by famous critics; and that they are a storehouse of many additional extracts. The index to all the extracts in the book should assist the student in locating every quotation from any writer he may have in view.

While he has never neglected the practical aspect of his task, the writer of the present work has never been content with a bleak summary of our literary history. It has been his ambition to set out the facts with clearness, vivacity, and some kind of literary elegance. How far he has succeeded the reader must judge.

The use of the Bibliography (Appendix II) is strongly urged upon all readers. Such a book as the present cannot avoid being fragmentary and incomplete. The student should therefore pursue his inquiries into the volumes mentioned in the Appendix. Owing to the restrictions of space, the Bibliography is small. But all the books given are of moderate price or easily accessible. Moreover, they have been tested by repeated personal use, and can be recommended with some confidence.

There remains to set on record the author's gratitude to his colleagues and good friends, for their skill and good-nature in revising the manuscript and in making many excellent suggestions.

E. A.

EDINBURGH

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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

THE BEGINNINGS

Of the actual facts concerning the origin of English literature we know little indeed. Nearly all the literary history of the period, as far as it concerns the lives of actual writers, is a series of skillful reconstructions based on the texts, fortified by some scanty contemporary references (such as those of Bede), and topped with a mass of conjecture. The results, however, are astonishing and fruitful, as will be seen even in the meager summary that appears in the following pages.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The period is a long one, for it starts with the fifth century and concludes with the Norman Conquest of 1066. The events, however, must be dismissed very quickly. We may begin in 410 with the departure of the Romans, who left behind them a race of semi-civilized Celts. The latter, harassed by the inroads of the savage Caledonians, appealed for help to the adventurous English. The English, coming at first as saviors, remained as conquerors (450–600). In the course of time they gained possession of nearly all the land from the English Channel to the Firth of Forth. Then followed the Christianizing of the pagan English, beginning in Kent (597), a movement that

affected very deeply all phases of English life. In succession followed the inroads of the Danes in the ninth century; the rise of Wessex among the early English kingdoms, due in great measure to the personality of King Alfred, who compromised with the Danes by sharing England with them (878); the accession of a Danish dynasty in England (1017); and the Gallicizing of the English Court, a process that was begun before the Conquest of 1066. All these events had their effect on the literature of the period.

LITERARY FEATURES OF THE PERIOD

1. Pagan Origins. The earliest poems, such as *Widsith* and *Beowulf*, present few Christian features, and those that do appear are clearly clumsy additions by later hands. It is fairly certain, therefore, that the earliest poems came over with the pagan conquerors. They were probably the common property of the bards or gleemen, who sang them at the feasts of the warriors. As time went on Christian ideas were imposed upon the heathen poetry, which retained much of its primitive phraseology.

2. Anonymous Origins. Of all the Old English poets, we have direct mention of only one, Cædmon. The name of another poet, Cynewulf, obscurely hinted at in three separate runic or riddling verses. Of the other Old English poets we do not know even the names. Prose came much later, and, as it was used for practical purposes, its authorship is in each case established.

3. The Imitative Quality. Nearly all the prose, and the larger part of the poetry, consists of translations and adaptations from the Latin. The favorite works for translation were the lives of saints, the books of the Bible, and various works of a

practical nature. The clergy, who were almost the sole authors, had such text-books at hand, and were rarely capable of reaching beyond them. This secondhand nature of Old English is certainly its most disappointing feature. In most cases the translations are feebly imitative; in a few cases the poets (such as Cynewulf) or the prose-writers (such as Alfred) alter, expand, or comment upon their Latin originals, and then the material is of much greater literary importance.

4. The Manuscripts. It is very likely that only a portion of Old English poetry has survived, though the surviving material is quite representative. The manuscripts that preserve the poetical texts are comparatively late in their discovery, are unique of their kind, and are only four in number. They are (*a*) the *Beowulf* manuscript (containing also a portion of a poem *Judith*), discovered in 1705, and said to have been written about the year 1000; (*b*) the Junian manuscript, discovered in 1681 by the famous scholar Junius, and now in the Bodleian Library, containing the Cædmon poems; (*c*) the Exeter Book, in the Exeter Cathedral library (to which it was given by Leofric about 1050, being brought to light again in 1705), which preserves most of the Cynewulf poems; and (*d*) the Vercelli Book, discovered at Vercelli, near Milan, in 1832, which contains, along with some prose homilies, six Old English poems, including *Andreas* and *Elene*.

THE LANGUAGE

The Old English language was that of a simple and semi-barbarous people: limited in vocabulary, concrete in ideas, and rude and forcible in expression. In the later stages of their literature we see the crudeness being softened into something

more cultured. In grammar the language was fairly complicated, possessing declinable nouns, pronouns, and adjectives, and a rather elaborate verb-system. There were three chief dialects: the Northern or Northumbrian, which was the first to produce a literature, and which was overwhelmed by the Danes; the West Saxon, a form of the Mercian or Midland, which grew to be the standard, as nearly all the texts are preserved in it; and the Kentish or Jutish, which is of little literary importance.

BEOWULF

1. Origin of the Poem. It is almost certain that the poem originated before the English invasions. There is no mention of England; Beowulf himself is the king of the "Geatas." The poem, moreover, is pagan in conception, and so antedates the Christian conversion. With regard to the actual authorship of the work there is no evidence. It is very likely that it is a collection of the tales sung by the bards, strung together by one hand, and written in the West Saxon dialect.

2. The Story. There are so many episodes, digressions, and reversions in the story of *Beowulf* that it is almost impossible to set it down as a detailed consecutive narrative. Putting it in its very briefest form, we may say that Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, and king of the Geatas, sails to Denmark with a band of heroes, and rids the Danish King Hrothgar of a horrible mere-monster called Grendel. The mother of Grendel meets with the same fate, and Beowulf, having been duly feasted and rewarded, returns to his native land. After a prosperous reign of forty years Beowulf slays the dragon that ravishes his land, but himself receives a mortal wound. The poem concludes with the funeral of the old hero.

3. The Style. We give a short extract, along with a literal translation, to illustrate the style. The short lines of the poem are really half-lines, and in most editions they are printed in pairs across the page. The extract deals with Beowulf's funeral rites:

Him ðá ge-giredan	For him then did the people of the
Geáta leóde	Geáts prepare
Âd on eorðan	Upon the earth
Un-wác-lícne	A funeral pile, strong,
Helm-be-hongen	Hung round with helmets,
Hilde-bordū	With war-boards and
Beorhtū byrnū	Bright byrnies[1]
Swá he béna wæs	As he had requested.
Ā-legdon ðá to-middes	Weeping the heroes
Máerne þeóden	Then laid down
Hæleð hiófende	In the midst
Hláf-ord leófne	Their dear lord;
On-gunnon ðá on beorge	Then began the warriors
Bæl-fýra mæst	To wake upon the hill
Wigend weccan	The mightiest of bale-fires;
Wu [du-r] êc á-stáh	The wood smoke rose aloft,
Sweart of swicðole	Dark from the wood-devourer; [2]
Swógende let	Noisily it went, mingled
[Wópe] be-wunden	With weeping; the mixture
Wind-blond ğ-læg	Of the wind lay on it
Oð that he tha bàn-hús	Till it the bone-house
Ge-brocen hæfd[e]	Had broken,
Hat on hreðre	Hot in his breast:
Higū un-róte	Sad in mind,
Mód-ceare mændon	Sorry of mood they moaned
Mod-dryhtnes [cwealm].	The death of their lord.

It will be observed that the language is abruptly and rudely phrased. The half-lines very frequently consist of mere tags or, as they are called, *kennings*. Such conventional phrases were the stock-in-trade of the gleemen, and they were employed to keep the

narrative in some kind of motion while the invention of the minstrel flagged. At least half of the lines in the extract are kennings—*beorhtū byrnū*, *hláf-ord leófne*, *higū un-róte*, and so on. Such phrases occur again and again in Old English poetry. It will also be observed that the lines are strongly rhythmical, but not metrical; and that there is a system of alliteration, consisting as a rule of two alliterated sounds in the first half-line and one in the second half-line.

With regard to the general narrative style of the poem, there is much primitive vigor in the fighting, sailing, and feasting; a deep appreciation of the terrors of the sea and of other elemental forces; and a fair amount of rather tedious repetition and digression. *Beowulf*, in short, may be justly regarded as the expression of a hardy, primitive, seafaring folk, reflecting their limitations as well as their virtues.

OTHER POETRY

1. The Pagan Poems. The bulk of Old English poetry is of a religious cast, but a few pieces are distinctly secular.

(*a*) **Widsith** (*i.e.*, "the far traveler") is usually considered to be the oldest poem in the language. It consists of more than a hundred lines of verse, in which a traveler, real or imaginary, recounts the places and persons he has visited. Since he mentions several historical personages, the poem is of much interest, but as pure poetry it has little merit.

(*b*) **Waldhere** (or *Walter*) consists of two fragments, sixty-eight lines in all, giving some of the exploits of a famous Burgundian hero. There is much

real vigor in the poem, which ranks high among its fellows.

(*c*) **The Fight at Finnesburgh**, a fragment of fifty lines, contains a finely told description of the fighting at Finnesburgh.

(*d*) **The Battle of Brunanburgh** is a spirited piece on this famous fight, which took place in 937. The poem has much more spirit and originality than usual, contains some fine descriptions, and forces the narrative along at a comparatively fast pace.

(*e*) **The Battle of Maldon** is a fragment, but of uncommon freshness and vivacity. The battle occurred in 993, and the poem seems to be contemporary with the event.

2. The Dramatic Monologues. These poems, which are called *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *Deor's Complaint*, *The Wife's Complaint*, *The Husband's Message*, and *Wulf and Eadwacer*, appear in the Exeter Book. It is unlikely that they were composed at the same time, but they are alike in a curious meditative pathos. In Old English literature they come nearest to the lyric. As poetry, they possess the merit of being both original and personal, qualities not common in the poems of the period.

3. The Cædmon Group. In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* Bede tells the story of a herdsman Cædmon, who by divine inspiration was transformed from a state of tongue-tied ineffectiveness into that of poetical ecstasy. He was summoned into the presence of Hilda of Whitby, who was abbess during the years 658–80. He was created a monk, and thereafter sang of many Biblical events. On a blank page of one of the Bede manuscripts there is quoted the first divinely inspired hymn of Cædmon, a rude

and distinctly uninspired fragment of poetry, nine lines in all, composed in the ancient Northumbrian dialect.

That is all we know of the life and works of Cædmon; but in the Junian manuscript a series of religious paraphrases was unearthed in the year 1651. In subject they corresponded rather closely to the list set out by Bede, and in a short time they were ascribed to Cædmon. The poems consist of paraphrases of Genesis, Exodus, and Daniel and three shorter poems, the chief of which is the *Harrowing of Hell*. Modern scholarship now recognizes that the poems are by different hands, but the works can be conveniently lumped together under the name of the shadowy Northumbrian. The poems appear in the West Saxon dialect, in spite of the fact that Cædmon must have written in his own dialect; but the difficulty is overcome by pointing out that a West Saxon scribe might have copied the poems.

In merit the poems are unequal. At their best they are not sublime poetry, but they are strong and spirited pieces with some aptitude in description. On the average they are trudging mediocrities which are frequently prosaic and dull.

4. The Cynewulf Group. In 1840 the scholar Kemble lighted upon three runic (or pre-Roman) signatures which appeared respectively in the course of the poems called *Christ* and *Juliana* (in the Exeter Book) and *Elene* (in the Vercelli Book). The signatures read “Cynewulf” or “Cynwulf.” In 1888 a signature “Fwulcyn” was discovered in *The Fates of the Apostles*. This is all we know of Cynewulf, if we accept the quite general personalities that appear in the course of the poems. Yet an elaborate life has been built up for the poet, and other poems, similar

in style to the signed pieces, have been attributed to him. *The Phœnix*, *The Dream of the Rood*, and the *Riddles* of the Exeter Book are the most considerable of the additional poems.

The Cynewulfian poems are much more scholarly compositions than the *Beowulf* or even the Cædmon poems. There is a greater power of expression, less reliance on the feeble kenning, and some real expertness in description. The ideas expressed in the poems are broader and deeper, and a certain lyrical fervor is not wanting. The date is probably the tenth century.

PROSE

1. Alfred (848–900). Though there were some prose writings of an official nature (such as the laws of Ine, who died about 730) before the time of Alfred, there can be little objection to the claim frequently made for him, that he is "the father of English prose." As he tells us himself in his preface to the *Pastoral Care*, he was driven into authorship by the lamentable state of English learning, due in large measure to the depredations of the Danes. Even the knowledge of Latin was evaporating, so the King, in order to preserve some show of learning among the clergy, was compelled to translate some popular monastic handbooks into his own tongue. These works are his contribution to our literature. As he says, they were often "interpreted word for word, and meaning for meaning"; but they are made much more valuable by reason of the original passages freely introduced into them. The books, four in number, are an able selection from the popular treatises of the day: the *Universal History* of Orosius; the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bede; the *Pastoral Care* of

Pope Gregory; and the *Consolation of Philosophy* of Boëthius. His claim to the translation of Bede is sometimes disputed; and there is a fifth work, a *Handbook* or commonplace book, which has been lost. The chronological order of the translations cannot be determined, but they were all written during the last years of the reign.

We add a brief extract to illustrate his prose style. It is not a highly polished style; it is rather that of an earnest but somewhat unpracticed writer. When it is simplest it is best; in its more complicated passages it is confusing and involved. The vocabulary is simple and unforced.

Swa clæne heo wæs oðfeallen on Angelcynne [-þ] swiðe feawa wæron be-heonan Humbre þe hira þe-nunge cuðon understanden on Englisc, oððe furðon an ærend-ge-writ of Ledene on Englisc areccan; and ic wene [-þ] naht monige be-geondan Humbre næron. Swa feawa heora wæron [-þ] ic furbon anne ænlepne ne mæg geþencan be-suðan Thamise þa þa ic to rice feng. Gode Ælmightigum sy þanc, [-þ] we nu ænigne an steal habbað lareowa. For þam ic þe beode, [-þ] þu do swa ic gelyfe [-þ] þu wille.	So clean [completely] has ruin fallen on the English nation, that very few were there this side the Humber that could understand their service in English or declare forth an Epistle [an errand-writing] out of Latin into English; and I think that not many beyond Humber were there. So few such were there, that I cannot think of a single one to the south of the Thames when I began to reign. To God Almighty be thanks, that we now have any to teach in stall [any place]. Therefore I bid thee that thou do as I believe that thou wilt.

Preface to "Pastoral Care"

2. Ælfric (955–1020) is known as "the

Grammarian." Of his life little is known. It is probable that he lived near Winchester, and he was certainly the first abbot of Eynsham, near Oxford, in 1006. A fair number of his works, both in Latin and English, have come down to us. Of his English books, two series of homilies, adapted from the Latin, seem to have been composed about the year 990. A third series of homilies, called *The Lives of the Saints*, is dated approximately at 996. Several of his pastoral letters survive, as well as a translation of Bede's *De Temporibus* and some English translations of Biblical passages.

Ælfric's style is interesting, for it is representative of the scholarly prose of his time, a century after Alfred. It is flowing and vigorous, showing an almost excessive use of alliteration. In many cases it suggests a curious hybrid between the poetry and prose of the period.

3. Wulfstan was Archbishop of York from 1003 till his death in 1023. In his prose, which survives in more than fifty homilies and in his famous *Letter to the English People* (*Lupi Sermo ad Anglos*), he shows the effects of "style" to a marked degree. His *Letter* in particular is a fervid epistle, detailing with considerable power and fluency the dreadful plight of the English nation in the year 1014. The alliteration and rhythm are exceedingly well marked, much more so than in the case of Ælfric.

4. The **Anglo-Saxon Chronicle** was probably inspired by King Alfred, who is said even to have dictated the entries dealing with his own campaigns. The *Chronicle* has come down to us in four versions, all of which seem to have sprung from a common stock. The four versions are preserved in seven manuscripts, of which the most notable are those

connected with Canterbury and Peterborough. From the period of the English invasions till the year 892 the books are fairly in accord. At the latter year they diverge. Each introduces its local events and miscellaneous items of news, and they finish at different dates. The last date of all is about the middle of the twelfth century.

The style of the *Chronicle* varies greatly; it ranges from the baldest notes and summaries to quite ambitious passages of narrative and description. Of the latter class the well-known passage on the horrors of Stephen's reign is a worthy example. We give a brief extract, dated 1100, just at the close of the Old English period, which is a fair average of the different methods:

On þisum geare aras seo ungeþwærnes on Glæstinga byrig betwyx þam abbode Đurstane and his munecan. Ærest hit com of þæs abbotes unwisdome [-þ] he misbead his munecan on fela thingan, and þa munecas hit mændon lufelice to him and beadon hine [-þ] he [`s]ceolde healdan hi rihtlice beon and lufian hi, and hi woldon him beon holde and gehyrsume.	In the year arose the discord in Glastonbury betwixt the Abbot Thurstan and his monks. First it came from the Abbot's unwisdom: In that he misbade [ruled] his monks in many things and the monks meant it lovingly to him and bade him that he should hold [treat] them rightly and love them and they would be faithful to him and hearsome [obedient].

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

From the time when it first appears till it is swamped by the Norman Conquest Old English literature undergoes a quite noticeable development. In the mass the advance appears to be considerable,

but when we reflect that it represents the growth of some five hundred years, we see that the rate of progress is undoubtedly slow. We shall take the poetical and prose forms separately.

1. Poetry. Poetry is much earlier in the field, and its development is the greater. It begins with the rude forms of *Beowulf* and concludes with the more scholarly paraphrases of Cynewulf.

(*a*) The *epic* in its untutored form exists in *Beowulf*. This poem lacks the finer qualities of the epic: it is deficient in the strict unity, the high dignity, and the broad motive of the great classical epic; but a crude vigor and a certain rude majesty are not wanting. It is no mean beginning for the English epic. The later poems of the Cædmon and Cynewulf types are too discursive and didactic to be epics, though in places they are like *The Battle of Maldon* and *The Fight at Finnesburgh* in their narrative force.

(*b*) The *lyric*—that is, the short and passionate expression of a personal feeling—hardly exists at all. The nearest approach to it lies in the dramatic monologues, such as *Deor's Complaint*. These poems are too long and diffuse to be real lyrics, but they have some of the expressive melancholy and personal emotion of the lyric.

2. Prose. The great bulk of Old English prose consists of translation; and in its various shapes English prose adopts the methods of its originals. We have many homilies, some history, and a few pastoral letters, all based strictly upon Latin works. There are very few passages of real originality, and they are short and disjointed. Of historical writing we have the rudiments in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. On the whole, the development is very small, for the prose is bound by the curse of imitativeness.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

1. Poetry. We have once more to distinguish between the earlier *Beowulf* stage and the later Cynewulf stage. In the earlier period the style is more disjointed, abrupt, and digressive, and is weighted down by the reliance upon the kenning. In the later stage there is greater passion and insight, less reliance upon the stock phrases, and a greater desire for stylistic effects.

2. Prose. In spite of its limited scope, Old English prose shows quite an advance in style. The earlier style, represented by the prose of Alfred, is rather halting and unformed, the sentences are loosely knit, the vocabulary is meager, and there is an absence of the finer qualities of rhythm and cadence. By the time of Wulfstan the prose has gained in fluency. It is much more animated and confident, and it freely employs alliteration and the commoner rhetorical figures.

But within this development both of prose and poetry there was already the seed of decay. During the last century of the period the poetical impulse was weakening; there is little verse after the time of Cynewulf. The prose too was failing, and the language was showing symptoms of weakness. The inflections were loosening even before the Norman Conquest, and the Old English vocabulary was being subtly Gallicized. The Norman Conquest was in time to put an abrupt finish to a process already well advanced.

EXERCISES

1. Examine the style of the following poetical passages. Point out examples of kennings, and

mention the purposes they serve. Comment upon the type of sentence, the use of alliteration, and the nature of the vocabulary. Compare the style with that of the *Beowulf* extract given on page 4.

(1) Us is riht micel,	For us it is much right
That we rodera weard,	That we the Guardian of the skies,
Wereda wuldor-cining,	The glory-King of hosts,
Wordum herigen	With our words praise,
Modum lufien.	In our minds love.
He is mægna sped,	He is of power the essence,
Heofod ealra	The head of all
Heah-gesceafta,	Exalted creatures,
Fréa Ælmīhtig.	The Lord Almighty.
Næs him fruma æfre	To him has beginning never
Ór geworden	Origin been,
Ne nu ende cymth	Nor now cometh end
Écean drihtnes,	To the eternal Lord,
Ac he bíth á ríce	But he is ever powerful
Ofer heofen-stolas.	Over the heavenly thrones.

CÆDMON.

(2) Nis tháer on thám lande	There in that land is not
Láth geníthle,	Harmful enmity,
Ne wop ne wracu,	Nor wail nor vengeance,
Weá-tácen nán,	Evil-token none,
Yldu ne yrmthu,	Old age nor poverty,
Ne se enga death,	Nor the narrow death,
Ne lífes lyre,	Nor loss of life,
Ne láthes cyme,	Nor coming of harm,
Ne syn ne sacu,	Nor sin nor strife,
Ne sár-wracu,	Nor sore revenge,
Ne wædle gewin,	Nor toil of want,
Ne wélan ansýn,	Nor desire of wealth,
Ne sorg ne sláep,	Nor care nor sleep,
Ne swar leger,	Nor sore sickness,
Ne winter-geweorp,	Nor winter-dart,
Ne weder-gebregd	Nor dread of tempest
Hreóh under heofonum.	Rough under the heavens.

The Phœnix.

2. Comment briefly upon the style of the following prose extract. How does it compare with modern English prose?

Đu bæde me for oft engliscera gewritena. And ic þe ne getiðode ealles swa timlice ær ðam þe þu mid weorcum þæs gewilnodest æt me þa ða þu me bæde for Godes lufon georne [-þ] ic þe æt ham æt þinum huse gespræce. And pu ða swiðe mændest þa þa ic mid þe wæs [-þ] þu mine gewrita begitan ne mihtest. Nu wille ic [-þ] þu hæbbe huru þis litle nu ðe wisdom gelicað. And pu hine habban wilt [-þ] þu ealles ne beo minra boca bedæled. God luvað pa godan weorce and he wyle big habban æt us.

Thou hast oft entreated me for English Scripture, and I gave it thee not so soon, but thou first with deeds hast importuned me thereto; at what time thou didst so earnestly pray me for God's love that I should speak to thee at thy house at home, and when I was with thee great moan thou madest that thou couldst get none of my writings. Now will I that thou have at least this little, sith knowledge is so acceptable unto thee: and thou wilt have it rather than be altogether without my books. God loveth good deeds and will have them at our hands [of us].

ÆLFRIC, *Introduction to the Old Testament*

3. What appears to you to be the reasons why in Old English poetry appears before prose?

4. Mention some of the effects of translation upon both the poetry and the prose of the Old English.

5. "Old English prose is much nearer modern English prose than Old English poetry is to modern English poetry." Discuss this statement.

CHAPTER II

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1050–1350)

The extensive period covered by this chapter saw many developments in the history of England: the establishment of Norman and Angevin dynasties; the class-struggle between king, nobles, clergy, and people; and the numerous wars against France, Scotland, and Wales. But, from the literary point of view, much more important than definite events were the general movements of the times: the rise of the religious orders, their early enthusiasm, and their subsequent decay; the blossoming of chivalry and the spirit of romance, bringing new sympathy for the poor and for womankind; the Crusades, and the widening of the European outlook which was gradually to expand into the rebirth of the intellect known as the Renaissance. All these were only symptoms of a growing intelligence that was strongly reflected in the literature of the time.

STATE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

This period witnesses the disappearance of the pure Old English language and the emergence of the mixed Anglo-French or Middle English speech that was to be the parent of modern English. As a written language Old English disappears about 1050, and, also as a written language, Middle English first appears about the year 1200. With the appearance of the *Brut* about 1200 we have the beginning of the numerous Middle English texts, amply illustrating

the changes that have been wrought in the interval: the loss of a great part of the Old English vocabulary; a great and growing inrush of French words; the confusion, crumbling, and ultimate loss of most of the old inflections; and the development of the dialects. There are three main dialects in Middle English: the Northern, corresponding to the older Northumbrian; the Midland, corresponding to Mercian; and the Southern, corresponding to the Old English Kentish or Southern. None of the three can claim the superiority until late in the period, when the Midland gradually assumes a slight predominance that is strongly accentuated in the period following.

LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

The latter part of the three hundred years now under review provides a large amount of interesting, important, and sometimes delightful works. It is, however, the general features that count for most, for there is hardly anything of outstanding individual importance.

1. The Transition. The period is one of transition and experiment. The old poetical methods are vanishing, and the poets are groping after a new system. English poets had two models to follow—the French and the Latin, which were not entirely independent of each other. For a time, early in the period, the French and Latin methods weighed heavily upon English literature; but gradually the more typically native features, such as the systematic use of alliteration, emerge. It is likely that all the while oral tradition had preserved the ancient methods in popular songs, but that influence was slight for a long period after the Norman Conquest.

2. The **anonymous** nature of the writing is still strongly in evidence. A large proportion of the works are entirely without known authors; most of the authors whose names appear are names only; there is indeed only one, the Hermit of Hampole, about whom we have any definite biographical detail. There is an entire absence of any outstanding literary personality.

3. The Domination of Poetry. The great bulk of the surviving material is poetry, which is used for many kinds of miscellaneous work, such as history, geography, divinity, and rudimentary science. Most of the work is monastic hack-work, and much of it is in consequence of little merit.

Compared with poetry of the period, the prose is meager in quantity and undeveloped in style. The common medium of the time was Latin and French, and English prose was starved. Nearly all the prose consists of homilies, of the nature of the *Ancren Riwle*; and most of them are servile translations from Latin, and destitute of individual style.

POETRY

For the sake of convenience we can classify the different poems into three groups, according to the nature of their subjects.

1. The Rhyming Chronicles. During this period there is an unusual abundance of chronicles in verse. They are distinguished by their ingenuous use of incredible stories, the copiousness of their invention, and in no small number of cases by the vivacity of their style.

(*a*) *The Brut.* This poem was written by a certain **Layamon** about the year 1205. We gather a few

details about the author in a brief prologue to the poem itself. He seems to have been a monk in Gloucestershire; his language certainly is of a nature that corresponds closely to the dialect of that district. The work, thirty thousand lines in length, is a paraphrase and expansion of the Anglo-Norman *Brut d'Angleterre* of Wace, who in turn simply translated from Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin history of Britain. In the *Brut* the founder of the British race is Brutus, great-grandson of Æneas of Troy. Brutus lands in England, founds London, and becomes the progenitor of the earliest line of British kings. In style the poem is often lifeless, though it has a naïve simplicity that is attractive. The form of the work, however, is invaluable as marking the transition from the Old English to the Middle English method.

Alliteration, the basis of the earlier types, survives in a casual manner; at irregular intervals there are rudely rhyming couplets, suggesting the newer methods; the lines themselves, though they are of fairly uniform length, can rarely be scanned; the basis of the line seems to be four accents, occurring with fair regularity. The following extract should be scrutinized carefully to bring out these features:

To niht a mine slepe,
Their ich læi on bure,

Me imæette a sweuen;
Ther oure ich full sari æm.
Me imætte that mon me hof
Uppen are halle.
Tha halle ich gon bestriden,
Swulc ich wolde riden
Alle tha lond tha ich ah
Alle ich ther ouer sah.

At night in my slepe
Where I lay in bower [chamber]
I dreamt a dream—
Therefore I full sorry am.
I dreamt that men lifted me

Up on a hall;
The hall I gan bestride,

As if I would ride;
All the lands that I owned,
All I there overlooked.

And Walwain sat biuoren me;	And Walwain sate before me;
Mi sweord he bar an honde.	My sword he bare in hand.
Tha com Moddred faren ther	Then approached Modred there,
Mid unimete uolke.	With innumerable folk.

(*b*) **Robert of Gloucester** is known only through his rhyming history. From internal evidence it is considered likely that he wrote about 1300. From his dialect, and from local details that he introduces into the poem, it is probable that he belonged to Gloucestershire. Drawing largely upon Layamon, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and other chroniclers, he begins his history of England with Brutus and carries it down to the year 1270. The style of the poem is often lively enough; and the meter, though rough and irregular, often suggests the later "fourteener." As a rule the lines are longer than those of the *Brut*, and the number of accents is greater.

(*c*) **Robert Manning (1264–1340)** is sometimes known as Robert of Brunne, or Bourne, in Lincolnshire. In 1288 he entered a Gilbertine monastery near his native town. His *Story of Ingelond* (1338) begins with the Deluge, and traces the descent of the English kings back to Noah. The latter portion of the book is based upon the work of Pierre de Langtoft, and the first part upon Wace's *Brut*. The meter is a kind of chaotic alexandrine verse; but an interesting feature is that the couplet rhymes are carefully executed, with the addition of occasional middle rhymes.

Manning's *Handlyng Synne* (1303) is a religious manual based on a French work, *Manuel des Pechiez*. The poem, which is thirteen thousand lines in length, is a series of metrical sermons on the Ten

Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, and the Seven Sacraments. The author knows how to enliven the work with agreeable anecdotes, and there are signs of a keen observation. The meter is an approximation to the octosyllabic couplet.

Manning's language is of importance because it marks a close approach to that of Chaucer: a comparative absence of old words and inflections, a copious use of the later French terms, and the adoption of new phrases.

(*d*) **Laurence Minot**, who probably flourished about 1350, appears as the author of eleven political songs, which were first published in 1795. The pieces, which sing of the exploits of Edward III, are violently patriotic in temper, and have a rudely poetical vigor. Their meters are often highly developed.

2. Religious and Didactic Poetry. Like most of the other poetry of the period, this kind was strongly imitative, piously credulous, and enormous in length.

(*a*) The *Ormulum*, by a certain **Orm**, or **Ormin**, is usually dated at 1200. As it survives it is an enormous fragment, twenty thousand lines in length, and composed in the East Midland dialect. It consists of a large number of religious homilies addressed to a person called Walter. Of poetical merit the poem is destitute; but it is unique in the immense care shown over a curious and complicated system of spelling, into which we have not the space to enter. Its metrical form is noteworthy: a rigidly iambic measure, rhymeless, arranged in alternate lines of eight and seven syllables respectively. This regularity of meter is another unique feature of the poem, which we illustrate by an extract:

An Romanisshe Kaserrking	A Roman Kaiser-king
Wass Augusstuss [gh]ehatenn	Was called Augustus
And he wass wurrthenn Kaserrking	And he became Kaiser-king
Off all mannkinn onn eorthe,	Of all mankind on earth,
And he gann thenkenn off himmsellf	And he gan think of himself
And off hiss micle riche.	And of his muckle kingdom,
And he bigann to thenkenn tha,	And he began to think
Swa summ the goddspell kithethth	Just as the gospel tells
Off thatt he wollde witenn wel	Of what he would well know
Hu mikell fehh himm come,	How much money [fee] would come to him
[GH]iff himm off all hiss kinedom.	If to him of all his kingdom
Illc mann an penning [gh]æfe.	Each man a penny gave.

(*b*) *The Owl and the Nightingale*, the date of which is commonly given as 1250, is attributed to **Nicholas of Guildford**. The poem consists of a long argument between the nightingale, representing the lighter joys of life, and the owl, which stands for wisdom and sobriety. The poem is among the most lively of its kind, and the argument tends to become heated. In meter it is rhyming octosyllabic couplets, much more regular than was common at the time.

(*c*) The *Orison to Our Lady*, *Genesis* and *Exodus*, the *Bestiary*, the *Moral Ode*, the *Proverbs of Alfred*, and the *Proverbs of Hendyng* are usually placed about the middle of the thirteenth century. Of originality there is little to comment upon; but as metrical experiments they are of great importance. The

Proverbs show some regular stanza-formation, and the *Moral Ode* is remarkable for the steadiness and maturity of its measure, a long line coming very close to the fourteener.

(*d*) The *Cursor Mundi* was composed about 1320. It is a kind of religious epic, twenty-four thousand lines long, composed in the Northern dialect. The author, who divides his history into seven stages, draws upon both the Old and the New Testaments. The meter shows a distinct advance in its grip of the octosyllabic couplet.

(*e*) **Richard Rolle of Hampole**, who died in 1349, is one of the few contemporary figures about whom definite personal facts are recorded. He was born in Yorkshire, educated at Oxford, and ran away from home to become a hermit. Subsequently he removed to Hampole, near Doncaster, where he enjoyed a great reputation for sanctity and good works.

He wrote some miscellaneous prose and a few short poems, but his chief importance lies in his authorship of the long poem *The Pricke of Conscience*. This work, which is based upon the writings of the early Christian Fathers, describes the joys and sorrows of a man's life as he is affected in turn by good and evil. The meter is a close approximation to the octosyllabic couplet, which shows extensions and variations that often resemble the heroic measure. It has been suggested that Hampole is the first English writer to use the heroic couplet; but it is almost certain that his heroic couplets are accidental.

(*f*) *The Alliterative Poems.* In a unique manuscript, now preserved in the British Museum, are found four remarkably fine poems in the West Midland dialect: *Pearl*, *Cleannesse*, *Patience*, and *Sir Gawain and the*

Green Knight. There is no indication of the authorship, but judging from the similarity of the style it is considered likely that they are by the same poet. The date is about 1300. The first three poems are religious in theme, and of them *Pearl* is undoubtedly the best. This poem, half allegorical in nature, tells of a vision in which the poet seeks his precious pearl that has slipped away from him. In his quest he spies his pearl, which seems to be the symbol of a dead maiden, and obtains a glimpse of the Eternal Jerusalem. The poem, which contains long discussions between the poet and the pearl, has some passages of real, moving beauty, and there is a sweet melancholy inflection in some of the verses that is rare indeed among the fumbling poetasters of the time. The meter is extraordinarily complicated: heavily alliterated twelve-lined stanzas, with intricate rhymes arranged on a triple basis (see p. 149). *Cleannesse* and *Patience*, more didactic in theme, are of less interest and beauty, but they have an exultation and stern energy that make them conspicuous among the poems of the period. They are composed in a kind of alliterative blank verse. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is one of the most captivating of the romances. Its meter also is freely alliterated and built into irregular rhyming stanzas which sometimes run into twenty lines.

3. The Metrical Romances. The great number of the romances that now appear in our literature can be classified according to subject.

(*a*) The romances dealing with early English history and its heroes were very numerous. Of these the lively *Horn* and *Havelock the Dane* and the popular *Guy of Warwick* and *Bevis of Hampton* were among the best. Even contemporary history was

sometimes drawn upon, as in the well-known *Richard Cœur-de-Lion*.

(*b*) Allied to the last group are the immense number of Arthurian romances, which are closely related and often of high merit. *Sir Tristrem*, one of the earliest, is by no means one of the worst; to it we may add the famous *Arthur and Merlin*, *Ywain and Gawain*, the *Morte d'Arthure*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

(*c*) There was also a large number of classical themes, such as the exploits of Alexander the Great and the siege of Troy. *King Alisaunder* is very long, but of more than average merit. Further examples are *Sir Orpheo* and *The Destruction of Troy*.

(*d*) The group dealing with the feats of Charlemagne is smaller, and the quality is lower. *Rauf Coilyear*, an alliterative romance, is probably the best of them, and to it we may add *Sir Ferumbras*.

(*e*) A large number of the romances deal with events which are to some extent contemporary with the composition. They are miscellaneous in subject, but they are of much interest and some of them of great beauty. *Amis and Amiloun* is a touching love-story; *William of Palerne* is on the familiar "missing heir" theme; and *The Squire of Low Degree*, who loved the king's daughter of Hungary, is among the best known of all the romances.

It would take a volume to comment in detail upon the romances. The variety of their meter and style is very great; but in general terms we may say that the prevailing subject is of a martial and amatory nature; there is the additional interest of the supernatural, which enters freely into the story; and one of the most attractive features to the modern reader of this

delightful class of fiction is the frequent glimpses obtainable into the habits of the time.

PROSE

1. The **Ancren Riwle**, or *Rule of Anchoresses*, is one of the earliest of Middle English prose texts, for it dates from about 1200. The book, which is written in a simple, matter-of-fact style, is a manual composed for the guidance of a small religious community of women which then existed in Somersetshire. Nothing certain is known regarding the author. Its Southern dialect shows some traces of Midland. As in some respects the text is the forerunner of modern prose, we give an extract:

Uorþi was ihoten a Godes half iðen olde lawe þet put were euer iwrien; & [gh]if eni unwrie put were, & best feolle þerinne, he hit schulde [gh]elden þet þene put unwrieh. Ðis is a swuðe dredlich word to wummen þet scheaweð her to wep-monnes eien. Heo is bitocned bi þe þet unwrieð þene put: þe put is hire veire neb, & hire hwite swire, & hire hond, [gh]if hes halt forð in his eihsihðe.	Therefore it was ordered on the part of God in the old law that a pit should be ever covered, and if there were any uncovered pit, and a beast fell therein, he should pay for it, that uncovered the pit. This is a very dreadful saying for a woman that shows herself to a man's eyes. She is betokened by the person that uncovers the pit; the pit is her fair face, and her white neck, and her hand, if she holds it forth in his eyesight.

2. The **Ayenbite of Inwyt** was written by Dan Michel of Northgate, who flourished about 1340. The book is a servile translation of a French work, and is of little literary importance. To the philologist it is very useful as an example of the Southern dialect of the period.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

1. Poetry. (*a*) *Meter*. The most interesting feature of this period is the development of the modern system of rhymed meters, which displaced the Old English alliterative measures. Between the Old English poems of Cynewulf (about 950) and the Middle English *Brut* (about 1205) there is a considerable gap both in time and in development. This gap is only slightly bridged by the few pieces which we proceed to quote.

A quatrain dated at about 1100 is as follows:

> Merrie sungen the muneches binnen Ely,
> Tha Cnut chining[3] reu[4] ther by;
> "Roweth, cnichtes, noer the land,
> And here we thes muneches sang."

In this example we have two rough couplets. The first pair rhyme, and in the second pair there is a fair example of assonance. The meter, as far as it exists at all, is a cross between octosyllables and decasyllables.

A few brief fragments by Godric, who died in 1170, carry the process still further. The following lines may be taken as typical:

> Sainte Nicholaes, Godes druth,
> Tymbre[5] us faire scone[6] hus,
> At thy burth,[7] at thy bare,[7]
> Sainte Nicholaes, bring us wel thare.

These lines are almost regular, and the rhyme in the second couplet is perfect.

The *Brut*, with its ragged four-accented and nearly rhymeless lines, shows no further advance; but the *Ormulum*, though it does without rhyme, is remarkable for the regularity of its meter. Then during the thirteenth century there comes a large

number of poems, chiefly romances and homilies. Much of the verse, such as in *Horn*, *Havelock the Dane*, and the works of Manning, is in couplet form. It is nearly doggerel very often, and hesitates between four and five feet. This is the rough work that Chaucer is to make perfect. The following example of this traditional verse should be carefully scanned:

> For Engelond ys ful ynow of fruyt and of tren,
> Of wodes and of parkes, that joye yt ys to sen.
> Of foules and of bestes of wylde and tame also.
> Of salt fysch and eche fresch, and fayr ryueres ther to.
> Of welles swete and colde ynow, of lesen and of mede.
> Of seluer or and of gold, of tyn and of lede.
>
> ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER

During the fourteenth century, with the increase of dexterity, came the desire for experiment. Stanzas in the manner of the French were developed, and the short or *bobbed* line was introduced. The expansion of the lyric helped the development of the stanza. Thus we pass through the fairly elaborate meters of Minot, the *Proverbs of Hendyng*, and the romances (like *The King of Tars*) in the Romance sestette, to the extremely complicated verses of *Sir Tristrem*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and *Pearl*. We add a specimen of the popular Romance sestette, and a verse from a popular song of the period.

(1) The King of Tars came also
The Soudan battle for to do,
With many a Christian Knight;
Either host gan the other assail,
There began a strong battail
That grisley was of sight.

The King of Tars

(2) Sitteth alle stille, ant herkneth to me:
The kyn of Alemaigne,[8] bi mi leaute[9]

Thritti thousent pound askede he
For te make the pees[10] in the countre
Ant so he dude more.
Richard, thah thou be euer trichard,[11]
Trichten shalt thou neuer more.

(*b*) *The Lyric.* The most delightful feature of the period is the appearance of the lyric. There can be little doubt that from Old English times popular songs were common, but it is not till the thirteenth century that they receive a permanent place in the manuscripts. We then obtain several specimens that for sweetness and lyrical power are most satisfying.

Apart from its native element, the lyric of the time drew its main inspiration from the songs of the French *jongleurs* and the magnificent, rhymed Latin hymns (such as *Dies Iræ* and *Stabat Mater*) of the Church. These hymns, nobly phrased and rhymed, were splendid models to follow. Many of the early English lyrics were devoutly religious in theme, especially those addressed to the Virgin Mary; a large number, such as the charming *Alysoun*, are love-lyrics; and many more, such as the cuckoo song quoted below (one of the oldest of all), are nature-lyrics. In the song below note the regularity of the meter:

Sumer is i-cumen in, Lhude sing cuccu: Groweth sed, and bloweth med, And springth the wde nu. Sing cuccu, cuccu.	Summer is coming, Loud sing cuckoo: Groweth seed and bloweth mead, And springeth the wood now. Sing cuckoo, cuckoo.
Awe bleteth after lombe, Lhouth after calue cu;	Ewe bleateth after lamb, Loweth after calf the cow;

Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth;	Bullock starteth, buck verteth[12]
Murie sing cuccu,	Merry sing cuckoo:
Cuccu, cuccu.	Cuckoo, cuckoo.
Wel singes thu, cuccu;	Well sing'st thou, cuckoo;
Ne swik thu nauer nu.	Nor cease thou ever now.
Sing cuccu nu,	Sing cuckoo now,
Sing, cuccu.	Sing, cuckoo.

(*c*) *The Metrical Romances.* A romance was originally a composition in the Romance tongue, but the meaning was narrowed into that of a tale of the kind described in the next paragraph. Romances were brought into England by the French minstrels, who as early as the eleventh century had amassed a large quantity of material. By the beginning of the fourteenth century the romance appears in English, and from that point the rate of production is great. Romantic tales are the main feature of the literature of the time.

TABLE TO ILLUSTRATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

YEAR	POETRY			PROSE	
	Lyrical	Narrative	Didactic	Narrative	Dic
700		*Beowulf* Cædmon			
800					
900					Alfred
1000		Cynewulf		A.S. CHRONICLE	Ælfric

					Wulfs
1100					
1200			*Ormulum*		
1300		*Brut*	Manning		*Ancre*
1400	*Alysoun*, etc.	THE ROMANCES *Cursor Mundi*	Hampole		

The chief features of the romance were: a long story, cumulative in construction, chiefly of a journey or a quest; a strong martial element, with an infusion of the supernatural and wonderful; characters, usually of high social rank, and of fixed type and rudimentary workmanship, such as the knightly hero, the distressed damsel, and the wicked enchanter; and a style that was simple to quaintness, but in the better specimens was spirited and suggestive of mystery and wonder. In meter it ranged from the simple couplet of *The Squire of Low Degree* to the twenty-lined stanza of *Sir Tristrem*. In its later stages, as Chaucer satirized it in *Sir Thopas*, the romance became extravagant and ridiculous, but at its best it was a rich treasure-house of marvelous tales.

2. Prose. The small amount of prose is strictly practical in purpose, and its development as a species of literature is to come later.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STYLE IN POETRY

With poetry in such an immature condition, it can be easily understood that style is of secondary importance. The prevailing, almost the universal, style is one of artless simplicity. Very often, owing chiefly to lack of practice on the part of the poet, the style becomes obscure; and when more ambitious schemes of meter are attempted (as in *Pearl*) the same cause leads to the same result. Humor is rarely found in Middle English, but quaint touches are not entirely lacking, as facts revealed in the life of Hampole show. Pathos of a solemn and elevated kind appears in the *Moral Ode*, and the romance called *The Pistyl of Susan* and the *Pearl*, already mentioned, have passages of simple pathos.

EXERCISES

1. The following extracts show the development of English poetry from Old English to Chaucerian times. Trace the changes in meter (scansion, rhyme, and stanza-formation), alliteration, and style. Are there any traces of refinements such as melody and vowel-music?

(1) Swá íú wætres thrym	When of old the water's mass
Ealne middan-geard,	All mid-earth,
Mére-flód, theáhte	When the sea-flood covered
Eorthan ymb-hwyrft,	The earth's circumference,
Thá [`s]e æthela wong	Then that noble plain
Æg-hwæs án-súnd	In everything entire
With yth-fare	Against the billowy course
Gehealden stód,	Stood preserved,
Hreóhra wæga	Of the rough waves
Eádig unwemmed,	Happy, inviolate,
Thurh áest Godes;	Through favour of God.
Bídeth swá geblówen	It shall abide thus in bloom,

Oth bæles cyme	Until the coming of the funeral fire
Dryhtnes dómes.	Of the Lord's judgment.

The Phœnix, 900

(2) And ich isæh thæ vthen	And I saw the waves
I there sæ driuen;	In the sea drive;
And the leo i than ulode	And the lion in the flood
Iwende with me seolue.	Went with myself.
Tha wit I sæ comen,	When we two came in the sea,
Tha vthen me hire binomen.	The waves took her from me;
Com ther an fisc lithe,	But there came swimming a fish;
And fereden me to londe.	And brought me to land.
Tha wes ich al wet,	Then was I all wet
And weri of soryen, and seoc.	And weary from sorrow, and sick.
Tha gon ich iwakien	When I gan wake
Swithe ich gon to quakien.	Greatly I gan quake.

LAYAMON, *Brut*, 1200

(3) Ich am eldre þan ich wes. a winter and ek on lore.
Ich welde more þan ich dude. my wyt auhte beo more.
Wel longe ich habbe child ibe[`s]. a werke and eke on dede.
Þah ich beo of wynter old. to yong ich am on rede.
Vnneð lif ich habbe ilad. and yet me þinkþ ich lede.
Hwenne ich me biþenche. ful sore ich me adrede.
Mest al þat ich habbe idon. is idelnesse and chilce.
Wel late ich habbe me bi-þouht. bute god do me mylce.
Veole idel word ich habbe ispeke. seoþþe ich speke cuþe.
And feole yonge deden ido. þat me of-þincheþ nuþe.

Moral Ode, 1250

(4) Herknet to me, gode men,
Wiues, maydnes, and alle men,
Of a tale that ich you wile telle
Wo so it wile here, and ther to duelle
The talk is of Hauelok i-maked;
Wil he was litel he yede ful naked;
Havelok was a ful god gome,
He was ful god in eueri trome,
He was the wicteste man at nede
That thurte riden on ani stede
That ye mouen nou y-here,
And the tale ye mowen y-lere.
At the beginning of vre tale
Fille me a cuppe of ful god ale.

Havelock the Dane, 1300

(5) Byteuene Mershe & Aueril
When spray biginneþ to springe,
Þe lutel foul haþ hire wyl
On hyre lud to synge;
Ich libbe in louelonginge
For semlokest[13] of alle þynge,
He may me blisse bringe,
Icham in hire baundoun.[14]
An hendy[15] hap[16] ichabbe yhent
Ichot[17] from heuene it is me sent
From alle wymmen mi loue is lent
& lyht on Alysoun.

Alysoun, 1300

(6) In Nauerne be [gh]unde the see
In Venyse a gode cyte,
Duellyde a prest of Ynglonde,
And was auaunsede, y understonde.
Every [gh]ere at the florysyngge
When the vynys shulde sprynngge
A tempest that tyme began to falle
And fordede here vynys alle;

In Avergne beyond the sea
In Venice a good city
Dwelled a priest of England,
And was advanced I understand.
Every year at the flourishing
When the vines should spring
A tempest then began to fall
And ruined all their vines.

Every [gh]ere withouten fayle	Every year without fail
And fordyde here grete trauayle.	And ruined their great labour.
Therfor the folk were alle sory	Therefore the folk were all sorry
Thurghe the cyte comunly:	Through the city commonly.
Thys prest seyde, y shal [gh]ou telle	This priest said, “I shall you tell
What shall best thys tempest felle;	What shall best this tempest fell;
On Satyrday shal [gh]e ryngge noun	On Saturday shall ye ring noon
And late ne longer ne werke be doun.	And let no longer work be done.”

Handlyng Synne, 1350

(7) Ther faure citees wern set, nov is a see called,
That ay is drouy[18] and dym and ded in hit kynde,
Blo[19] blubrande[20] and blak, vnblythe to ne[gh]e[21]
As a stynkande stanc that stryed[22] synne
That euer of synne and of smach,[23] smart is to fele;
Forthy the derk dede see hit is demed ever more,
For hit dede[gh] of dethe duren there [gh]et.
For hit is brod and bothemle[gh] and bitter as the galle,
And no[gh]t may lenge in that lake that any lyf bere[gh],
And all the coste[gh] of kynde hit combre[gh][24] vchone[25]
For lay ther-on a lump of led and hit on loft flete[gh],
And folde ther-on a ly[gh]t fyther and hit to founs synkke[gh],
And ther water may walter to wete any erthe,
Shal neuer grene ther-on growe, gresse ne wod nawther.

Cleannesse, 1350

2. Account for the poor quality of English prose during this period.

3. What were the effects of the Norman Conquest upon English literature?

4. Describe the main features of the romance.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF CHAUCER

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1350–1450)

Compared with the periods covered by the last two chapters, the period now under review is quite short. It includes the greater part of the reign of Edward III and the long French wars associated with his name; the accession of his grandson Richard II (1377); and the revolution of 1399, the deposition of Richard, and the foundation of the Lancastrian dynasty. From the literary point of view, of greater importance are the social and intellectual movements of the period: the terrible plague called the Black Death, bringing poverty, unrest, and revolt among the peasants, and the growth of the spirit of inquiry, which was strongly critical of the ways of the Church, and found expression in the teachings of Wyclif and the Lollards, and in the stern denunciations of Langland.

LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

1. The Standardizing of English. The period of transition is now nearly over. The English language has shaken down to a kind of average—to the standard of the East Midland speech, the language of the capital city and of the universities. The other dialects, with the exception of the Scottish branch, rapidly melt away from literature, till they become quite exiguous. French and English have amalgamated to form the standard English tongue, which attains to its first full expression in the works

of Chaucer.

2. A curious **"modern" note** begins to be apparent at this period. There is a sharper spirit of criticism, a more searching interest in man's affairs, and a less childlike faith in, and a less complacent acceptance of, the established order. The vogue of the romance, though it has by no means gone, is passing, and in Chaucer it is derided. The freshness of the romantic ideal is being superseded by the more acute spirit of the drama, which even at this early time is faintly foreshadowed. Another more modern feature that at once strikes the observer is that the age of anonymity is passing away. Though many of the texts still lack named authors, the greater number of the books can be definitely ascribed. Moreover, we have for the first time a figure of outstanding literary importance, who gives to the age the form and pressure of his genius.

3. Prose. This era sees the foundation of an English prose style. Earlier specimens have been experimental or purely imitative; now, in the works of Mandeville and Malory, we have prose that is both original and individual. The English tongue is now ripe for a prose style. The language is settling to a standard; Latin and French are losing grip as popular prose mediums; and the growing desire for an English Bible exercises a steady pressure in favor of a standard English prose.

4. Scottish Literature. For the first time in our literature, in the person of Barbour (died 1395), Scotland supplies a writer worthy of note. This is only the beginning; for the tradition is handed on to the powerful group of poets who are mentioned in the next chapter.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340–1400)

1. His Life. In many of the documents of the time Chaucer's name is mentioned with some frequency; and these references, in addition to some remarks he makes regarding himself in the course of his poems, are the sum of what we know about his life. The date of his birth is uncertain, but it is now generally accepted as being 1340. He was born in London, entered the household of the wife of the Duke of Clarence (1357), and saw military service abroad, where he was captured. Next he seems to have entered the royal household, for he is frequently mentioned as the recipient of royal pensions and bounties. When Richard II succeeded to the crown (1377) Chaucer was confirmed in his offices and pensions, and shortly afterward (1378) he was sent to Italy on one of his several diplomatic missions. More pecuniary blessings followed; then ensued a period of depression, due probably to the departure to Spain (1387) of his patron John of Gaunt; but his life closed with a revival of his prosperity. He was the first poet to be buried in what is now known as Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

2. His Poems. The order of Chaucer's poems cannot be ascertained with certitude, but from internal evidence they can as a rule be approximately dated.

It is now customary to divide the Chaucerian poems into three stages: the French, the Italian, and the English, of which the last is a development of the first two.

(*a*) The poems of the earliest or French group are closely modeled upon French originals, and the style is clumsy and immature. Of such poems the longest is *The Romaunt of the Rose*, a lengthy allegorical

poem, written in octosyllabic couplets, and based upon Jean de Meung's *Le Roman de la Rose*. This poem, which, though it extends to eight thousand lines, is only a fragment, was once entirely ascribed to Chaucer, but recent research, based upon a scrutiny of Chaucerian style, has decided that only the first part, amounting to seventeen hundred lines, is his work. Other poems of this period include *The Dethe of the Duchesse*, probably his earliest, and dated 1369, the date of the Duchess's death, *The Compleynte unto Pité*, *Chaucer's ABC*, *The Compleynte of Mars*, *The Compleynte of Faire Anelida*, and *The Parlement of Foules*. Of these the last is the longest; it has a fine opening, but, as so often happens at this time, the work diffuses into long speeches and descriptions.

(*b*) The second or Italian stage shows a decided advance upon the first. In the handling of the meters the technical ability is greater, and there is a growing keenness of perception and a greater stretch of originality. *Troilus and Cressida* is a long poem adapted from Boccaccio. By far the greater part of the poem is original, and the rhyme royal stanzas, of much dexterity and beauty, abound in excellent lines that often suggest the sonnets of Shakespeare. The poem suffers from the prevailing diffuseness; but the pathos of the story is touched upon with a passionate intensity.

> "If no love is, O God, what fele I so?
> And if love is, what thing and which is he?
> If love be good, from whennes com'th my wo?
> If it be wikke, a wonder thinketh me
> When every torment and adversite
> That com'th of him may to me savory thinke;
> For ay thurste I the more that ich it drinke.
>
> "And if that in myn owne lust I brenne,
> From whennes com'th my wailing and my pleynte?

If harm agree me, wher-to pleyne I thenne?
I n'ot, ne why unwery that I fainte.
O quike deth! O swete harm so queynte!
How may of thee in me swich quantite,
But if I consente that it be?"

The Hous of Fame, a shorter poem in octosyllabic couplets, is of the dream-allegory type, as most of Chaucer's poems of this period are; and it is of special importance because it shows gleams of the genuine Chaucerian humor. In this group is also included *The Legende of Good Women*, in which Chaucer, starting with the intention of telling nineteen affecting tales of virtuous women of antiquity, finishes with eight accomplished and the ninth only begun. After a charming introduction on the daisy, there is some masterly narrative, particularly in the portion dealing with Cleopatra. The meter is the heroic couplet, with which Chaucer was to familiarize us in *The Canterbury Tales*.

(*c*) The third or English group contains work of the greatest individual accomplishment. The achievement of this period is *The Canterbury Tales*, though one or two of the separate tales may be of slightly earlier composition. For the general idea of the tales Chaucer may be indebted to Boccaccio, but in nearly every important feature the work is essentially English. For the purposes of his poem Chaucer draws together twenty-nine pilgrims, including himself. They meet at the Tabard Inn, in Southwark, in order to go on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. The twenty-nine are carefully chosen types, of both sexes, and of all ranks, from a knight to a humble plowman; their occupations and personal peculiarities are many and diverse; and, as they are depicted in the masterly *Prologue* to the main work, they are interesting, alive,

and thoroughly human. At the suggestion of the host of the Tabard, and to relieve the tedium of the journey, each of the pilgrims is to tell two tales on the outward journey, and two on the return. In its entirety the scheme would have resulted in an immense collection of over a hundred tales. But as it happens Chaucer finished only twenty, and left four partly complete. The separate tales are linked with their individual prologues, and with dialogues and scraps of narrative. Even in its incomplete state the work is a small literature in itself, an almost unmeasured abundance and variety of humor and pathos, of narrative and description, and of dialogue and digression. There are two prose tales, Chaucer's own *Tale of Melibœus* and *The Parson's Tale*; and nearly all the others are composed in a powerful and versatile species of the heroic couplet.

To this last stage of Chaucer's work several short poems are ascribed, including *The Lack of Stedfastness* and the serio-comic *Compleynte of Chaucer to his Purse*.

There is also mention of a few short early poems, such as *Origines upon the Maudeleyne*, which have been lost.

During his lifetime Chaucer built up such a reputation as a poet that many works were at a later date ascribed to him without sufficient evidence. Of this group the best examples are *The Flower and the Leaf*, quite an excellent example of the dream-allegory type, and *The Court of Love*. It has now been settled that these poems are not truly his.

3. His Prose. The two prose tales cannot be regarded as among Chaucer's successful efforts. Both of them—that is, *The Tale of Melibœus* and *The Parson's Tale on Penitence*—are lifeless in style and

full of tedious moralizings. Compared with earlier prose works they nevertheless mark an advance. They have a stronger grasp of sentence-construction, and in vocabulary they are copious and accurate. The other prose works of Chaucer are an early translation of Boëthius, and a treatise, composed for the instruction of his little son Lewis, on the astrolabe, then a popular astronomical instrument.

The following extract is a fair example of his prose:

> "Now, sirs," saith dame Prudence, "sith ye vouche saufe to be gouerned by my counceyll, I will enforme yow how ye shal gouerne yow in chesing of your counceyll. First tofore alle workes ye shall beseche the hyghe God, that he be your counceyll; and shape yow to suche entente that he yeue you counceyll and comforte as Thobye taught his sone. 'At alle tymes thou shall plese and praye him to dresse thy weyes; and loke that alle thy counceylls be in hym for euermore.' Saynt James eke saith: 'Yf ony of yow haue nede of sapience, axe it of God.' And after that than shall ye take counceyll in yourself, and examyne well your thoughtys of suche thynges as ye thynke that ben beste for your profyt. And than shall ye dryue away from your hertes the thynges that ben contraryous to good counceyl: this is to saye—ire, couetyse, and hastynes."
>
> *The Tale of Melibœus*

4. Features of his Poetry. (*a*) The first thing that strikes the eye is the *unique position* that Chaucer's work occupies in the literature of the age. He is first, with no competitor for hundreds of years to challenge his position. He is, moreover, the forerunner in the race of great literary figures that henceforth, in fairly regular succession, dominate the ages they live in.

(*b*) *His Observation.* Among Chaucer's literary virtues his acute faculty of observation is very prominent. He was a man of the world, mixing freely with all types of mankind; and he used his opportunities to observe the little peculiarities of human nature. He had the seeing eye, the retentive memory, the judgment to select, and the capacity to expound; hence the brilliance of his descriptions, which we shall note in the next paragraph.

(*c*) *His Descriptions.* Success in descriptive passages depends on vivacity and skill in presentation, as well as on the judgment shown in the selection of details. Chaucer's best descriptions, of men, manners, and places, are of the first rank in their beauty, impressiveness, and humor. Even when he follows the common example of the time, as when giving details of conventional spring mornings and flowery gardens, he has a vivacity that makes his poetry unique. Many poets before him had described the break of day, but never with the real inspiration that appears in the following lines:

> The bisy larke, messager of day,
> Salueth in her song the morwe gay,
> And firy Phœbus riseth up so brighte
> That all the orient laugheth with the lighte.
>
> *The Knight's Tale*

The *Prologue* contains ample material to illustrate Chaucer's power in describing his fellow-men. We shall add an extract to show him in another vein. Observe the selection of detail, the terseness and adequacy of epithet, and the masterly handling of the couplet.

> First on the wal was peynted a forest,
> In which ther dwelleth neither man nor best,
> With knotty, knarry, barreyne trees olde

Of stubbes sharpe and hidouse to biholde,
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,
As though a storm sholde bresten every bough;
And dounward from an hille, under a bente,
Ther stood the temple of Mars armypotente,
Wroght al of burned steel, of which the entree
Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.
The northern light in at the dores shoon,
For wyndowe on the wal ne was ther noon
Thurgh which men myghten any light discern,
The dores were al of adament eterne,
Y-clenched overthwart and endelong
With iren tough, and for to make it strong,
Every pyler, the temple to sustene,
Was tonne greet, of iren bright and shene.

The Knight's Tale

(*d*) *His Humor and Pathos.* In the literature of his time, when so few poets seem to have any perception of the fun in life, the humor of Chaucer is invigorating and delightful. The humor, which steeps nearly all his poetry, has great variety: kindly and patronizing, as in the case of the Clerk of Oxenford; broad and semi-farcical, as in the Wife of Bath; pointedly satirical, as in the Pardoner and the Summoner; or coarse, as happens in the tales of the Miller, the Reeve, and the Pardoner. It is seldom that the satirical intent is wholly lacking, as it is in the case of the Good Parson, but, except in rare cases, the satire is good-humored and well-meant. The prevailing feature of Chaucer's humor is its urbanity: the man of the world's kindly tolerance of the weaknesses of his erring fellow-mortals.

Chaucer lays less emphasis on pathos, but it is not overlooked. In the poetry of Chaucer the sentiment is humane and unforced. We have excellent examples of pathos in the tale of the Prioress and in *The Legende of Good Women.*

We give a short extract from the long conversation

between Chaucer and the eagle ("with fethres all of gold") which carried him off to the House of Fame. The bird, with its cool acceptance of things, is an appropriate symbol of Chaucer himself in his attitude toward the world.

> Thus I longe in his clawes lay,
> Til at the laste he to me spak
> In mannes vois, and seyde, "Awak!
> And be not so agast, for shame!"
> And called me tho by my name.
> And, for I sholde the bet abreyde—
> Me mette—"Awak," to me he seyde,
> Right in the same vois and stevene
> That useth oon I coude nevene;
> And with that vois, soth for to sayn,
> My minde cam to me agayn;
> For hit was goodly seyd to me,
> So nas hit never wont to be....
> And sayde twyes "Seynte Marie!
> Thou art noyous for to carie."...
> "O god," thoughte I, "that madest kinde,
> Shal I non other weyes dye?
> Wher Ioves wol me stellifye,
> Or what thing may this signifye?
> I neither am Enok, nor Elye,
> Ne Romulus, ne Ganymede
> That was y-bore up, as men rede,
> To hevene with dan Iupiter,
> And maad the goddes boteler."

(*e*) *His Narrative Power.* As a story-teller Chaucer employs somewhat tortuous methods, but his narrative possesses a curious stealthy speed. His stories, viewed strictly as stories, have most of the weaknesses of his generation: a fondness for long speeches, for pedantic digressions on such subjects as dreams and ethical problems, and for long explanations when none are necessary. *Troilus and Cressida*, heavy with long speeches, is an example of his prolixity, and *The Knight's Tale*, of baffling complexity and overabundant in detail, reveals his haphazard and dawdling methods; yet both contain

many admirable narrative passages. But when he rises above the weaknesses common to the time he is terse, direct, and vivacious. The extract given below will illustrate the briskness with which his story can move.

> This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
> Herden thise hennes crie and maken wo,
> And out at dores stirten they anon,
> And syen the fox toward the grove gon,
> And bar upon his bak the cok away,
> And cryden, "Out! Harrow! And weylaway!
> Ha! Ha! The Fox!" And after hym they ran,
> And eek with staves many another man;
> Ran Colle, oure dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland
> And Malkyn, with a dystaf in hir hand;
> Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges,
> So were they fered for berkynge of the dogges,
> And shoutyng of the men and wommen eek;
> They ronne so hem thoughte hir herte breek.
> They yolleden, as feendes doon in helle;
> The dokes cryden, as men wolde hem quelle;
> The gees, for feere, flowen over the trees;
> Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
> So hidous was the noys, *a benedicitee*!
> Certes, he Jakke Straw, and his meynee,
> Ne made never shoutes half so shrille,
> Whan that they wolden any Flemyng kille,
> As thilke day was maade upon the fox.
>
> *The Nun's Priest's Tale*

(*f*) *His Metrical Skill.* In the matter of poetical technique English literature owes much to Chaucer. He is not an innovator, for he employs the meters in common use. In his hands, however, they take on new powers. The octosyllabic and heroic couplets, which previously were slack and inartistic measures, now acquire a new strength, suppleness, and melody. Chaucer, who is no great lyrical poet, takes little interest in the more complicated meters common in the lyric; but in some of his shorter poems he shows a skill that is as good as the very best apparent in the contemporary poems.

(*g*) *Summary*. We may summarize Chaucer's achievement by saying that he is the earliest of the great moderns. In comparison with the poets of his own time, and with those of the succeeding century, the advance he makes is almost startling. For example, Manning, Hampole, and the romancers are of another age and of another way of thinking from ours; but, apart from the superficial archaisms of spelling, the modern reader finds in Chaucer something closely akin. All the Chaucerian features help to create this modern atmosphere: the shrewd and placidly humorous observation, the wide humanity, the quick aptness of phrase, the dexterous touch upon the meter, and, above all, the fresh and formative *spirit*—the genius turning dross into gold. Chaucer is indeed a genius; he stands alone, and for nearly two hundred years none dare claim equality with him.

OTHER POETS

1. William Langland, or **Langley (1332–1400)**, is one of the early writers with whom modern research has dealt adversely. All we know about him appears on the manuscripts of his poem, or is based upon the remarks he makes regarding himself in the course of the poem. This poem, the full title of which is *The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman*, appears in its many manuscripts in three forms, called respectively the A, B, and C texts. The A text is the shortest, being about 2500 lines long; the B is more than 7200 lines; and the C, which is clearly based upon B, is more than 7300 lines. Until quite recently it has always been assumed that the three forms were all the work of Langland; but the latest theory is that the A form is the genuine composition of Langland, whereas both B and C have been

composed by a later and inferior poet.

From the personal passages in the poem it appears that the author was born in Shropshire about 1332. The vision in which he saw Piers the Plowman probably took place in 1362.

The poem itself tells of the poet's vision on the Malvern Hills. In this trance he beholds a fair "feld ful of folk." The first vision, by subtle and baffling changes, merges into a series of dissolving scenes which deal with the adventures of allegorical beings, human like Do-wel, Do-bet, and Do-betst, or of abstract significance like the Lady Meed, Wit, Study, and Faith. During the many incidents of the poem the virtuous powers generally suffer most, till the advent of Piers the Plowman—the Messianic deliverer—restores the balance to the right side. The underlying motive of the work is to expose the sloth and vice of the Church, and to set on record the struggles and virtues of common folks. Langland's frequent sketches of homely life are done with sympathy and knowledge, and often suggest the best scenes of Bunyan.

The style has a somber energy, an intense but crabbed seriousness, and an austere simplicity of treatment. The form of the poem is curious. It is a revival of the Old English rhymeless measure, having alliteration as the basis of the line. The lines themselves are fairly uniform in length, and there is the middle pause, with (as a rule) two alliterations in the first half-line and one in the second. Yet in spite of the Old English meter the vocabulary draws freely upon the French, to an extent equal to that of Chaucer himself.

We quote the familiar opening lines of the poem. The reader should note the strong rhythm of the lines

—which in some cases almost amounts to actual meter—the fairly regular system of alliteration, and the sober undertone of resignation.

> In a somer sesun, whan softe was the sonne,
> I shope me into a shroud, a sheep as I were;
> In habite of an hermite, unholy of werkes,
> Wende I wyde in this world, wondres to here.
> But in a Mayes morwnynge, on Malverne hulles,
> Me bifel a ferly,[26] a feyric me thouhte;
> I was wery of wandringe and wente me to reste
> Under a brod banke, bi a bourne syde,
> And as I lay and lened, and loked on the waters,
> I slumberde on a slepyng; it sownede so murie.

2. John Gower, the date of whose birth is uncertain, died in 1408. He was a man of means, and a member of a good Kentish family; he took a fairly active part in the politics and literary activity of the time, and was buried in London.

The three chief works of Gower are noteworthy, for they illustrate the unstable state of contemporary English literature. His first poem, *Speculum Meditantis*, is written in French, and for a long time was lost, being discovered as late as 1895; the second, *Vox Clamantis*, is composed in Latin; and the third, *Confessio Amantis*, is written in English, at the King's command according to Gower himself. In this last poem we have the conventional allegorical setting, with the disquisition of the seven deadly sins, illustrated by many anecdotes. These anecdotes reveal Gower's capacity as a story-teller. He has a diffuse and watery style of narrative, but occasionally he is brisk and competent. The meter is the octosyllabic couplet, of great smoothness and fluency.

3. John Barbour (1316–95) is the first of the Scottish poets to claim our attention. He was born in

Aberdeenshire, and studied both at Oxford and Paris. His great work is *The Brus* (1375), a lengthy poem of twenty books and thirteen thousand lines. The work is really a history of Scotland from the death of Alexander III (1286) till the death of Bruce and the burial of his heart (1332). The heroic theme is the rise of Bruce, and the central incident of the poem is the battle of Bannockburn. The poem, often rudely but pithily expressed, contains much absurd legend and a good deal of inaccuracy, but it is no mean beginning to the long series of Scottish heroic poems. The spirited beginning is often quoted:

A! fredome is a nobill thing!
Fredome mayss man to haiif liking!
Fredome all solace to man giffis;
He levys at ess that frely levys!
A noble hart may haiff nane ess,
Na ellys nocht that may him pless,
Gyffe fredome failzhe: for fre liking
Is zharnyt[27] our all othir thing.
Na he, that ay hass levyt fre,
May nocht knaw weill the propyrte,
The angyr, na the wrechyt dome,
That is couplyt to foule thyrldome.

PROSE-WRITERS

1. Sir John Mandeville is the English form of the name of **Jehan de Mandeville**, who compiled and published a French book of travels between 1357 and 1371. This French work was very popular, and it was translated into several languages, including English. The English version has a preface, in which it is stated that the author was a Sir John Mandeville, a knight, born at St. Albans, who crossed the sea in 1322 and traveled in many strange regions. Much of the personal narrative is invention; nowadays the very existence of Sir John is denied. The real author of the book is said to be **Jehan de**

Bourgogne, who died at Liège in 1372.

It has now been demonstrated that the so-called "*Travels*" is a compilation from several popular books of voyages, including those of a Friar Odoric, of an Armenian called Hetoum, and (to a very small extent) of the famous traveler Marco Polo. These, with a few grains of original matter, are ingeniously welded into one of the most charming books of its kind. The travels are full of incredible descriptions and anecdotes, which are set down with delightful faith and eagerness. The style is sweet and clear, with some colloquial touches; and the short narrations freely dispersed through the text, tersely phrased and accurately gauged in length, are rendered with great skill.

We add an example to illustrate this admirable prose style. Observe the brief sentences, many of which begin with "and," the simple but effective diction, and the straightforward style of narrative.

> And zee schull undirstonde that whan men comen to Jerusalem her first pilgrymage is to the chirche of the Holy Sepulcr wher oure Lord was buryed, that is withoute the cytee on the north syde. But it is now enclosed in with the ton wall. And there is a full fair chirche all rownd, and open above, and covered with leed. And on the west syde is a fair tour and an high for belles strongly made. And in the myddes of the chirche is a tabernacle as it wer a lytyll hows, made with a low lityll dore; and that tabernacle is made in maner of a half a compas right curiousely and richely made of gold and azure and othere riche coloures, full nobelyche made. And in the ryght side of that tabernacle is the sepulcre of oure Lord. And the tabernacle is viij fote long and v fote wide, and xj fote in heghte. And it is not longe sithe the sepulcre was all open, that men

> myghte kisse it and touche it. But for pilgrymes that comen thider peyned hem to breke the ston in peces, or in poudr; therefore the Soudan[28] hath do make a wall aboute the sepulcr that no man may towche it. But in the left syde of the wall of the tabernacle is well the heighte of a man, is a gret ston, to the quantytee of a mannes bed, that was of the holy sepuler, and that ston kissen the pilgrymes that comen thider. In that tabernacle ben no wyndowes, but it is all made light with lampes that hangen befor the sepulcr.

2. John Wyclif, or **Wycliffe (1320–84)**, was born in Yorkshire about the year 1320. He was educated at Oxford, took holy orders, received the living of Lutteworth in Leicestershire (1374), and took a prominent part in the ecclesiastical feuds of the day. He was strong in his denunciation of the abuses then rampant, and only the influence of his powerful friends saved him from the fate of a heretic. He died peacefully in 1384.

An active controversialist, he wrote many Latin books in support of his revolutionary opinions. In addition, he issued a large number of tracts and pamphlets in English, and carried through an English translation of the Bible. His English style is not polished, but it is vigorous and pointed, with a homely simplicity that makes its appeal both wide and powerful.

3. Sir Thomas Malory may be included at this point, though his famous work, the *Morte d'Arthur*, was composed as late as the "ix yere of the reygne of Kyng Edward the furth" (1469). Nearly all we know about Malory is contained in the preface of Caxton, the first printer of the book. Caxton says that the book was written by Sir Thomas Malory "oute of certeyn bookes of frensshe."

Like the travels of Mandeville, the *Morte d'Arthur* is a compilation. In the case of Malory's books, French Arthurian romances are drawn upon to create a prose romance of great length and detail. However diverse the sources are, the book is written with a uniform dignity and fervor that express the very soul and essence of romance. The prose style, never pretentious, is always equal to the demands put upon it, and frequently it has that flash of phrase that is essential to the creation of a literary style. Malory is, in short, our first individual prose stylist.

> And on the morn the damsel and he took their leave and thanked the knight, and so departed, and rode on their way until they came to a great forest. And there was a great river and but one passage, and there were ready two knights on the further side to let them the passage. "What sayest thou," said the damsel, "wilt thou match yonder knights, or turn again?" "Nay," said Sir Beaumains, "I will not turn again and they were six more." And therewithal he rushed into the water, and in the midst of the water, either brake their spears upon other to their hands, and then they drew their swords and smote eagerly at other. And at the last Sir Beaumains smote the other upon the helm that his head stonied, and therewithal he fell down in the water, and there was he drowned. And then he spurred his horse upon the land, where the other knight fell upon him and brake his spear, and so they drew their swords and fought long together. At the last Sir Beaumains clave his helm and his head down to the shoulders: and so he rode unto the damsel, and bade her ride forth on her way.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

The Chaucerian age saw a great and significant advance in poetical forms of literature, and a

noteworthy one in the domain of prose.

1. Poetry. With regard to poetry, we can observe the various forms separating themselves and straightening out into form and coherence.

(*a*) The *lyric*, chiefly the religious and love-lyric, continues to be written and developed. Chaucer himself contributes very little toward it, but a number of anonymous bards add to the common stock. It is seldom that we can give precise dates to the lyrics of this period; but about this time were composed such exquisite pieces as *The Nut-brown Maid*, a curious hybrid between the lyric and the ballad, and the lovely carols of the Church.

(*b*) *The Rise of the Ballad.* The origin of the ballad has always been a question in dispute. There is little doubt, however, that ballads began to assume a position of importance at the end of the fourteenth century.

The true ballad-form had several features to make it distinct from the romance: it is commonly plebeian in origin and theme, thus contrasting with the romance, which is aristocratic in these respects; it is short, and treats of one incident, whereas the romance form is cumulative, and can absorb any number of adventures; it is simple in style, and is as a rule composed in the familiar ballad-stanza. Some of the fine ballads belonging to this time are *Chevy Chace*, *Gil Morrice*, and *Sir Patrick Spens*. Very old ballads, as can be seen in the case of *Chevy Chace*, which exists in more than one version, have descended to modern times in a much more polished condition than they were in at first. In their earliest condition they were rude and almost illiterate productions, the compositions of the popular minstrels.

(*c*) *The Rise of the Allegory.* This is perhaps the suitable place to note the rise of allegory, which in the age of Chaucer began to affect all the branches of poetry. Even at its best the allegorical method is crude and artificial, but it is a concrete and effective literary device for expounding moral and religious lessons. It appeals with the greatest force to minds which are still unused to abstract thinking; and about the period now under discussion it exactly suited the lay and ecclesiastical mind. Hence we have a flood of poems dealing with Courts of Love, Houses of Fame, Dances of the Seven Deadly Sins, and other symbolical subjects. Especially in the earlier stages of his career, Chaucer himself did not escape the prevailing habit. We shall see that the craze for the allegory was to increase during the next century and later, till it reached its climax in *The Faerie Queene*.

(*d*) *Descriptive and Narrative Poems.* In this form of poetry *The Canterbury Tales* is the outstanding example, but in many passages of Langland and Gower we have specimens of the same class. We have already mentioned some of the weaknesses that are common to the narrative poetry of the day, and which were due partly to lack of practice and partly to reliance upon inferior models: the tantalizing rigmaroles of long speeches and irrelevant episodes, the habit of dragging into the story scientific and religious discussions, and an imperfect sense of proportion in the arrangement of the plot. In the best examples, such as those of Chaucer, there is powerful grip upon the central interest, a shrewd observation and humor, and quite often a brilliant rapidity of narration.

(*e*) The *metrical romance* is still a popular form, but the great vogue of the last century is on the wane.

Among the lower classes it is being supplanted by the ballad; and the growing favor that is being shown to the *fabliau*—that is, the short French tale, realistic in subject and humorous-satirical in style—is leading to tales of the coarser Chaucer type.

2. Prose. In prose we have the first English travel-book in Mandeville's *Travels*; one of the earliest translations of the Bible in Wyclif's; and, among others, a prose chronicle in the work of **John of Trevisa (1326–1412)**, who issued a prose version of Higden's *Polychronicon*. As yet such works are in an undeveloped state, but already some considerable growth is apparent. Prose is increasing both in quantity and in quality, and the rate of increase is accelerating.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

1. Poetry. We have already stated that the time of transition and experiment is nearly over. English poetical style has established itself, and the main lines of development have been laid down. For this we are indebted almost entirely to Chaucer.

(*a*) With regard to *meter*, it is curious to observe that with increasing practice the tendency is toward simplicity. The extremely complicated stanzas are becoming less common, and rhyme royal and other shorter verses are coming into favor. Along with simplification is a greater suppleness and dexterity. There is less rigidity in the position of the pause, and a greater freedom in the substitution of three-syllabled feet for two-syllabled feet. These features are most strongly developed in the couplet forms. It is this union of simplicity and freedom that is to remain the dominating characteristic of English verse, thus contrasting with the quantitative system

of the classical measures and the syllabic nature of the French.

(*b*) There is an interesting *revival in alliteration*. In the true alliterative poem the basis of the line is a system of repeating sounds, such as was the custom in Old English verse. One of the earliest examples of this type which occurs after the Norman Conquest is *Wynnere and Wastour* (1352), an anonymous poem of no great merit. The tradition is continued in the alliterative romances of the type of *Cleannesse*; and it attains its climax in *Piers Plowman*. Though this last poem gained a great popularity it left no important literary descendants. Hence the revival of the ancient system of alliteration remains as an interesting curiosity. In a very short time after Langland, alliteration becomes simply an ornament to meter—sometimes a device of great beauty, but not vital to the metrical scheme.

As regards the actual *poetic diction* of the period, there is a considerable liking shown for ornate French and classical terms. This can be observed in the earlier poems of Chaucer and in the *Confessio Amantis* of Gower. We have not yet attained to the aureate diction of the succeeding generation, but the temptation to use French terms was too strong to be resisted. Langland, though he draws upon the French Element, writes with much greater simplicity; and the ballads also are composed in a manner quite plain and unadorned.

2. Prose. The state of prose is still too immature to allow of any style beyond the plainest. Wyclif's, the earliest of the period, is unpolished, though it can be pointed and vigorous. Mandeville's prose style, though it is devoid of artifices, attains to a certain distinction by reason of its straightforward

methods, its short and workmanlike sentences, and a brevity rare in his day. In the case of Malory, who comes some time after the others, we have quite an individual style. It is still unadorned; but it has a distinction of phrase and a decided romantic flavor that make Malory a prose stylist of a high class. His prose is, indeed, a distinct advance upon that of his predecessors.

EXERCISES

1. The following series of extracts is intended to show the development of English prose style from Old English times to those of Malory. The student should write a brief commentary upon the development of the prose, paying attention to vocabulary, sentence-construction, clearness, and brevity.

(1) Đa ic ða ðis eall gemunde, ða wundrade ic swiðe swiðe ðara godena wiotona ðe giu wæron giond Angelcynn, ond ða bec ealla be fullan geliornod hæfdon, ðæt hie hiora ða nænne dæl noldon on hiera agen geðiode wendan. Ac ic ða sona eft me selfum andwyrde, ond cwæþ: "Hie ne wendon ðætte æfre menn sceolden swæ reccelease weorðan, ond sio lar swæ oðfeallan; for ðære wilnunga hie hit forleton ond woldon ðaet her ðy mara wisdom on londe wære ðy we ma geðeoda cuðon?"

When I recollected all this, I wondered very much that of all the scholars that long were throughout England and had learnt all the books in full, none at all wished to turn them into their own tongue. But in a short space I answered myself, saying: "They did not believe that men should ever be so reckless, and learning so fall away; through that desire they held back from it, and wished that the more wisdom there might be in the land the more tongues we might know."

ALFRED, *Pastoral Care*, 900

(2) Thæt witen ge wel alle, thæt we willen and unnen, thæt thæt ure rædesmen alle other the moare dæl of heom, thæt beoth ichosen thurg us and thurg thæt loandes folk on ure kuneriche, habbeth idon and schullen don in the worthnesse of Gode and on ure treowthe for the frem of the loande thurg the besigte of than toforeniseide redesmen, beo stedefaest and ilestinde in alle thinge a buten ænde, and we hoaten alle ure treowe in the treowthe, thæt heo us ogen, thæt heo stedefaestliche healden and swerien to healdan and to werien the isetnesses.

This know ye well all, that we will and grant that which our councillors, all or the greater part of them, who are chosen by us and by the land's people in our kingdom, have done and shall do, to the honour of God and in allegiance to us, for the good of the land, by the ordinance of the aforesaid councillors, be stedfast and permanent in all things, time without end, and we command all our true men by the faith that they owe us, that they stedfastly hold, and swear to hold and defend the regulations.

Proclamation of Henry III, 1258

(3) And for als moche as it is longe tyme passed that ther was no generalle passage ne vyage over the see; and many men desiren for to here speke of the Holy Lond, and han therof gret solace and comfort; I, John Maundevylle, Knyght alle be it I be not worthi, that was born in Englond, in the town of Seynt Albones, passede the see, the yeer of our Lord MCCCXXII, in the day of Seynt Michelle; and hidra to have been longe tyme over the see, and have seyn and gon thorghe manye

dyverse londes, and many provynces and kingdomes and iles and have passed thorghout Turkey, Percye, Surrye, Egypt the highe and the lowe, Ermonye, Inde the lasse and the more, and many iles, that ben abouten Inde where dwellen many dyverse folkes and of dyverse maneres and schappes of men, of which I schalle speke more pleynly hereafter.

MANDEVILLE, *Travels*, 1370

(4) Yn Brytayn buþ meny wondres, noþeles foure buþ most wonderful. Þe furste ys at Pectoun, þar bloweþ so strong a wynd out of þe chenes of þe eorþe þat hyt casteþ vp a[gh]e[29] cloþes þat me casteþ in. Þe secunde ys at Stonhenge, bysydes Salesbury, þar gret stones & wondur huge buþ arered[30] an hy[gh], as hyt were [gh]ates, so þat þar semeþ [gh]ates yset apon oþer [gh]ates; noþeles hyt ys no[gh]t clerlych yknowe noþer parceyuet hou[gh] & whar-fore a buþ so arered & so wonderlych yhonged. Þe þriddle ys at Cherdhol,[31] þer ys gret holwenes vndur eorþe; ofte meny men habbeþ y-be þer-ynne & ywalked aboute with-ynne & yseye ryuers & streemes, bote nowhar conneþ hy fynde ende. Þe feurþe ys, þat reyn[32] ys ys ye arered vp of þe hulles, & anon yspronge aboute yn þe feeldes. Also þer ys a gret pond þat conteyneþ þre score ylondes couenable[33] for men to dwelle ynne; þat pound ys byclypped aboute wiþ six score rooches.[34]

JOHN OF TREVISA, 1387

(5) So Balan prayed the lady of her gentleness, for his true service that she would bury them both in that same place where the battle was done. And she granted them with weeping it should be done richly in the best manner. “Now will ye send for a priest, that we may receive our sacrament and receive the blessed body of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Yea,” said the lady, “it shall be done.” And so she sent for a priest and gave them their rites. “Now,”

said Balin, “when we are buried in one tomb, and the mention made over us how two brethren slew each other, there will never good knight nor good man see our tomb but they will pray for our souls.” And so all the ladies and gentlewomen wept for pity. Then, anon Balan died, but Balin died not till the midnight after, and so were they buried both, and the lady let make a mention of Balan how he was there slain by his brother’s hands, but she knew not Balin’s name.

MALORY, *Morte d’ Arthur*, 1470

2. Comment upon the style of each of the following extracts. Note the use of French words, the type of sentences, the clearness of construction, and the handling of the meter. Compare (1) with the extract given from Chaucer on page 39. Which is the better narrative, and which shows the more humor?

(1) In a Croniq I fynde thus,
How that Caius Fabricius
Wich whilome was consul of Rome,
By whome the lawes yede and come,
Whan the Sampnitees to him brouht
A somme of golde, and hym by souht
To done hem fauoure in the lawe,
Towarde the golde he gan hym drawe:
Where of in alle mennes loke,
A part in to his honde he tooke,
Wich to his mouthe in alle haste
He put hit for to smelle and taste,
And to his ihe and to his ere,
Bot he ne fonde no comfort there:
And thanne he be gan it to despise,
And tolde vnto hem in this wise:
“I not what is with golde to thryve
Whan none of alle my wittes fyve
Fynt savour ne delite ther inne
So is it bot a nyce sinne
Of golde to ben to coveitous,
Bot he is riche an glorious
Wich hath in his subieccion
The men wich in possession
Ben riche of golde, and by this skille,

For he may alday whan he wille,
Or be him leef or be him loth,
Justice don vppon hem bothe."
Lo thus he seide and with that worde
He threwe to fore hem on the borde
The golde oute of his honde anon,
And seide hem that he wolde none,
So that he kepte his liberte
To do justice and equite.

GOWER, *Confessio Amantis*

(2) The kyng and hise knyghtes To the kirke wente
To here matyns of the day And the mass after.
Thanne waked I of my wynkyng, And wo was withalle,
That I ne had slept sadder And y-seighen moore.
Ac er I hadde faren a furlong, Feyntise[35] me hente,[36]
That I ne myghte ferther a foot For defaute of slepynge,
And sat softly a-doun, And seide my bileve,
And so[37] I bablede on my bedes Thei broughte me a-slepe.
And thanne saugh I much moore Than I bifore of tolde,
For I seigh the feld ful of folk, That I bifore of seide
And how Reson gan arayen hym Al the reaume[38] to preche
And with a cros afore the kyng Comsede[39] thus to techan.

LANGLAND, *Piers Plowman*

3. The two extracts given below represent the older and the more modern versions of *Chevy Chace*. Compare them with regard to diction, vivacity, and general competence in the handling of meter.

(1) With that ther cam an arrowe hastely
Forthe off a mightie wane,[40]
Hit hathe strekene the yerle Duglas
In at the brest bane.
Thoroue lyvar and longs bathe[41]
The sharp arrowe ys gane,
That never after in all his lyffe days,
He spayke mo wordes but ane,
That was, "Fyghte ye, my merry men whyllys ye may,

For my lyff days ben[42] gan."
The Perse leanyde on his brande,
And sawe the Duglas de;
He tooke the dede man be the hande,
And sayd, "Wo ys me for the!
To have sayvde thy lyffe I wold have pertyd[43] with
My landes for years thre,
For a better man of hart, nare of hande
Was not in all the north countre."

(2) With that, there came an arrow keen
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Erle Douglas to the heart,
A deepe and deadly blow:
Who never spoke more words than these,
"Fight on, my merry men all;
For why, my life is at an end;
Lord Percy sees my fall."
Then leaving life, Erle Percy tooke
The dead man by the hand;
And said, "Erle Douglas, for thy life
Wold I had lost my land.
"O Christ! my verray heart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake;
For sure, a more redoubted knight
Mischance did never take."

4. "In the union of the two [art and strength] Chaucer stood alone." (Saintsbury.) Compare Chaucer with Langland and Gower, and show how he combines the strength of the former with the art of the latter.

5. The following quotations on Chaucer can each be taken as the theme of a short discussion, and all of them can be used as the foundation of a longer paper.

(1) Dan Chaucer, well of English undefiled,
On Fame's eternall beadroll worthy to be filed.
SPENSER

(2) He is the father of English poetry.... He followed nature everywhere.... The verse of

> Chaucer is not harmonious to us.... There is the rudeness of a Scotch tune in it.[44]
>
> DRYDEN

> (3) He was a healthy and hearty man, so humane that he loved even the foibles of his kind.... He was a truly epic poet, without knowing it.... He has left us such a picture of contemporary life as no man ever painted.
>
> LOWELL

> (4) Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
> Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
> The spacious times of great Elizabeth
> With sounds that echo still.
>
> TENNYSON

6. Point out some of the traces that the social and religious unrest has left upon the literature of the time.

7. "There exists a general impression that our prose dates from the sixteenth century." (Earle.) Is this impression a correct one?

CHAPTER IV

FROM CHAUCER TO SPENSER

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1450–1550)

The dates that appear at the head of this section are only approximate, but the general features of the time are well defined. In England the period begins with wars, unrest, and almost chaos; it concludes with a settled dynasty, a reformed religion, and a people united and progressive. Abroad, as well as in England, there is apparent the broad intellectual flood known as the Renaissance, running deep and strong: the renewed desire for knowledge, changes in religious ideals, the discovery of new worlds, both geographical and literary, and the enormous quickening of heart and mind. In England the scene is being prepared for the great age to follow.

LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

1. Poverty of Material. Considering the length of the period, the poverty of the output is hard to explain. There is no English poet of any consequence; the prose writing is thin in quality and quantity; and if it were not for the activities of the Scottish poets the age would be poor indeed.

2. Scottish Poetry. Scottish poetry comes late into notice, but it comes with a bound. The poverty and disunion of Scotland, its severance from the intellectual stimulus of English thought, and the dearth of educational facilities all combine to retard its literary development. But these disadvantages are

rapidly passing away, with the beneficial results apparent in this chapter.

3. The Development of the Drama. The popularity of the romance is almost gone; the drama, more suited to the growing intelligence of the time, is rapidly taking on a new importance. The professional actor and the playwright, owing to real demand for their services, are making their appearance. The development of the drama is sketched in this chapter.

4. The Importance of the Period. The importance of the time is belied by its apparent barrenness. In reality it is a season of healthy fallow, of germination, of rest and recuperation. The literary impulse, slowly awakening, is waiting for the right moment. When that movement comes the long period of rest gives the new movement swift and enduring force.

POETRY

1. The Scottish Poets. (*a*) **James I (1394–1437)** was captured by the English in 1405, and remained in England till 1424, when he married Joan Beaufort, the cousin of Henry V, and returned to Scotland. The chief poem associated with his name is *The Kingis Quhair* (*quire* or *book*). The attempts to disprove his authorship have not been successful. It seems to have been written during his captivity, and it records his first sight of the lady destined to be his wife. It follows the Chaucerian model of the dream, the garden, and the introduction of allegorical figures. The stanza is the rhyme royal, which is said to have derived its name from his use of it. The diction, which is the common artificial blend of Scottish and Chaucerian forms, is highly ornamented; but there

are some passages of really brilliant description, and a few stanzas of passionate declamation quite equal to the best of Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*. It is certainly among the best of the poems that appear between the periods of Chaucer and Spenser. Other poems, in particular the more plebeian *Peblis to the Play* and *Christis Kirk on the Green*, have been ascribed to James, but his authorship is extremely doubtful.

The two following stanzas are fair examples of James's poetry. The man who wrote them was no mean poet.

> Of her array the form if I shall write,
> Towards her golden hair and rich attire,
> In fretwise couchit[45] with pearlis white,
> And great balas[46] leaming[47] as the fire,
> With mony ane emeraut and fair sapphire;
> And on her head a chaplet fresh of hue,
> Of Plumis parted red, and white, and blue.
>
> Full of quaking spangis bright as gold,
> Forged of shape like to the amorets,
> So new, so fresh, so pleasant to behold,
> The plumis eke like to the flower jonets,[48]
> And other of shape, like to the flower jonets;
> And above all this, there was, well I wot,
> Beauty enough to make a world to dote.
>
> *The Kingis Quhair*

(*b*) **Sir David Lyndsay (1490–1555)** was born in Fifeshire about the year 1490. He entered the royal service, and rose to fill the important position of Lyon King-of-Arms.

His longer works, which were written during his service at Court, include *The Dreme*, in rhyme royal stanzas, with the usual allegorical setting; *The Testament of Squyer Meldrum*, in octosyllabic couplets, a romantic biography with a strongly

Chaucerian flavor; *The Testament and Compleynt of the Papyngo*, which has some gleams of his characteristic humor; and *Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estatis*, a morality-play, coarse and vulgar, but containing much of his best work. It is full of telling satire directed against the Church, and it shows acute observation of the frailties of his fellows. Lyndsay represents the ruder type of the Scottish Chaucerian. He has a coarseness beyond the standard even of his day; but he cannot be denied a bluff good-humor, a sound honesty of opinion, and an abundant and vital energy.

(*c*) **Robert Henryson (1425–1500)** has left us few details regarding his life. In one of his books he is described as a "scholemaister of Dunfermeling"; he may have studied at Glasgow University; and he was dead when Dunbar (see below) wrote his *Lament for the Makaris* in 1506. Hence the dates given for his birth and death are only approximations.

The order of his poems has not been determined. His longest is a version of the *Morall Fabillis of Esope*, composed in rhyme royal stanzas and showing much dexterity and vivacity; *The Testament of Cresseid* is a continuation of Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*, and it has a finely tragic conclusion; *Orpheus and Eurydice*, an adaptation from Boëthius, has, along with much commonplace moralizing, some passages of real pathos; and among his thirteen shorter poems *Robene and Makyne*, a little pastoral incident, is executed with a lightness, a brevity, and a precision that make it quite a gem among its fellows. His *Garment of Gude Ladies*, though often quoted, is pedantically allegorical, and of no high quality as poetry.

We quote two stanzas from *The Testament of Cresseid*. The diction is an artificial blend of that of

Chaucer and of colloquial Scots, and it is heavily loaded with descriptive epithet; but it is picturesque and dramatic, in some respects suggesting the later work of Spenser.

His face frosnit,[49] his lyre was lyke the leid,
His teith chatterit, and cheverit[50] with the chin,
His ene[51] drowpit, how,[52] sonkin in his heid,
Out of his nois the meldrop[53] fast did rin,
With lippis bla,[54] and cheikis liene and thin,
The iceschoklis that fra his hair doun hang,
Was wonder greit, and as ane speir als lang.

Atouir[55] his belt his lyart[56] lokkis lay
Felterit[57] unfair, ovirfret with froistis hoir,
His garmound and his gyis[58] full gay of gray,
His widderit weid[59] fra him the wind out woir;
Ane busteous bow within his hand he boir,
Under his girdill ane flasche[60] of felloun flanis,[61]
Fedderit[62] with ice, and heidit with hailstanis.

The Testament of Cresseid

(*d*) **William Dunbar (1460–1520)** is generally considered to be the chief of the Scottish Chaucerian poets. He was born in East Lothian, studied at St. Andrews University (1477), and went to France and became a wandering friar. Returning to Scotland, he became attached to the household of James IV, and in course of time was appointed official Rhymer. He died about 1520.

Dunbar wrote freely, often on subjects of passing interest; and though his work runs mainly on Chaucerian lines it has an energy and pictorial quality that are quite individual. Of the more than ninety poems associated with his name the most important are *The Golden Targe*, of the common allegorical-rhetorical type; *The Thrissill and the Rois*, celebrating the marriage of James IV and the English Margaret (1503); *The Dance of the Sevin Deidlie Sins*,

with its strong *macabre* effects and its masterly grip of meter; *The Twa Meryit Wemen and the Wedo*, a revival of the ancient alliterative measure, and outrageously frank in expression; and *The Lament for the Makaris*, in short stanzas with the refrain *Timor Mortis conturbat me*, quite striking in its effect.

The following short extract reveals Dunbar's strong pictorial quality and his command of meter.

Let see quoth he now wha begins:—
With that the foul Sevin Deidlie Sins
  Beyond to leap at anis[63];
And first of all in dance was Pride
With hair wyld[64] back and bonnet o' side,
  Like to make vaistie wanis.[65]
And round about him as a wheel
Hung all in rumples to the heel
  His kethat[66] for the nanis.[67]
Mony proud trumpour[68] with him trippit;
Through scalding fire aye as they skippit
  They girned[69] with hideous granis.[70]
Then Ire came in with sturt[71] and strife
His hand was aye upon his knife,
  He brandeist like a beir.[72]

The Dance of the Sevin Deidlie Sins

(*e*) **Gawain Douglas (1474–1522)** was a member of the famous Douglas family, his father being the fifth Earl of Angus, Archibald "Bell the Cat." He studied at St. Andrews University (1489) and probably at Paris, became a priest, and rose to be Bishop of Dunkeld. He took a great share in the high politics of those dangerous times, and in the end lost his bishopric, was expelled to England, and died in London.

His four works belong to the period 1501–13: *The Palice of Honour*, of elaborate and careful workmanship, and typical of the fifteenth-century manner; *King Hart*, a laboriously allegorical treatment of life, the Hart being the heart of life,

which is attended by the five senses and other personifications of abstractions; *Conscience*, a short poem, a mere quibble on the word "conscience," of no great poetical merit; and the *Æneid*, his most considerable effort, a careful translation of Virgil, with some incongruous touches, but done with competence and some poetical ability. It is the earliest of its kind, and so is worthy of some consideration. Douglas is the most scholarly and painstaking of his group; but he lacks the native vigor of his fellows. His style is often overloaded and listless, and in the selection of theme he shows little originality.

2. John Skelton (1460–1529) comes late in this period, but he is perhaps the most considerable of the poets. His place of birth is disputed; he may have studied at Oxford, and he probably graduated at Cambridge. He took orders (1498), entered the household of the Countess of Richmond, the mother of Henry VII, and became a tutor to Prince Henry. In 1500 he obtained the living of Diss in Norfolk, but his sharp tongue ruined him as a rector. He fell foul of Wolsey, and is said to have escaped imprisonment by seeking sanctuary in Westminster Abbey, where he died in 1529.

In his *Garlande of Laurell Skelton* gives a list of his own works, most of which have perished. This poem itself is a dreary effort, stilted in style and diffuse in treatment. It is in satire that Skelton appears at his best. His satirical poems, in spite of their shuffling and scrambling meters, are usually sharp, often witty, and nearly always alive. *Why come ye not to Court?* is addressed to Wolsey, and for jeering impertinence it is hard to find its equal, at that time at least; *The Tunnynge of Elynore Runnynge* is realism

indeed, for it faithfully portrays the drunken orgies of a pack of women in an ale-house. His more serious poems include a *Dirge on Edward IV*, *The Bowge of Court*, and a quite excellent morality-play, *Magnificence*.

We quote an example of Skelton's peculiar meter, which came to be called "Skeltonics." It is a species of jingling octosyllabic couplet, but crumbling and unstable, often descending to doggerel. It is, however, lively, witty in a shallow fashion, and attractive. His own description of it is quite just:

> For though my rhyme be ragged,
> Tattered and jagged,
> Rudely rayne beaten,
> Rusty and moughte eaten,
> It hath in it some pyth.

The following extract shows his powers of invective:

> But this mad Amelek
> Like to a Mamelek,
> He regardeth lords
> Not more than potshords;
> He is in such elation
> Of his exaltation,
> And the supportation
> Of our sovereign lord,
> That, God to record,
> He ruleth all at will.
> Without reason or skill;
> Howbeit the primordial
> Of his wretched original,
> And his base progeny,
> And his greasy genealogy,
> He came of the sank[73] royal
> That was cast out of a butcher's stall.
>
> *Why come ye not to Court?*

3. John Lydgate (1370–1451) had a great reputation in his day, but little of it has survived. He was born at Lydgate, near Newmarket, and became a

monk at Bury St. Edmunds, where he rose to be priest in 1397. He studied and wrote much, gaining a wide reputation both as a scholar and a poet. The dates of his birth and death are only approximately fixed.

Lydgate was a friend of Chaucer, upon whom he models much of his poetry. But as a poet he is no Chaucer. He has none of the latter's metrical skill and lively imagination, and the enormous mass of his poems only enhances their futility. *The Falls of Princes*, full of platitudes and wordy digressions, is no less than 7,000 verses long; *The Temple of Glass*, of the common allegorical type, is mercifully shorter; and so is *The Story of Thebes*, a feeble continuation of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*. On rare occasions, as in *London Lickpenny*, he is livelier; but he has no ear for meter, and the common vices of his time—prolixity, lack of humor, and pedantic allegory—lie heavy upon him.

4. Thomas Occleve, or **Hoccleve (1368–1450)**, may have been born in Bedfordshire; but we know next to nothing about him, and that he tells us himself. He was a clerk in the Privy Seal Office, from which in 1424 he retired on a pension to Hampshire.

His principal works are *The Regement of Princes*, written for the edification of Henry VIII, and consisting of a string of tedious sermons; *La Male Règle*, partly autobiographical, in a sniveling fashion; *The Complaint of Our Lady*; and *Occleve's Complaint*.

The style of Occleve's poetry shows the rapid degeneration that set in immediately after the death of Chaucer. His meter, usually rhyme royal or couplets, is loose and sprawling, the style is uninspired, and the interest of the reader soon ebbs

very low. He himself, in his characteristic whining way, admits it with much truth:

> Fader Chaucer fayne wold han me taught,
> But I was dul, and learned lite or nought.

5. Stephen Hawes (1474–1530) was a Court poet during the first twenty years of the sixteenth century. Very little is known of him, even the dates of his birth and death being largely matters of surmise.

His chief works include *The Passetyme of Pleasure*, a kind of romantic-homiletic poem, composed both in rhyme royal stanzas and in couplets, and dealing with man's life in this world in a fashion reminiscent of Bunyan's, *The Example of Virtue*, *The Conversion of Swerers*, and *A Joyfull Medytacyon*. Of all the poets now under discussion Hawes is the most uninspired; his allegorical methods are of the crudest; but he is not entirely without his poetical moments. His *Passetyme of Pleasure* probably influenced the allegory of Spenser.

6. Alexander Barclay (1476–1552) might have been either a Scotsman or an Englishman for all that is known on the subject. He was a priest in Devonshire, and later withdrew to a monastery in Ely. His important poem, *The Ship of Fools*, a translation of a German work by Sebastian Brant, represents a newer type of allegory. The figures in the poem are not the usual wooden creatures representing the common vices and virtues, but they are sharply satirical portraits of the various kinds of foolish men. Sometimes Barclay adds personal touches to make the general satire more telling. *Certayne Ecloges*, another of Barclay's works, is the earliest English collection of pastorals. It contains, among much grumbling over the times, quite

attractive pictures of the country life of the day.

PROSE-WRITERS

1. Reginald Pecock (1395–1460) may have been born in Wales, and perhaps in 1395. He was educated at Oxford, and took orders, when he became prominent through his attacks upon the Lollards. In his arguments he went so far that he was convicted of heresy (1457), forced to make a public recantation, and deprived of his bishopric of Chichester. He died in obscurity about 1460.

His two works were *The Repressor of Over-much Blaming the Clergy* (1449) and *The Book of Faith*. In his dogma he strongly supported the ancient usages of the Church; and in the style of his argument he is downright and opinionative. His prose, often rugged and obscure, is marked by his preference for English words in place of those of Latin origin. His books are among the earliest of English controversial works, and thus they mark a victory over the once all-important Latin.

2. William Caxton (1422–91), the first English printer, was born in Kent about the year 1422. He was apprenticed to a London mercer, and in his capacity of mercer went to Bruges to assist in the revival of English trade with the Continent. In Bruges, where he lived for thirty-three years, he started his translations from the French, and in that city he may have learned the infant art of printing. In 1476 he established himself in London as a printer. There he began to issue a series of books that laid the foundation of English printing. The first book printed in England was *The Dictes and Sayengis of the Philosophers* (1477). The main part of the volume was the work of Lord Rivers, but Caxton, as

was his habit, revised it for the press.

In addition to printing many older texts, such as Chaucer and Malory, Caxton did some original work of great value. He translated and printed no fewer than twenty-one books, French texts, the most remarkable of which were the two earliest, *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* (1469) and *The Game and Playe of Chesse* (1474). Like King Alfred, he added to many of his books introductory remarks, some of great personal or general interest.

We give a brief extract from his preface to *The Recuyell*. Observe the rather clumsy sentences and the plain language.

> When I remember that every man is bounden by the commandment and counsel of the wise man to eschew sloth and idleness, which is mother and nourisher of vices, and ought to put myself unto virtuous occupation and business, then I, having no great charge of occupation, following the said counsel, took a French book and read therein many strange and marvellous histories wherein I had great pleasure and delight, as well for the novelty of the same as for the fair language of French, which was in prose so well and compendiously set and written, which methought I understood the sentence and substance of every matter. And forsomuch as this book was new and late made and drawn into French, and never had seen it in our English tongue, I thought in myself it should be a good business to translate it into our English, to the end that it might be had as well in the realm of England as in other lands, and also for to pass therewith the time, and thus concluded in myself to begin this said work. And forthwith took pen and ink and began boldly to run forth as blind Bayard, in this present work which is named the

Recuyell of the Trojan histories.

3. John Fisher (1459–1535) was born in Yorkshire about 1459, was educated at Cambridge, and entered the Church. In due course he became Bishop of Rochester. During the time of the Reformation he opposed Henry VIII's desire to be acknowledged as the head of the English Church, and was imprisoned in the Tower (1531). While there he was made a cardinal by the Pope; and he was beheaded by the orders of Henry.

Fisher wrote much in Latin, and in English he is represented by a small collection of tracts and sermons and a longer treatise on the Psalms. Though they are of no great quantity, his prose works are in their nature of much importance. They are the first of the rhetorical-religious books that for several centuries were to be an outstanding feature of English prose. In addition, they show a decided advance in the direction of style. They are written in the style of the orator and are the result of the conscious effort of the stylist: the searching after the appropriate word (often apparent by the use of two or three words of like meaning), the frequent use of rhetorical figures of speech, and a rapid and flowing rhythm. In brief, in the style of Fisher we can observe the beginnings of an ornate style. It is still in the making, but it is the direct ancestor of the prose style of Jeremy Taylor and other divines of the same class.

In the following passage observe the use of such doublets as "painful and laborious," "rest and ease," and "desire and love." The rhythm is supple, there is a quick procession of phrases, and the vocabulary is copious and Latinized to a considerable extent.

What life is more painful and laborious of itself

> than is the life of hunters which, most early in the morning, break their sleep and rise when others do take their rest and ease, and in his labour he may use no plain highways and the soft grass, but he must tread upon the fallows, run over the hedges, and creep through the thick bushes, and cry all the long day upon his dogs, and so continue without meat or drink until the very night drive him home; these labours be unto him pleasant and joyous, for the desire and love that he hath to see the poor hare chased with dogs. Verily, verily, if he were compelled to take upon him such labours, and not for this cause, he would soon be weary of them, thinking them full tedious unto him; neither would he rise out of his bed so soon, nor fast so long, nor endure these other labours unless he had a very love therein.
>
> *The Ways to Perfect Religion*

4. Hugh Latimer (1491–1555) was born in Leicestershire, educated at Cambridge, and rose to be chaplain to Henry VIII and Bishop of Worcester. He resisted some of the reforms of Henry, was imprisoned in the Tower, and was released on the death of the King. At the accession of Mary he was once again thrown into jail, and was burned at Oxford.

Latimer's English prose works consist of two volumes of sermons published in 1549. They are remarkable for their plain and dogmatic exposition, their graphical power, and their homely appeal. He is the first of the writers of plain style.

5. Sir Thomas More (1478–1535) was born in London, and was the son of a judge. He was educated in London, attached to the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and became a lawyer. A man of eager and aspiring mind, he fell under the

influence of Erasmus, Colet, and other humanists of the period. For a time he sat in Parliament and saw State service. His advanced political views led to his imprisonment (1534), and he was beheaded in the following year.

Owing to their elegance and wit, his Latin works are of unusual importance. They include his *Utopia*, the description of his imaginary ideal state. This book was not translated into English until 1551, and so does not count as an English work of More's. His English prose works include *The Lyfe of John Picus*, *The Historie of Richard III*, and a number of tracts and letters. He writes ably and clearly, but with no great distinction of manner. He is the first writer of the middle style.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

1. Poetry. In this period we have to chronicle the appearance of the *eclogue* or *pastoral* in the work of Barclay (*Ecloges*) and in some shorter poems like Henryson's *Robene and Makyne*. The pastoral, which in classical times had been practiced by Virgil and Theocritus, became a common form of poetical exercise in Italy, France, and Spain before, in the sixteenth century, it appeared in England. It was marked by a set of conventional shepherds and shepherdesses, possessing such names as Colin, Phyllis, and Phœbe; by stock scenes introducing sheep, meadows, and flowers; and it was often made the medium for philosophical and political theories. As yet the golden age of the pastoral had not made its appearance in England, but the beginning of the vogue was apparent.

A glance at the poems mentioned in this chapter will reveal the importance of the *allegory*. In this

period it grew and hardened into a mechanical and soulless device, for the poets lacked sufficient poetical fire to give it life. The allegory, as we can see in Dunbar's *Golden Targe* and Lydgate's *Temple of Glass*, usually opened with a garden and a dream, conventionalized to an absurd degree, and it continued with the introduction of the Goddess of Love, the Virtues and Vices, and similar stock personations. The allegory, however, in spite of its enormous elaboration, was not at the end of its popularity, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, it was to add another great poet to its list of devotees.

The development of the *ballad* and *carol* continued, with highly satisfactory results. These poems began to acquire polish and expertness, for the early rudeness was becoming a thing of the past. To this period probably belong the lovely carol to the Virgin Mary beginning "I sing of a maiden," and the ballads connected with Robin Hood, Fair Rosamund, and many others.

2. Prose. There were no outstanding achievements in prose, but facts all helped to reveal the waning influence of Latin and the increasing importance given to English. English prose appeared in theological works, as in those of Fisher; and **Cranmer (1489–1556)** gave it a new field in his notable English Prayer Book. Historical prose was represented by *The Chronicle of England* of **Capgrave (1393–1464)**, who wrote in a businesslike fashion; a species of philosophical prose appeared in *The Governance of England* of **Fortescue (1394–1476)**, and in *The Boke named the Governour* of **Eylot (1490–1546)**, a kind of educational work; *The Castle of Health*, also by the last author, was a medical work.

The great race of Elizabethan translators is well begun by **Lord Berners (1467–1533)**, who translated Froissart with freedom and no mean skill; and, lastly, the English Bible was taking shape.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

The work on the English Bible began as early as the eighth century, when Bede translated a portion of the Gospel of St. John into Old English prose. The work was ardently continued during the Old English period—for example, in the Lindisfarne Gospels (about 700) and the prose of Ælfric (about 1000). During the Anglo-Norman period, owing to the influence of French and Latin, English translation did not flourish; but efforts were made, especially in the Psalms and the Pauline epistles. Translation was systematically undertaken by **Wyclif (1320–84)**, under whose direction two complete versions were carried through about 1384 and 1388. How much actual translation Wyclif accomplished will never be known, but his was the leading spirit, and to him falls the glory of being the leader in the great work. To the second of the Wycliffian versions is sometimes given the name of **John Purvey**, the Lollard leader who succeeded Wyclif. The two versions are simple and unpretentious renderings, the second being much more finished than the first.

After Wyclif translation flagged till the Reformation bent men's minds anew to the task. The greatest of all the translators was **William Tyndale (1485–1536)**, who did much to give the Bible its modern shape. Tyndale suffered a good deal of persecution owing to his hardihood, and was driven abroad, where much of his translation was accomplished, and where it was first printed. It was at Cologne that the first English Bible appeared in

print. A feature of Tyndale's translation was its direct reliance upon the Hebrew and Greek originals, and not upon the Latin renderings of them. Of these Latin texts the stock version was the Vulgate, upon which Wyclif to a large extent relied.

Miles Coverdale (1488–1568) carried on the work of Tyndale. Though he lacked the latter's scholarship, he had an exquisite taste for phrase and rhythm, and many of the most beautiful Biblical expressions are of his workmanship.

Translations now came apace. None of them, however, was much improvement upon Tyndale's. In 1537 appeared the finely printed version of "Thomas Matthew," who was said to be **John Rogers**, a friend of Coverdale. The *Great Bible*, the first of the authorized versions, was executed by a commission of translators, working under the command of Henry VIII. It was based on Matthew's Bible. Another notable translation was the Calvinistic *Geneva Bible* (1560). This book received the popular name of "*Breeches Bible*," owing to its rendering of Genesis iii, 7: "They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves breeches." In the reign of Elizabeth was issued the *Bishops' Bible* (1568), a magnificent folio, which was translated by a committee of bishops and learned men. It was intended to be a counterblast to the growing popularity of the Breeches Bible.

With these we are close upon the great *Authorized Version* (1611), which we shall mention in the next chapter, where also we shall briefly discuss the influence and the literary qualities of this translation. A few representative passages from the early translations will be found in the exercises attached to this chapter.

3. The Drama. As we have arrived on the

threshold of the great Elizabethan drama, it is here convenient to sketch the growth of the dramatic form of literature.

(*a*) THE ORIGINS. (1) *Classical.* By the fourth or fifth century the Latin drama had become degraded almost past recognition. It left the merest traces in the *mimes*, who were professional strolling players common to all Europe during the Dark Ages. Their performances seem to have been poor and ribald enough, and they left little trace upon English drama.

(2) *Popular Elements.* At the great festivities, such as those at Easter and Yule, there were popular shows that included a large amount of acting and speaking. These plays, rude and childish probably, were survivals of ancient pagan beliefs and contained many scraps of folk-lore. There were nature-myths, such as that representing the expulsion of winter, in which a figure representing summer was slain and then revived. In England these *mummings*, as they were called, developed into elaborate sword-play, into morris-dancing (partly of foreign origin), and into dramatic versions of the feats of Robin Hood and St. George. These plays, which were commonly acted at the feast of Corpus Christi, were the occasion of fun and license, particularly at the election of the "Abbot of Unreason," with his attendants, the hobby-horse and the clown.

(3) *Ecclesiastical Elements.* In early times the Church was the chief supporter of the popular drama. The Church service, including the Mass itself, contains dramatic elements. In the course of time, in order to make the Church services more intelligible and attractive, there grew up a habit of exhibiting "living pictures" illustrating Gospel stories, especially those connected with Easter. As early as the fifth

century we have mention of such primitive dramatic entertainments, which were accompanied by the singing of hymns. Such was the origin of the *mystery*.

(*b*) THE MYSTERY-PLAY. The mystery was the dramatic representation of some important Biblical theme, such as the Nativity or the Resurrection. There were stock characters, set speeches (usually in doggerel verse), and a rudimentary plot supplied by the Biblical narrative. The mystery was in existence as early as the tenth century. Priests took part in the plays, though it is not certain that they wrote them; and the performances took place in the vicinity of some church. This feature proved so attractive that the mystery developed quite elaborate forms. The mystery-play proper centered around the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, but other themes that grew into favor were those of the Fall, Noah, Daniel, and Lazarus.

We add a brief passage from an ancient Cornish mystery. The reader should observe the set speeches of uniform length, the simple style, and the rhymeless stanzas.

Mary Magdalene. Oh! let us hasten at once,
For the stone is raised
From the tomb.
Lord, how will it be this night,
If I know not where goes
The head of royalty?

Mary, Mother of James. And too long we have stayed,
My Lord has gone his way
Out of the tomb, surely.
Alas! my heart is sick;
I know not indeed if I shall see him,
Who is very God.

Mary Salome. I know truly, and I believe it,
That he is risen up
In this day.

How long will it be to us now,
That we find not our Lord?
Alas! woe! woe!

[*They sing.*

The Dirge

Alas! mourning I sing, mourning I call,
Our Lord is dead that bought us all.

The Three Maries

(*c*) THE MIRACLE-PLAY. From the well-developed mystery-play it was but a step to the *miracle-play*. In such plays the theme passed from the Scriptural story to that of the lives of the saints. The plots were much more varied, the characters nearer to human experience, and the style rather more urbane.

(*d*) THE MORALITY-PLAY registered a further advance. In such plays virtues and vices were presented on the stage as allegorical creations, often of much liveliness. Abstractions such as Justice, Mercy, Gluttony, and Vice were among the commonest characters. An important feature of this class of play is the development of characterization. It is almost crude; but it is often strongly marked and strongly contrasted, with broad farcical elements. The favorite comic character was Vice, whose chief duty was to tease the Devil.

Everyman (about 1490), perhaps the best of the morality-plays, is represented by the brief extract here given. The characters are simply but effectively drawn, and the play does not lack a noble pathos.

Everyman. O all thing faileth, save God alone;
Beauty, Strength, and Discretion;
For when Death bloweth his blast,
They all run from me full fast.
Five-Wits. Everyman, my leave now of thee I take;
I will follow the other, for here I thee forsake.
Everyman. Alas! then may I wail and weep,
For I took you for my best friend.
Five-Wits. I will no longer thee keep;

Now farewell, and there an end.
Everyman. O Jesu, help, all hath forsaken me!
Good-Deeds. Nay, Everyman, I will bide with thee,
I will not forsake thee indeed;
Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.
Everyman. Gramercy, Good-Deeds; now may I true friends see;
They have forsaken me every one;
I loved them better than my Good-Deeds alone.
Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?
Knowledge. Yea, Everyman, when ye to death do go:
But not for no manner of danger.
Everyman. Gramercy, Knowledge, with all my heart.

(*e*) THE PLAY-CYCLES. As the plays developed, so did the demands upon the stagecraft of the performers. At first the priests were equal to it. Quite elaborate erections were used. In the very early productions a popular setting was an erection in three stories. The top represented heaven, with the heavenly inhabitants, the "middel erde" was in the center, and lowest of all were the flames of hell, tenanted by cheerfully disposed devils. In the course of time the acting passed from the priests into the hands of the craftsmen, the students, and the schoolboys. The merchants' guilds, in particular, were the most consistent supporters of the drama.

A curious feature was the fashion in which the plays ran in cycles or groups, each of which became associated with some town. The earliest is the Chester play-cycle (1268–76), comprising twenty-four plays; others are the York, with forty-nine; the Townley, with thirty-two, acted at the fairs at Widkirk; and the Coventry, of which only one play survives. Each member of the play-series was connected in theme with the others, and the complete cycle illustrated Bible history in all its stages.

Each company of the guild, say the Barbers or the

Wax-chandlers, took a unit of the series. Each unit was short, corresponding to an *act* of the modern drama. They were composed in a great variety of meters, from doggerel to complicated lyrical stanzas.

Each company having selected and rehearsed its play, the entire apparatus was enclosed in a huge vehicle called the *pageant*. The body of the vehicle was enclosed, and served as the dressing-and property-room; the top was an open-air stage. On the day of the festival, which at York and Coventry was Corpus Christi, the whole contrivance was pulled about the town, and performances were given at certain fixed points, of which the abbey was the chief. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare has caricatured many features of these artisans' dramatic performances.

(*f*) THE INTERLUDE. The last predecessor of the drama proper was the *interlude*, which flourished about the middle of the sixteenth century. It had several distinguishing points: it was a short play that introduced real characters, usually of humble rank, such as citizens and friars; there was an absence of allegorical figures; there was much broad farcical humor, often coarse; and there were set scenes, a new feature in the English drama. It will be observed that the interlude was a great advance upon the morality-play. **John Heywood**, who lived in the latter half of the sixteenth century, was the most gifted writer of the interlude. *The four P's* is one of his best. It is composed in doggerel verse, and describes a lying-match between a Pedlar, a Palmer, a Pardoner, and a Potycary. His *Johan Johan* has much sharp wit and many clever sayings.

(*g*) THE EARLIEST DRAMAS. Our earliest dramas began to appear about 1550. Their immediate cause

was the renewed study of the classical drama, especially the plays of Seneca (3 B.C.-A.D. 65), whose mannerisms were easily imitated by dramatic apprentices. The classical drama gave English drama its five acts, its set scenes, and many other features.

(1) *Tragedies.* The first tragedies had the Senecan stiffness of style, the conventional characters and plot, though in some cases they adopted the "dumb show," an English feature. *Gorboduc* (1562), afterward called *Ferrex and Porrex*, written by Norton and Lord Buckhurst, was probably the earliest, and was acted at the Christmas revels of the Inner Temple. The meter was a wooden type of regular blank verse. Other plays of a similar character were *Appius and Virginia* (1563), of anonymous authorship; the *Historie of Horestes* (1567), also anonymous; *Jocasta* (1566); and Preston's *Cambises, King of Percia* (1570). Hughes's *Misfortunes of King Arthur* (1587) broke away from the classical theme, but, like the others, it was a servile imitation of classical models. Many of the plays, however, preserved a peculiarly English feature in the retention of the comic Vice.

(2) *Histories.* Along with the alien classical tragedy arose a healthier native breed of historical plays. These plays, the predecessors of the historical plays of Shakespeare, were dramatized forms of the early chronicles, and combined both tragic and comic elements. This union of tragedy and comedy was alien to the classical drama, and was the chief glory of the Elizabethan stage. Early historical plays were *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* (before 1588), a mixture of rude verse and prose; *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* (before 1591); and *The Chronicle History of King Leir* (1594).

(3) *Comedies.* Though the comedies drew much

upon Latin comedians, such as Plautus, and upon Italian models also, they were to a great extent the growth of the English mumming element. They were composed usually in mixed verse and prose, the humor was of a primitive character, but the best of them had verve and high good-humor, and they were distinguished by some worthy songs and ditties. *Ralph Roister Doister* (1551), by **Nicholas Udall**, is the earliest extant comedy. Its author was the headmaster of Eton, and the play seems to have been composed as a variant upon the Latin dramas that were the stock-in-trade of the schoolboy actors then common. Another comedy was *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1575), the authorship of which is in dispute. The plot is slight, but the humor, though the reverse of delicate, is abundant, and the play gives interesting glimpses of contemporary English life.

We add a small scene from an early comedy. It shows the doggerel verse and the uninspired style—the homely natural speech of the time.

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE MARGERIE MUMBLECRUST

C. Custance. Who took thee this letter, Margerie Mumblecrust?
M. Mumble. A lusty gay bachelor took it me of trust,
And if ye seek to him he will love your doing.
C. Custance. Yea, but where learned he that manner of wooing?
M. Mumble. If to sue to him, you will any pains take,
He will have you to his wife (he saith) for my sake.
C. Custance. Some wise gentleman, belike. I am bespoken:
And I thought verily this had been some token
From my dear spouse Gawin Goodluck, whom when him please,
God luckily send home to both our hearts' ease.
M. Mumble. A joyly man it is, I wot well by report,
And would have you to him for marriage resort;
Best open the writing, and see what it does speak.

C. Custance. At this time, nurse, I will neither read ne break.
M. Mumble. He promised to give you a whole peck of gold.
C. Custance. Perchance, lack of a pint when it shall be all told.
M. Mumble. I would take a gay rich husband, and I were you.
C. Custance. In good sooth, Madge, e'en so would I, if I were thou.
But no more of this fond talk now, let us go in,
And see thou no more move me folly to begin.
Nor bring me no more letters for no man's pleasure,
But thou know from whom.
M. Mumble. I warrant ye shall be sure.

Ralph Roister Doister

Summary. We can thus see the material that lay to the hand of Shakespeare and his fellows. It was almost of uniform development and of ancient and diverse origin; it was frequently coarse and childish, but its material was abundant and vital. The time was at hand, and so was the genius of the master to give this vast body a shape and impulse. Almost in a day, after centuries of slow ripening, the harvest came, with a wealth and excellence of fruition that is one of the marvels of our literature.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

1. Poetry. In English poetry there was a marked decadence in style. In the works of Lydgate, Skelton, and Hawes the meters often became mere doggerel; there was little trace of real poetical imagination and phrasing; and the actual vocabulary is not striking. Compared with that of Chaucer, their work seems childish and inept. Many reasons have been advanced to explain this rapid collapse. The most obvious one is the sheer lack of talent: there is nobody to carry on the Chaucerian tradition with any great credit. Another cause is probably the rapid

decay of the use of the final *e*, which in the meter of Chaucer was an item of much moment. Pronunciation of English was rapidly changing, and the new race of poets had not the requisite skill to modify the old meter to suit the new age. In Scottish poetry there is much activity. To a large extent the Scottish poets were content to imitate the mannerisms of Chaucer. In one respect, indeed, they carried his descriptive-allegorical method too far, and made their poems lifeless. Such were the less successful poems of Dunbar (*The Golden Targe*), and of Gawain Douglas (*The Palice of Honour*). On the other hand, peculiar Scottish features were not lacking: a breezy and sometimes vulgar humor, bred, perhaps, of the ruder folk and the bleaker air; a robust independence and common sense; a note of passion and pathos; and a sense of the picturesque both in nature and in man. We find such features illustrated, wholly or in part, in such poems as Lyndsay's *Satyre of the Thrie Estatis*, in Dunbar's *Lament for the Makaris*, and at the close of Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*.

2. Prose. The development of prose style was marked by a number of small improvements which in the aggregate represented no small advance. Unlike the poetry of the time, prose suffered from no retrogression. There was a perceptible increase in skill, due to increased practice; there was a growing perception of the beauties of rhythm and cadence; and, in the purely formal sense, there was the appearance of the prose paragraph. Above all, the chief prose styles—the ornate, the middle, and the plain—are appearing faintly but perceptibly. With their arrival the rapid development of English prose is assured.

EXERCISES

1. The following prose passages are early examples of ornate, middle, and simple styles. Analyze them carefully with respect to their sentence-construction, vocabulary, and rhythm, and show how each deserves its name.

(1) Forasmuch as this honourable audience now is here assembled to prosecute the funeral observances and ceremonies about this most noble prince late our king and sovereign, king Henry the seventh. And all be it I know well mine unworthiness and inabilities to this so great a matter, yet for my most bounden duty, and for his gracious favour and singular benefits exhibit unto me in this life, I would now after his death right affectuously some thing say, whereby your charities the rather might have his soul recommended. And to that purpose I will entreat the first psalm of the *dirige*, which psalm was written of the holy king and prophet king David, comforting him after his great falls and trespasses against Almighty God and read in the church in the funeral obsequies of every Christian person when that he dieth.

FISHER, *Funeral Sermon on Henry VII*

(2) Maistres Alyce, in my most hartywise, I commend me to you. And whereas I am enfourmed by my son Heron of the losse of my barnes and our neighbours' also with all the corn that was therein; albeit (saving God's pleasure), it is gret pitie of so much good corne lost; yet sith it hath liked hym to sende us such a chaunce, we must and are bounden, not only to be content, but also to be glad of his visitacion. He sente us all that we have loste, and sith he hath by such a chaunce taken it away againe, his pleasure be fulfilled! Let us never grudge thereat, but take it in good worth and hartely thank him as well for

adversitie as for prosperitie.

MORE, *Letter to his Wife*

(3) Now-a-dayes the judges be afraid to heare a poore man against the rich, insomuch they will either pronounce against him, or so drive off the poore man's sute, that he shall not be able to go thorow with it. The greatest man in a realme cannot so hurt a judge as the poore widdow; such a shrewd turne she can do him. And with what armour, I pray you? She can bring the judge's skinne over his eares, and never lay hands upon him. And how is that? "The teares of the poore fall downe upon their cheekes, and go up to heaven," and cry for vengeance before God, the judge of widdowes, the father of widdowes and orphanes. Poore people be oppressed even by lawes. Wo worth to them that make evill lawes against the poore!

LATIMER, *Sermons*

2. Point out in what respects the style and sentiment of each of the following extracts represent its age and nationality. Write a critique on the passages taken together: point out their common features.

(1) Now there was made, fast by the tower's wall
A garden fair; and in the corners set
An herbere[74] green, with wandis long and small
Railed about, and so with treis set
Was all the place, and hawthorn hedges knet
That lyf[75] was none walking there forbye
That might within scarce any wight espy.

And therewith cast I doun mine eye again
Where as I saw walking under the tower
Full secretly, now comen her to pleyne[76]
The fairest or the freshest younge flower
That e'er I saw methought before that hour
For which sudden abate[77] anon astart
The blood of all my body to my heart.

JAMES I OF SCOTLAND, *The Kingis Quhair*

(2) Thus I, Colin Clout,
As I go about,
And wandering as I walk,
I hear the people talk:
Men say for silver and gold
Mitres are bought and sold.
There shall no clergy oppose
A mitre nor a crose,
But a full purse—
A straw for God's curse!
What are they the worse?
For a simoniac
Is but a hermoniac,
And no more ye may make
Of simony men say
But a child's play;
Over this the foresaid lay
Report how the pope may
A holy anchorite call
Out of a stony wall.

SKELETON, *Colin Clout*

(3) He came all so still
Where his mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on the grass.

He came all so still
To his mother's bower,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flower.

He came all so still
Where his mother lay,
As dew in April
That falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden,
Was never none like she!
Well may such a lady,
God's mother to be!

ANONYMOUS

(4) My father was sae waik of bluid and bane
That he deit,[78] wherefore my mother made greate mane;

Then she deit within ane day or two,
And there began my poverty and wo.
Our gude grey meir was baitand[79] on the field,
And our land's laird took her for his heryield.[80]
The vicar took the best cow by the heid
Incontinent, when my father was deid.
And when the vicar heard tell how that my mother
Was deid, fra hand, he took till him the other.

LYNDSAY, *Satyre of the Thrie Estatis*

3. The following series of translations of Matthew iii, 1–4, illustrates the development of Biblical style. Write a short comment upon them, comparing them and pointing out the development.

(*a*) (1) In þo dayes come Ihone baptist prechand in desert of þe Iewry, & seyand, (2) Do [gh]e penaunce; forwhy þe kyngdome of heuyne sal come negh. (3) Þis is he of whome it was seide be Isay þe prophete, sayand, Þe voice of þe cryand in þe desert, redye [gh]e þe way of God, right make [gh]e þe lityl wayes of him.' (4) & Ihone his kleþing of þe hoerys of camels, & a gyrdyl of a skyn about his lendys; & his mete was þe locust & hony of þe wode.

ANONYMOUS, 1300

(*b*) (1) In thilke days came Ioon Baptist, prechynge in the desert of Iude, sayinge, (2) Do [gh]e penaunce, for the kyngdom of heuens shal nei[gh] (*or* cume ni[gh]e). (3) Forsothe this is he of whome it is said by Ysaye the prophet, A voice of a cryinge in desert, Make [gh]e redy the wayes of the Lord; make [gh]e ri[gh]tful the pathes of hym. (4) Forsothe that ilk Ioon hadde cloth of the heeris of cameylis, and a girdil of skyn aboute his leendis; sothely his mete weren locustis, and hony of the wode.

WYCLIF, *First Version*, 1384

(*c*) (1) In tho daies Ioon Baptist cam, and prechide in the desert of Iudee, and seide, (2) Do

[gh]e penaunce, for the kyngdom of heuenes shal nei[gh]e. (3) For this is he, of whom it is seid bi Ysaie, the prophete, seyinge, A vois of a crier in desert, Make [gh]e redi the weies of the Lord; make [gh]e ri[gh]t the pathis of hym. (4) And this Ioon hadde clothing of camels heeris, and a girdil of skynne aboute his leendis; and his mete was honysoukis and hony of the wode.

WYCLIF, *Second Version*, 1388

(*d*) In those dayes Ihon the baptyser cam and preached in the wyldernes of Iury, saynge, Repent, the kyngedom of heven ys at hond. Thys ys he of whom it ys spoken be the prophet Isay, whych sayth; the voice of a cryer in wyldernes, prepaire ye the lordes waye, and make hys pathes strayght. Thys Ihon had hys garment of camelles heere, and a gyrdyll of a skynne about hys loynes. Hys meate was locustes and wyldhe ony.

TYNDALE, 1526

(*e*) In those dayes Ihon the Baptyst came and preached in the wildernes of Jury, saynge: Amende youre selues, the kyngdome of heuen is at honde. This is he, of whom it is spoken by the prophet Esay, which sayeth: The voyce of a cryer in the wyldernes, prepare the Lordes waye, and make his pathes straight. This Ihon had his garment of camels heer, and a lethren gerdell aboute his loynes. Hys meate was locustes and wylde hony.

COVERDALE, 1536

(*f*) In those dayes came Iohn the Baptyst, preaching in the wyldernes of Iewry, saying, Repent of the life that is past, for the kyngdome of heauen is at hande, For thys is he, of whom the prophet Esay, spake, which sayeth, the voyce of a cryer in the wyldernes, prepare ye the waye of the lorde: make hys pathes strayght. This Iohn had hys garment of camels heer and a gyrdell of a

skynne aboute hys loynes. His meate was locustes
and wylde hony.

The Great Bible, 1539

4. In the following series of extracts from the early plays comment upon the general standard of style, and point out any development that is apparent. Pay particular attention to the meter.

(1) (*From the Chester play-cycle, dating probably from the fourteenth century.*)

Ham's Wife. And I will go to gather slich[81]
The ship for to clean and pitch;
Anointed it must be, every stitch,
Board, tree, and pin.
Japhet's Wife. And I will gather chips here,
To make a fire for you, in fear,
And for to dight[82] your dinner,
Against you come in.
[*Here they make signs as though they were working with divers instruments.*
Noah. Now in the name of God I will begin,
To make the ship that we shall in,
That we be ready for to swim,
At the coming of the flood,
These boards I join together,
To keep us safe from the weather,
That we may roam both hither and thither,
And safe be from this flood....
God. Noah, take thou thy company,
And in the ship hie that you be,
For none so righteous man to me
Is now on earth living.

The Deluge

(2) (*From a sixteenth-century interlude.*)

Bale [*speaking as Epilogue*]. The matters are such as we have uttered here,
As ought not to slide from your memorial;
For they have opened such comfortable gear,
As is to the health of this kind universal,
Graces of the Lord and promises liberal,
Which he gives to man for every age,
To knit him to Christ, and so clear him of bondage.

BALE, *God's Promises*

(3) (*A historical play.*)

For non other cawse God hath kyngs constytute
And gevyn them the sword, but forto correct all vyce.
I have attempted this thing to execute
Uppon transgressers accordyng unto justyce;
And be cawse I wyll not be parcyall in myn offyce
For theft and murder to persones spirytuall,
I have ageynst me the pristes and the bysshoppes all
A lyke dysplesure in my fathers tyme ded fall,
Forty yeres ago, for ponyshment of a clarke.
No cun[`s]ell myght them to reformacyon call,
In ther openyon they were so stordy and so starke,
But ageynst ther prynce to the pope they dyd so barke,
That here in Ynglond in every cyte and towne
Excommunycacyons as thonder bolts came downe.

BALE, *Kynge Johan*

(4) (*From the earliest comedy.*)

R. Roister. Now, nurse, take this same letter here to thy mistress,
And as my trust is in thee, ply my business.
M. Mumble. It shall be done.
Mathew Merygreeke. Who made it?
R. Roister. I wrote it each whit.
M. Mery. Then needs it no mending.
R. Roister. No, no.
M. Mery. No, I know your wit,
I warrant it well.
M. Mumble. It shall be delivered.
But if ye speed, shall I be considered?
M. Mery. Whough! Dost thou doubt of that?
M. Mumble. What shall I have?
M. Mery. An hundred times more than thou canst devise to crave.
M. Mumble. Shall I have some new gear? for my old is all spent.
M. Mery. The worst kitchen-wench shall go in ladies' raiment....

[*Here they sing, and go out singing.*

UDALL, *Ralph Roister Doister*

5. Trace the influence of the Church upon the early English drama, and account for the decay of the Church influence.

6. Point out some of the effects of the Reformation that are apparent in the literature of the day.

7. In what respects is the period 1450–1550 a period of literary decadence, and in what respects does it show an advance?

8. Account for the sudden appearance of Scottish literature, and for its rapid rise to such a high standard.

9. In what respects was the Scottish literature of the time imitative, and in what respects was it original?

10. “As the Romance decays, the Drama develops.” Is this quite true? If so, can you account for the fact?

11. “The most original and powerful poetry of the fifteenth century was composed in popular form for the ear of the common people.” Discuss this statement with reference to the ballads, the carols, the songs, and the dramas of the time, as they compare with the other poetry of the day.

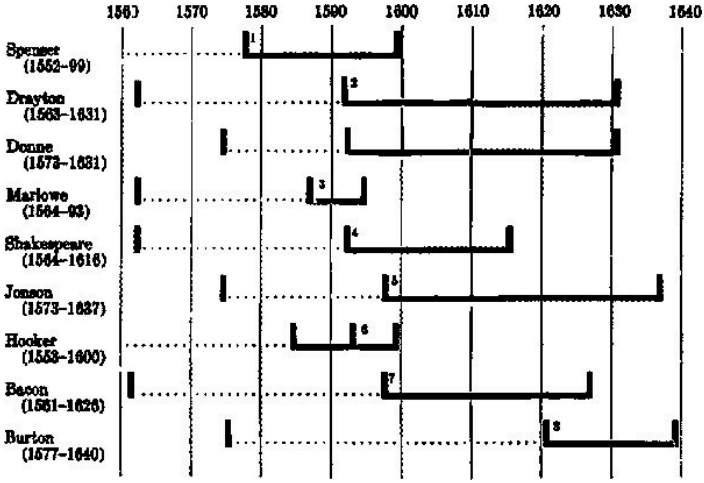
12. “It is doubtful if anyone in the fifteenth century thought of prose as a medium of artistic expression.” Comment upon this statement.

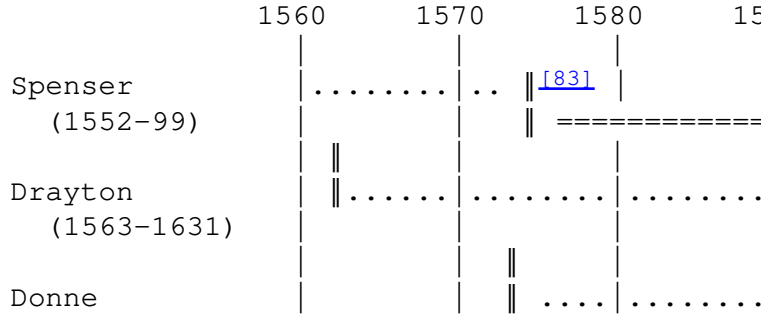
CHAPTER V

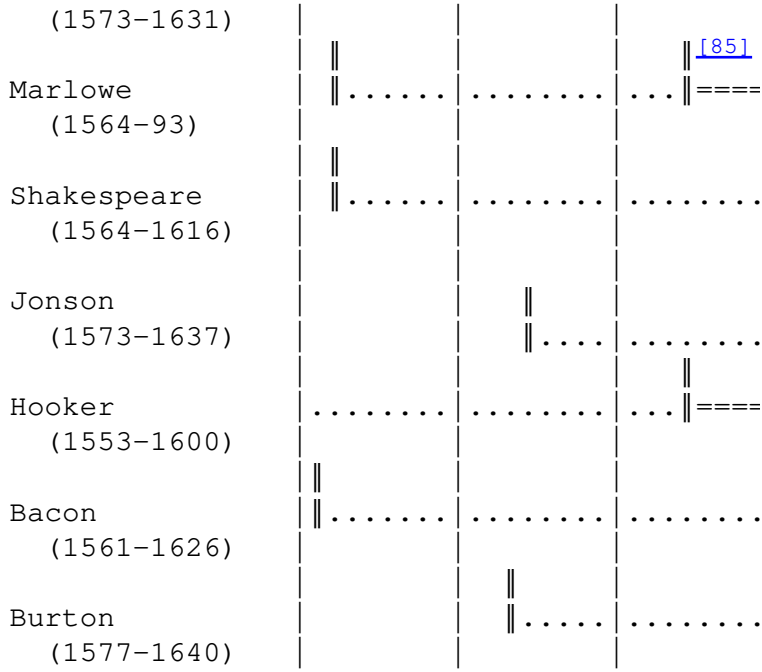
THE AGE OF ELIZABETH

TIME-CHART OF THE CHIEF AUTHORS

The thick line indicates the period of active literary production.







THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1550–1630)

This chapter introduces the reign of Elizabeth, sees it reach its climax and conclusion, and then witnesses the literary decline under the first of the Stuarts. The dominating features of the period can be conveniently summarized under two heads.

1. Settlement. Both in politics and religion the English nation was attaining to a state of stability. Dynastic problems, though they were troublesome, were not sufficient to cause serious trouble; and the union of the Crowns finally set at rest the ancient quarrel between Scotland and England. In religion the same general features were apparent—a general subsidence into quiescence, with minor disturbances at regular intervals. The settlement was all for the good of literature.

2. Expansion. In our history this is perhaps the most remarkable epoch for the expansion of both mental and geographical horizons. New knowledge was pouring in from the East, and new worlds were opening in the West. The great voyagers, whose exploits were chronicled in the immortal pages of **Hakluyt (1553–1616)**, brought home both material and intellectual treasures from beyond the "still-vexed Bermoothes," as Shakespeare called them. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the important effects which these revolutionary discoveries produced in literature.

LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

1. The New Classicism. By the time of Elizabeth the Renaissance, as it was called, had made itself strongly felt in England. In particular, there was an ardent revival in the study of Greek, which brought a dazzling light into many dark places of the intellect. The new passion for classical learning, in itself a rich and worthy enthusiasm, became quite a danger to the language. In all branches of literature Greek and Latin usages began to force themselves upon English, with results not wholly beneficial. It said much for the native sturdiness of English that, after a brief and vexed period of transition, it threw off the worst effects of this deadening pressure. English did not emerge unscathed from the contest. But, applied to this slight extent, the new classical influences were a great benefit: they tempered and polished the earlier rudeness of English literature.

2. Abundance of Output. After the lean years of the preceding epoch the prodigal issue of the Elizabethan age is almost embarrassing. As we have pointed out, the historical situation encouraged a healthy production. The interest shown in literary

subjects is quite amazing to a more chastened generation. Pamphlets and treatises were freely written; much abuse, often of a personal and scurrilous character, was indulged in; and literary questions became almost of national importance. To a great extent the controversies of the day were puerile enough, but at least they indicated a lively interest in the literature of the period.

3. The New Romanticism. The romantic quest is for the remote, the wonderful, and the beautiful. All these desires were abundantly fed during the Elizabethan age, which is our first and greatest romantic epoch. On the one hand, there was the revolt against the past, whose grasp was too feeble to hold in restraint the lusty youth of the Elizabethan age; on the other, there was a daring and resolute spirit of adventure in literary as well as in other regions; and, most important of all, there was an unmistakable buoyancy and freshness in the strong wind of the spirit. It was the ardent youth of English literature, and the achievement was worthy of it.

4. The Drama. The bold and critical attitude of the time was in keeping with the dramatic instinct, which is analytic and observant. Hence, after the long period of incubation detailed in the last chapter, the drama made a swift and wonderful leap into maturity. Yet it had still many early difficulties to overcome. The actors themselves were at variance, so much so that outrageous brawls were frequent. On more than one occasion between 1590 and 1593 the theaters were closed owing to disturbances caused by the actors. In 1594 the problem was solved by the licensing of two troupes of players, the Lord Chamberlain's (among whom was Shakespeare) and the Lord Admiral's. Another early difficulty the

drama had to face was its fondness for taking part in the quarrels of the time—for example, in the burning "Marprelate" controversy. Owing to this meddling the theaters were closed in 1589. Already, also, a considerable amount of Puritanical opposition was declaring itself. The most important anti-dramatic book of the day was Gosson's virulent *School of Abuse* (1579), to which Sidney replied with his *Apologie for Poetrie* (about 1580).

In spite of such early difficulties, the drama reached the splendid consummation of Shakespeare's art; but before the period closed decline was apparent.

5. Poetry. Though the poetical production was not quite equal to the dramatic, it was nevertheless of great and original beauty. As can be observed from the disputes of the time, the passion for poetry was absorbing, and the outcome of it was equal to expectation.

6. Prose. For the first time prose rises to a position of first-rate importance. The dead weight of the Latin tradition was passing away; English prose was acquiring a tradition and a universal application; and so the rapid development was almost inevitable.

7. Scottish Literature. A curious minor feature of the age was the disappearance of Scottish literature, after its brief but remarkable appearance in the previous age. At this point it took to ground, and did not reappear till late in the eighteenth century.

EDMUND SPENSER (1552–99)

1. His Life. From a passage in one of his sonnets it seems clear that Spenser was born in 1552; and from another passage, in his *Prothalamion*, we can deduce

that he was born in London. His parentage is unknown; but, though Spenser claimed kinship with the noble branch of the Spenser family, it is fairly certain that he was a member of some northern plebeian branch. He was educated at the Merchant Taylors' School (just founded in 1560) and at Cambridge. He left Cambridge in 1576, and for a few years his movements are unknown, though he probably spent the time in the North of England. He comes into view in London during the year 1579 as a member of the famous literary circle surrounding Sir Philip Sidney and his uncle the Earl of Leicester. Sidney patronized Spenser, introducing him to the Queen and encouraging him in his imitation of the classical meters. In 1580 Sidney's patronage bore fruit, for Spenser was appointed secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, who had just been appointed Lord-Deputy of Ireland.

In Ireland Spenser remained for eighteen years, serving the English government in more than one capacity, and seeing his share of the rebellion, outrage, and misery that afflicted the unhappy land. In the end his services were requited by the grant of Kilcolman Castle, near Limerick, and an estate of three thousand acres. In 1589 he visited London to publish the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*. After remaining in London for nearly two years he returned to Ireland; married an Irishwoman (1591); revisited London in 1596, bringing a second instalment of his great work; and once more returned to Kilcolman, which was ultimately burnt down (1598) during one of the sporadic rebellions that tormented the country. One of his children perished in the fire. A ruined and disappointed man, he repaired to London, where in the next year he died, "for lack of bread," according to the statement of Ben

Jonson.

2. His Minor Poems. The first of the poems that have descended to us is *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579). The title, adopted from a popular compilation of the day, suggests the contents: a series of twelve eclogues, one for each month of the year. Each eclogue, as is common with the species, is in dialogue form, in which the stock pastoral characters, such as Cuddie, Colin Clout, and Perigot, take part. The pieces, though they are of no great poetical merit, served as excellent poetical exercises, for they range widely in meter, contain much skillful alliteration, and juggle with the conventional phrases of the pastoral.

A volume of miscellaneous poems, including *The Ruins of Time*, *The Tears of the Muses*, *Mother Hubberd's Tale*, and *The Ruins of Rome*, appeared in 1591; in 1595 he published his *Amoretti*, a series of eighty-eight sonnets celebrating the progress of his love; *Epithalamion*, a magnificent ode, rapturously jubilant, written in honor of his marriage; and *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, somewhat wordy, but containing some interesting personal details. In 1596 appeared his *Four Hymns* and *Prothalamion*, the latter not so fine as the great ode of the previous year.

Spenser's shorter poems illustrate his lyrical ability, which is moderate in quality. His style is too diffuse and ornate to be intensely passionate; but, especially in the odes, he can build up sonorous and commanding measures which by their weight and splendor delight both mind and ear. To a lesser extent, as in *Mother Hubberd's Tale*, the shorter poems afford him scope for his satirical bent, which can be sharp and censorious.

We quote from the *Epithalamion*, which stands at

the summit of English odes:

> Open the temple gates unto my love,
> Open them wide that she may enter in,
> And all the posts adorn as doth behove,
> And all the pillars deck with girlonds trim,
> For to receive this Saint with honour due,
> That cometh unto you.
> With trembling steps, and humble reverence,
> She cometh in, before the Almighty's view;
> Of her, ye virgins, learn obedience,
> When so ye come into these holy places,
> And humble your proud faces.
> Bring her up to the high altar, that she may
> The sacred ceremonies there partake,
> The which do endless matrimony make;
> And let the roaring organs loudly play
> The praises of the Lord in lively notes;
> The whiles, with hollow throats,
> The choristers the joyous anthem sing,
> That all the woods may answer, and their echo
> ring.

3. Prose. In addition to his letters, which are often interesting and informative, Spenser left one longish prose work, a kind of State paper done in the form of a dialogue. Called *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1594), it gives Spenser's views on the settlement of the Irish question. His opinions are exceeding hostile to the Irish, and his methods, if put in force, would amount to pure terrorism. The style of the pamphlet is quite undistinguished.

4. The Faerie Queene. In spite of the variety and beauty of his shorter poems, *The Faerie Queene* is by far the most important of Spenser's works.

(*a*) *Dates of Composition.* The work appeared in instalments. In 1589 Spenser crossed to London and published the first three books; in 1596 the second three followed; and after his death two cantos and two odd stanzas of Book VII appeared. It was

reported that more of the work perished in manuscript during the fire at Kilcolman, but this is not certain.

(*b*) *The Plot.* The construction of the plot is so obscure ("clowdily enwrapped in Allegorical devises," as Spenser himself says) that he was compelled to write a preface, in the form of a letter to his friend Sir Walter Raleigh, explaining the scheme underlying the whole. There were to be twelve books, each book to deal with the adventures of a particular knight, who was to represent some virtue. As we have the poem, the first book deals with the Knight of the Red Cross, representing Holiness; the second with Temperance; the third with Chastity; the fourth with Friendship; and so on. The chief of all the twelve is Prince Arthur, who is to appear at critical moments in the poem, and who in the end is to marry Gloriana, the Queen of "Faerie-londe." The plot is exceedingly leisurely and elaborate; it is crammed with incident and digression; and by the fifth book it is palpably weakening. It is therefore no misfortune (as far as the plot is concerned) that only half of the story is finished.

(*c*) *The Allegory.* With its twelve divisions, each of which bears many smaller branches, the allegory is the most complex in the language. Through the story three strands keep running, twisting and untwisting in a manner both baffling and delightful. (1) There are the usual characters, poorly developed, of the Arthurian and classical romance, such as Arthur, Merlin, Saracens, fauns, and satyrs. (2) There are the allegorized moral and religious virtues, with their counterparts in the vices: Una (Truth), Guyon (Temperance), Duessa (Deceit), Orgoglio (Pride).

(3) Lastly, there is the strongly Elizabethan political-historical-religious element, also strongly allegorized. For example, Gloriana is Elizabeth, Duessa may be Mary, Queen of Scots, Archimago may be the Pope, and Artegal (Justice) is said to be Lord Grey. Sometimes the allegory winds and multiplies in a bewildering fashion. Elizabeth, who is grossly and shamelessly flattered in the poem, is sometimes Gloriana, sometimes Belphœbe, or Britomart, or Mercilla. It is very ingenious, but it retards the story.

(*d*) *The Style.* No one, however, goes to Spenser for a story; one goes to steep the senses in the rich and voluptuous style. The style has its weaknesses: it is diffuse, and lacks judgment; it is weak in "bite" and in sharpness of attack; and it is misty and unsubstantial. But for beauty long and richly wrought, for subtle and sustained melody, for graphic word-pictures, and for depth and magical color of atmosphere the poem stands supreme in English. Its imitators, good and bad, are legion. Milton, Keats, and Tennyson are among the best of them, and its influence is still powerful.

(*e*) *The Technique.* To the formal part of the poem Spenser devoted the intelligence and care of the great artist. (1) First of all, he elaborated an archaic diction: "he writ no language," said Ben Jonson, who did not like the diction. When the occasion demanded it he invented words or word-forms; for example, he uses *blend* for *blind*, *kest* for *cast*, and *vilde* for *vile*. The result is not perhaps ideal, but on the whole it suits the old-world atmosphere of the poem. (2) He introduced the Spenserian stanza, which ever since has been one of the most important measures in the language. Longer than the usual

stanza, but shorter than the sonnet, as a unit it is just long enough to give an easy pace to the slowly pacing narrative. The complicated rhymes of the stanza suit the interwoven harmonies of the style; and the long line at the end acts either as a dignified conclusion or as a longer and stronger link with the succeeding stanza. (3) The alliteration, vowel-music, and cadence are cunningly fashioned, adroitly developed, and sumptuously appropriate. In these last respects Spenser is almost peerless.

We add two brief extracts to illustrate some features of the style. The reader should analyze the stanza and observe the graphical power and the melodic beauty.

(1) And more to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rock tumbling downe,
And ever-drizling raine upon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne.
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
As still are wont t'annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard; but carelesse Quiet lyes
Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimyes.

(2) At last he came unto a gloomy shade,
Covered with boughes and shrubs from heavens light,
Whereas he sitting found in secret shade
An uncouth, salvage, and uncivile wight,[91]
Of griesly hew and foule ill favour'd sight;
His face with smoke was tand and eies were bleard,
His head and beard with sout were ill bedight,
His cole-blacke hands did seeme to have ben seard
In smythes fire-spitting forge, and nayles like clawes appeard.

His yron cote, all overgrowne with rust,
Was underneath enveloped with gold;
Whose glistring glosse, darkened with filthy dust,
Well yet appeared to have beene of old

A worke of rich entayle[92] and curious mould,
Woven with antickes and wyld ymagery;
And in his lap a masse of coyne he told,
And turned upside downe, to feede his eye
And covetous desire with his huge threasury.

And round about him lay on every side
Great heapes of gold that never could be spent;
Of which some were rude owre,[93] not purifide
Of Mulcibers devouring element;
Some others were new driven, and distent[94]
Into great Ingowes[95] and to wedges square;
Some in round plates withouten moniment;
But most were stampt, and in their metal bare
The antique shapes of kings and kesars straunge and rare.

OTHER POETS

1. Sir Thomas Wyat (1503–42) was descended from an ancient Yorkshire family which adopted the Lancastrian side in the Wars of the Roses. He was educated at Cambridge, and, entering the King's service, was entrusted with many important diplomatic missions. In public life his principal patron was Thomas Cromwell, after whose death he was recalled from abroad and imprisoned (1541). Though subsequently acquitted and released, he died shortly afterward.

None of Wyat's poems is very long, though in number they are considerable. The most numerous of them are his love-poems, ninety-six in all, which appeared in a compendium of the day called *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557). The most noteworthy of these poems are the sonnets, the first of their kind in English, thirty-one in number. Of these, ten are written almost entirely in the Italian or Petrarchan form. In sentiment the shorter poems, and especially the sonnets, are serious and reflective; in style and construction they are often too closely imitative to be

natural and genial; but as indications of the new scholastic and literary influences at work upon English, sweetening and chastening the earlier uncouthness, they are of the highest importance. Wyat's epigrams, songs, and rondeaux are lighter than the sonnets, and they also reveal a care and elegance that were typical of the new romanticism. His *Satires* are composed in the Italian *terza rima*, once again showing the direction of the innovating tendencies.

2. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1518–47), whose name is usually associated in literature with that of Wyat, was the younger poet of the two. He was the son of Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, and when his father became Duke of Norfolk (1524) the son adopted the courtesy title of Earl of Surrey. Owing largely to the powerful position of his father, Surrey took a prominent part in the Court life of the time, and served as a soldier both in France and Scotland. He was a man of reckless temper, which involved him in many quarrels, and finally brought upon him the wrath of the ageing and embittered Henry VIII. He was arrested, tried for treason, and beheaded on Tower Hill.

About 1542 Surrey began his literary relations with Wyat, who was his elder by fifteen years. His poems, which were the recreations of his few leisure moments, and which were not published till after his death (1557), appeared along with Wyat's in *Tottel's Miscellany*. They are chiefly lyrical, and include a few sonnets, the first of their kind, composed in the English or Shakespearian mode—an arrangement of three quatrains followed by a couplet. There are in addition a large number of love-poems addressed to a mysterious "Geraldine." They are smoother than

Wyat's poems, and are much more poetical in sentiment and expression. His most important poem was published separately: *Certain Bokes of Virgiles Æneis turned into English Meter* (1557). Though the actual translation is of no outstanding merit, the form is of great significance; it is done in blank verse, rather rough and frigid, but the earliest forerunner of the great achievements of Shakespeare and Milton.

In the development of English verse Surrey represents a further stage: a higher poetical faculty, increased ease and refinement, and the introduction of two metrical forms of capital importance—the English form of the sonnet, and blank verse. We add a specimen of the earliest English blank verse. It is wooden and uninspired, but as a beginning it is worthy of attention.

> But now the wounded quene with heavie care
> Throwgh out the vaines doth nourishe ay the plage,
> Surprised with blind flame, and to her minde
> Gan to resort the prowes of the man
> And honor of his race, whiles on her brest
> Imprinted stake his wordes and forme of face,
> Ne to her lymmes care graunteth quiet rest.
> The next morowe with Phœbus lampe the erthe
> Alightned clere, and eke the dawninge daye
> The shadowe danke gan from the pole remove.

3. Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1536–1608), was born at Buckhurst, in Sussex, and was educated both at Oxford and Cambridge. He was called to the Bar, entered Parliament, took part in many diplomatic and public missions, and was created Lord Buckhurst in 1566. His plain speaking did not recommend itself to Elizabeth, and for a time he was in disgrace. He was restored to favor, created Lord High Treasurer, and made Earl of Dorset in

1604.

In bulk Sackville's poetry does not amount to much, but in merit it is of much consequence. Two poems, *The Induction* and *The Complaint of Henry, Duke of Buckingham*, appeared in a miscellany called *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1555). Both are composed in the rhyme royal stanza, are melancholy and elegiac in spirit and archaic in language, but have a severe nobility of thought and a grandeur of conception and of language quite unknown since the days of Chaucer. The poems undoubtedly assisted Spenser in the composition of *The Faerie Queene*.

Sackville collaborated with Norton in the early tragedy of *Gorboduc* (see p. 77).

We add a few stanzas from *The Induction* to illustrate the somber graphical power of the poem:

> And, next in order, sad Old Age we found,
> His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind,
> With drooping cheer still poring on the ground,
> As on the place where nature him assigned
> To rest, when that the Sisters had untwined
> His vital thread, and ended with their knife
> The fleeting course of fast-declining life.
>
> There heard we him, with broke and hollow plaint,
> Rue with himself his end approaching fast,
> And all for nought his wretched mind torment
> With sweet remembrance of his pleasures past,
> And fresh delights of lusty youth forwaste;[96]
> Recounting which, how would he sob and shriek,
> And to be young again of Jove beseek!
>
> *****
>
> Crook-backed he was, tooth-shaken, and bleareyed,
> Went on three feet, and sometime crept on four;
> With old lame bones, that rattled by his side;
> His scalp all piled,[97] and he with eld forelore;
> His withered fist still knocking at Death's door;

Fumbling and drivelling as he draws his breath;
For brief, the shape and messenger of Death.

4. George Gascoigne (1535–77) is another of the founders of the great Elizabethan tradition. He was born in Bedfordshire, educated at Cambridge, and became a lawyer. Later in life he entered Parliament.

In addition to a large number of elegant lyrics, he composed one of the first regular satires in the language, *The Steel Glass* (1576). This poem has the additional importance of being written in blank verse. Among his other numerous works we can mention his tragedy *Jocasta* (1566), a landmark in the growth of the drama (see p. 77); his *Supposes* (1566), an important early comedy which was the basis of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*; and *Certayne Notes of Instruction concerning the Making of Verse in English* (1575), one of our earliest critical essays. In ease and versatility Gascoigne is typical of the best early Elizabethan miscellaneous writers.

5. Sir Philip Sidney (1554–86) was the chief of an elegant literary coterie, and exercised an influence which was almost supreme during his short life. He was the most commanding literary figure before the prime of Spenser and Shakespeare. Born in Kent of an aristocratic family, he was educated at Shrewsbury and Oxford, and then traveled widely. He took a brilliant part in the military-literary-courtly life common with the young nobles of the time, and at the early age of thirty-two was mortally wounded at Zutphen when assisting the Dutch against the Spaniards.

Sidney was successful in more than one branch of literature, but he owes his position chiefly to his collection of sonnets called *Astrophel and Stella*. Though they are strongly imitative of Italian

sentiment, and are immature in thought and in general ideas, they are often remarkable for their flashes of real passion and their genuine poetical style. In metrical form they adopt the English scheme, and thus in another respect they foreshadow the great Shakespearian sonnets, to which alone they take second place.

6. Michael Drayton (1563–1631) represents the later epoch of Elizabethan literature. He was born in Warwickshire, studied at Oxford, was attached to a noble family as tutor, came to London about 1590, and for the remainder of his long life was busy in the production of his many poems.

His first book was a collection of religious poems called *The Harmony of the Church* (1591); then followed a number of long historical poems, which include *England's Heroical Epistles* and *The Barons' Wars* (1603). His *Polyolbion* is the most important of his longer poems, and belongs to a later period of his career. It is a long, careful, and tedious description of the geographical features of England, interspersed with tales, and written in alexandrines. His shorter poems, such as his well-known poem on Agincourt, and his verse tales and pastorals, such as *The Man in the Moon* and *Nymphidia*, are skillful and attractive. Drayton is rarely an inspired poet—the wonderful sonnet beginning "Since there's no help" (see p. 152) is perhaps his only poem in which we feel inspiration flowing freely—but he is painstaking, versatile, and sometimes (as in *Nymphidia*) delightful.

7. Thomas Campion (1567–1620) was born in London, educated at Cambridge, studied law in Gray's Inn, but ultimately became a physician (1606). He wrote some masques that had much popularity, but his chief claim to fame lies in his

attractive lyrics, most of which have been set to music composed partly by the poet himself. His best-known collections of songs were *A Booke of Ayres* (1601), *Songs of Mourning* (1613), and *Two Bookes of Ayres* (1613). Campion had not the highest lyrical genius, but he had an ear skillful in adapting words to tunes, the knack of sweet phrasing, and a mastery of complicated meters. He is one of the best examples of the accomplished poet who, lacking the highest inspiration of poetry, excels in the lower technical features.

The lyric of Campion's that we add is typical not only of his own grace and melody, but also of the later Elizabethan lyrics as a whole. The ideas, in themselves somewhat forced and fantastic, are expressed with great felicity.

There is a garden in her face,
  Where roses and white lilies blow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
  Wherein all pleasant fruits do grow;
There cherries grow that none may buy,
Till "Cherry-ripe" themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
  Of orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
  They look like rose-buds fill'd with snow:
Yet them no peer nor prince may buy
Till "Cherry-ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
  Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threat'ning with piercing frowns to kill
  All that attempt with eye or hand
These sacred cherries to come nigh,
Till "Cherry-ripe" themselves do cry.

8. Phineas Fletcher (1582–1650) and **Giles Fletcher (1588–1623)** are usually associated in the history of literature. They were brothers, were both

educated at Cambridge, and both took holy orders. Both were poetical disciples of Spenser.

Phineas Fletcher's chief poem is *The Purple Island, or The Isle of Man* (1633), a curious work in twelve cantos describing the human body in an allegorical-descriptive fashion. There is much digression, which gives the poet some scope for real poetical passages. In its plan the poem is cumbrous and artificial, but it contains many descriptions in the Spenserian manner. The stanza is a further modification of the Spenserian, which it resembles except for its omission of the fifth and seventh lines.

Giles's best-known poem is *Christ's Victorie and Triumph* (1610), an epical poem in four cantos. The title of the poem sufficiently suggests its subject; in style it is glowingly descriptive, imaginative, and is markedly ornate and melodious in diction. It is said partly to have inspired Milton's *Paradise Regained*. The style is strongly suggestive of Spenser's, and the stanza conveys the same impression, for it is the Spenserian stanza lacking the seventh line.

The Fletchers are imitators, but imitators of high quality. They lack the positive genius of their model Spenser, but they have intensity, color, melody, and great metrical artistry.

9. John Donne (1573–1631) was born in London, the son of a wealthy merchant. He was educated at Oxford, and then studied law. Though he entered the public service and served with some distinction, his bent was always theological, and in 1616 he was ordained. In 1621 he was appointed Dean of St. Paul's.

Donne's poetical works are probably more important than those composed in prose, valuable

though the latter are. He began poetical composition with *Satires* (1593), forcible and picturesque, though crabbed and obscure in language. His other poems include *The Progress of the Soul*, his longest poem, composed about 1600; *An Anatomy of the World* (1611), a wild, exaggerated eulogy of a friend's daughter, who had just died; and a large number of miscellaneous poems, including songs, sonnets, elegies, and letters in verse.

In his nature Donne had a strain of actual genius, but his natural gifts were so obscured with fitful, wayward, and exaggerated mannerisms that for long he was gravely underrated. His miscellaneous poems show his poetical features at their best: a solemn, half-mystical, half-fanatical religious zeal; a style of somber grandeur, shot with piercing gleams of poetical imagery; and an almost unearthly music of word and phrase. Often, and especially in the *Satires*, he is rough and obscure; in thought and expression he is frequently fantastic and almost ludicrous; but at his best, when his stubborn, melancholy humor is fired with his emotional frenzy, he is almost alone in his curious compound of gloom and brilliance, of ice and consuming fire. He is the last of the Elizabethans, and among the first of the coming race of the "Metaphysicals."

His prose works comprise a large number of sermons, a few theological treatises, of which the greatest is *The Pseudo-Martyr* (1609), and a small number of personal letters. In its peculiar manner his prose is a reflex of his poetry. There is the same soaring and exaggerated imagery, the same fierce pessimism, and often the same obscurity and roughness. In prose his sentences are long and shapeless, but the cadence is rapid and free, and so is

suited to the purposes of the sermon.

As a brief specimen of his poetical mannerisms, good and bad, we add the following sonnet. The reader will observe the rugged grandeur of the style and the curious intellectual twist that he gives to the general idea of the poem.

> Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
> Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
> For those, whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,
> Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
> From rest and sleep, which but thy picture be,
> Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow:
> And soonest our best men with thee do go,
> Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
> Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
> And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
> And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
> And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
> One short sleep past, we wake eternally;
> And death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die.
>
> *Holy Sonnetts*

10. Samuel Daniel (1562–1619) was born near Taunton in Somerset, educated at Oxford, and became tutor to the son of the Countess of Pembroke. For a time (1599) he was Poet Laureate, and was made (1603) Master of the Queen's Revels by James I.

His poems include a sonnet-series called *Delia* (1592), a romance called *The Complaint of Rosamund* (1592), some long historical poems, such as *The Civil Wars* (1595), and a large number of masques, of which *The Queenes Wake* (1610) and *Hymen's Triumph* (1615) are the most important. His best work appears in his sonnets, which, composed in the English manner, carry on the great tradition of

Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare. In his longer poems he is prosy and dull, though the masques have pleasing touches of imagination.

11. The **poetical miscellanies** which abound during this period are typical of the time. By the very extravagance of their titles they reveal the enthusiasm felt for the revival of English poetry. Each volume consists of a collection of short pieces by various poets, some well known and others unknown. Some of the best poems are anonymous. Among much that is almost worthless, there are happily preserved many poems, sometimes by unknown poets, of great and enduring beauty. We have already drawn attention (p. 96) to *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557), which contained, among other poems, the pieces of Wyat and Surrey. Other volumes are *The Paradyse of Daynty Devises* (1576), *A Handfull of Pleasant Delites* (1584), *The Phœnix Nest* (1593), and *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599). The last book contains poems by Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Ralegh. The most important of the miscellanies is *England's Helicon* (1600), which surpasses all others for fullness, variety, and excellence of contents.

PRE-SHAKESPEARIAN DRAMA: THE UNIVERSITY WITS

In the last chapter we gave a summary of the rise of the English drama; it is now necessary to give an account of the early Elizabethan playwrights.

The name "University Wits" is usually applied to a group of young men, nearly all of whom were associated with Oxford or Cambridge, who did much to found the Elizabethan school of drama. They were all more or less acquainted with each other, and most of them led irregular and stormy lives. Their plays had several features in common. These features

were of a nature almost inevitable in strong and immature productions.

(*a*) There was a fondness for heroic themes, such as the lives of great figures like Mohammed and Tamburlaine.

(*b*) Heroic themes needed heroic treatment: great fullness and variety; splendid descriptions, long swelling speeches, the handling of violent incidents and emotions. These qualities, excellent when held in restraint, only too often led to loudness and disorder.

(*c*) The style also was "heroic." The chief aim was to achieve strong and sounding lines, magnificent epithets, and powerful declamation. This again led to abuse and to mere bombast, mouthing, and in the worst cases to nonsense. In the best examples, such as in Marlowe, the result is quite impressive. In this connection it is to be noted that the best medium for such expression was blank verse, which was sufficiently elastic to bear the strong pressure of these expansive methods.

(*d*) The themes were usually tragic in nature, for the dramatists were as a rule too much in earnest to give heed to what was considered to be the lower species of comedy. The general lack of real humor in the early drama is one of its most prominent features. Humor, when it is brought in at all, is coarse and immature. Almost the only representative of the writers of real comedies is Lyly, who in such plays as *Alexander and Campaspe* (1584), *Endymion* (1592), and *The Woman in the Moon* gives us the first examples of romantic comedy.

1. George Peele (1558–98) was born in London, educated at Christ's Hospital and at Oxford, and became a literary hack and free-lance in London. His

plays include *The Araygnement of Paris* (1581), a kind of romantic comedy; *The Famous Chronicle of King Edward the First* (1593), a rambling chronicle-play; *The Old Wives' Tale* (1595), a clever satire on the popular drama of the day; and *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe* (published 1599). Peele's style can be violent to the point of absurdity; but he has his moments of real poetry; he can handle his blank verse with more ease and variety than was common at the time; he is fluent; he has humor and a fair amount of pathos. In short, he represents a great advance upon the earliest drama, and is perhaps the most attractive among the playwrights of the time.

We give a short example to illustrate the poetical quality of his blank verse:

David. Now comes my lover tripping like the roe,
And brings my longings tangled in her hair.
To 'joy her love I'll build a kingly bower,
Seated in hearing of a hundred streams,
That, for their homage to her sovereign joys,
Shall, as the serpents fold into their nests,
In oblique turnings wind the nimble waves
About the circles of her curious walks,
And with their murmur summon easeful sleep
To lay his golden sceptre on her brows.
The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe

2. Robert Greene (1560–92) wrote much and recklessly, but his plays are of sufficient merit to find a place in the development of the drama. He was born at Norwich, educated at Cambridge (1575) and at Oxford (1588), and then took to a literary life in London. If all accounts, including his own, are true, his career in London must have taken place in a sink of debauchery. He is said to have died, after an orgy in a London ale-house, "of a surfeit of pickle herringe and Rennish wine."

Here we can refer only to his thirty-five prose

tracts, which are probably the best of his literary work, for they reveal his intense though erratic energy, his quick, malicious wit, and his powerful imagination. His plays number four: *Alphonsus, King of Arragon* (1587), an imitation of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*; *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1589), easily his best, and containing some fine representations of Elizabethan life; *Orlando Furioso* (1586), adapted from an English translation of Ariosto; and *The Scottish Historie of James the Fourth* (acted in 1592), not a "historical" play, but founded on an imaginary incident in the life of the King. Greene is weak in creating characters, and his style is not of outstanding merit; but his humor is somewhat genial in his plays, and his methods less austere than those of the other tragedians.

3. Thomas Nash (1567–1601) was born at Lowestoft, educated at Cambridge, and then (1586) went to London to make his living by literature. He was a born journalist, but in those days the only scope for his talents lay in pamphleteering. He took an active part in the political and personal questions of the day, and his truculent methods actually landed him in jail (1600). He finished Marlowe's *Dido*, but his only surviving play is *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592), a satirical masque. His *Jack Wilton, or The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), a prose tale, is important in the development of the novel (see p. 336).

4. Thomas Lodge (1558–1625) was the son of a Lord Mayor of London, was educated in London and at Oxford, and studied law. He deserted his legal studies, took to a literary career, and is said to have been an actor at one time.

His dramatic work is small in quantity. He

probably collaborated with Shakespeare in *Henry VI*, and with other dramatists, including Greene. The only surviving play entirely his own is *The Woundes of Civile War*, a kind of chronicle-play. His pamphleteering was voluminous and energetic; and he imitated the euphuistic tales of Lyly.

5. Thomas Kyd (1558–94) is one of the most important of the University Wits. Very little is known of his life. He was born in London, educated (probably) at Merchant Taylors' School, adopted a literary career, and became secretary to a nobleman. He became acquainted with Marlowe, and that brilliant but sinister spirit enticed him into composing "lewd libels" and "blasphemies." Marlowe's sudden death saved him from punishment for such offenses; but Kyd was imprisoned and tortured. Though he was afterward released, Kyd soon died under the weight of "bitter times and privy broken passions."

Much of this dramatist's work has been lost. Of the surviving plays *The Spanish Tragedy* (about 1585) is the most important. Its horrific plot, involving murder, frenzy, and sudden death, gave the play a great and lasting popularity. There is a largeness of tragical conception about the play that resembles the work of Marlowe, and there are touches of style that dimly foreshadow the great tragical lines of Shakespeare. Other plays of Kyd's are *Soliman and Perseda* (1588), *Jeronimo* (1592), a kind of prologue to *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *Cornelia* (1594), a tedious translation from the French.

6. Christopher Marlowe (1564–93) is symbolical both of the best and the worst of his boisterous times. The eldest son of a shoemaker, he was born at Canterbury, and educated there and at Cambridge.

Like so many more of that day, he adopted literature as a profession, and became attached to the Lord Admiral's players. Marlowe's great mental powers had in them a twist of perversity, and they led him into many questionable actions and beliefs. He became almost the pattern of the evil ways of his tribe. Charges of atheism and immorality were laid against him, and only his sudden death saved him from the experiences of his friend Kyd. Marlowe is said to have met his death in a tavern brawl, "stabbed to death by a bawdy servingman, a rival of his in his lewde love." In fairness to the memory of Marlowe it must be remembered that these charges were made against him by the Puritanical opponents of the stage.

With Marlowe's tragedies we at length come within measureable distance of Shakespeare. The gulf between the work of the two men is still very great. In Marlowe there is none of that benign humanity that clings to even the grimmest of Shakespeare's tragedies. Marlowe's characters are bleak in nature and massive in outline; enormous and majestical, but forbidding and almost inhuman. His style has the same qualities: glowing with a volcanic energy, capable of a mighty soaring line and phrase ("Marlowe's mighty line," as Ben Jonson called it), but diffuse, truculent, exaggerated, and bombastic. It is a lopsided style lacking the more amiable qualities of humor, flexibility, sweetness, and brevity.

His four great plays, all written within a few years, are *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587), *Doctor Faustus* (1588), *The Jew of Malta* (1589), and *Edward II* (1593). All four, in their march of horrors and splendors, are not unlike one another. The last has a

conclusion which for pity and terror ranks among the great achievements of Elizabethan tragedy. The plays, moreover, show a progressing dexterity in the handling of blank verse. Marlowe's life was pitiably short. If he had lived there might have been another triumph to chronicle.

He also collaborated with Nash in the tragedy of *Dido* (1593), and left uncompleted a poor fragment of a play called *The Massacre at Paris*.

We give a brief extract to show the "mighty line." In the passage Tamburlaine, "the Scourge of God," mentally reviews his past conquests.

> And I have marched along the river Nile
> To Machda where the mighty Christian priest,
> Called John the Great, sits in a milk-white robe,
> Whose triple mitre I did take by force,
> And made him swear obedience to my crown,
> From thence unto Cazates did I march,
> Where Amazonians met me in the field,
> With whom, being women, I vouchsafed a league,
> And with my power did march to Zanzibar,
> The eastern part of Afric, where I viewed
> The Ethiopian sea, rivers and lakes,
> But neither man nor child in all the land;
> Therefore I took my course to Manico,
> Where unresisted, I removed my camp,
> And by the coast of Byather, at last
> I came to Cubar, where the negroes dwell,
> And conquering that, made haste to Nubia.
> There having sacked Borno, the kingly seat,
> I took the king, and led him bound in chains
> Unto Damasco, where I stayed before.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

1. His Life. In considering the life of Shakespeare we have at our disposal a fair number of facts; but on these facts the industry of commentators has constructed an additional mass of great magnitude and complexity. It is therefore the duty of the historian with only a limited space at his disposal to

keep his eye steadily upon the established facts and, without being superior or disdainful, to turn toward speculation or surmise, however ingenious or laborious, a face of tempered but obdurate skepticism.

The future dramatist, as we learn from the church records, was baptized in the parish church at Stratford-on-Avon on April 26, 1564. He may have been born on April 23, St. George's Day, which happens also to be the date of his death in 1616. His father, John Shakespeare, was a burgess of the town, and seems to have followed the occupations of a butcher, a glover, and a farmer. The boy may have attended the grammar school of the town, though Ben Jonson, himself a competent scholar, affirmed that Shakespeare knew "small Latin and less Greek." From various entries in the town records it is clear that John Shakespeare, after flourishing for a time, fell on evil days, and the son may have assisted in the paternal butcher's shop. A bond dated November 28, 1582, affords clear evidence of Shakespeare's marriage on that date to a certain "Anne Hatthwey of Stratford." As at this time Shakespeare was only eighteen, and (as appears from the inscription on her monument) the bride was eight years older, speculation has busied itself over the somewhat ill-assorted match.

In 1584 Shakespeare left his native town. Why he did so is not known. The most popular explanation, which appeared after his death, is that he was convicted of poaching on the estate of a local magnate, Sir Thomas Lucy, and that he fled to escape the consequences. Then, until 1592, when he reappears as a rising actor, Shakespeare disappears from view. During this period he is said to have

wandered through the country, finally coming to London, where he performed various menial offices, including that of holding horses at the stage-door. On the face of them such tales are not improbable, but they grew up when the dramatist had become a half-mythical figure.

In 1592 Robert Greene, in a carping book called *A Groatsworth of Wit*, mentions "an upstart crow ... in his own conceit the only Shakescene in a country."[98] This reference, most probably a gibe at Shakespeare, shows that he is now important enough to merit abuse. In 1595 his name appears on the payroll of the Lord Chamberlain's company of actors, who performed at the Court. This company, one of the most important in the town, also played in the provinces, especially during the plague of 1603, in the Shoreditch Theatre till it was demolished in 1598, in the Globe Theatre, and finally (after 1608) in the Blackfriars. During this period, as can be inferred from his purchases of property both in London and Stratford, Shakespeare was prospering in worldly affairs. He was a competent but not a great actor; tradition asserts that his chief parts were of the type of Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet*. His chief function was to write dramas for his company, and the fruit of such labor was his plays.

About 1610 Shakespeare left London for Stratford, where he stayed at New Place, a house that he had bought. He may have written his last plays there; but it is likely that his connection with his company of actors ceased when the Globe Theatre was burned down during a performance of *Henry VIII* in 1613. His will, a hurriedly executed document, is dated March 25, 1616. His death occurred a month later,

April 23.

2. His Poems. Shakespeare's two long narrative poems were among the earliest of his writings. *Venus and Adonis* (1593), composed in six-line stanzas, showed decided signs of immaturity. Its subject was in accordance with popular taste; its descriptions were heavily ornamented and conventional; but it contained individual lines and expressions of great beauty. Already the hand of Shakespeare was apparent. *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), in rhyme royal stanzas, is of less merit. As was common in the poetry of that day, the action was retarded with long speeches, but there were Shakespearian touches all through. In 1599 a collection of verse called *The Passionate Pilgrim* appeared with Shakespeare's name on the title-page. Of the constituent poems only one, taking its name from the title of the book, has been decidedly fixed as Shakespeare's. It consists of some sonnets of unequal merit.

In 1609 a collection of Shakespeare's sonnets was printed by Thomas Thorpe, who dedicated the volume to a certain "Mr. W. H." as being "the onlie begetter" of the sonnets. Speculation has exhausted itself regarding the identity of "Mr. W. H." The most probable explanation is that he was William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. The sonnets themselves consist of 154 numbers, which are all composed in the English form of the sonnet, that of three quatrains clenched with a couplet. The entire collection falls into two groups of unequal size, divided, at number cxxvi, by a poem of six couplets. The first group consists largely of a series of cryptic references, often passionately expressed, to his friendship with a youth, apparently of high rank, who may be, and probably is, the mysterious "Mr. W. H." The second

group, also obscurely phrased, is taken up with reproaches addressed to his mistress, “a black beauty,” whose hair is like “black wires.” The identity of this “Dark Lady of the Sonnets” is one of the romances of our literature. She may be, as is often asserted, Mary Fitton, who happened to be fair; but she probably did not exist at all. Among the numerous sonneteers of the time it was a common trick to apostrophize a lovely and fickle mistress, as a rule quite imaginary, and it may be that Shakespeare was following the custom of the period.

Concerning the literary quality of the sonnets there can be no dispute. In the depth, breadth, and persistency of their passion, in their lordly but never overweening splendor of style, and, above all, in their mastery of a rich and sensuous phraseology, they are unique. Byron once remarked that the tissue of poetry cannot be all brilliance, any more than the midnight sky can be entirely stars; but several of the sonnets (for example, xxx, xxxiii, lv, lxxi, cxvi) are thick clusters of starlight; and all through the series the frequency of lovely phrasing is great indeed. We quote one sonnet that is nearly perfect; the second that we give, after a splendid opening, deteriorates toward the conclusion.

(1) Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is a star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth’s unknown, although his height be taken.
Love’s not Time’s fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle’s compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,

I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Sonnet cxvi

(2) When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rime,
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they looked but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

Sonnet cvi

Shakespeare's later poetical work is worthily represented in the numerous lyrics that are scattered through the plays. It is not quite certain how much of the songs is original; it is almost certain that Shakespeare, like Burns, used popular songs as the basis of many of his lyrics. As they stand, however, the lyrics show a great range of accomplishment, most of it of the highest quality. It varies from the nonsense-verses in *Hamlet* and *King Lear* to the graceful perfection of Ariel's "Full fathom five"; from the homely rusticity of "It was a lover and his lass" to the scholarly ease and wry humor of "O mistress mine"; it includes such gems as the willow-song in *Othello*, "Take, O take those lips away," in *Measure for Measure*, and the noble dirge, "Fear no more the heat o' the sun," in *Cymbeline*. If Shakespeare had not been our greatest dramatist, he would have taken a place among our greatest lyrical poets.

3. His Plays. Concerning the plays that are usually accepted as being Shakespeare's, almost endless discussion has arisen. In the following pages we shall indicate the main lines of Shakesperian

criticism.

(*a*) THE ORDER OF THE PLAYS. All the manuscripts of the plays have perished; Shakespeare himself printed none of the texts; and though eighteen of them appeared singly in quarto form during his lifetime, they were all unauthorized editions. It was not till 1623, seven years after his death, that the First Folio edition was printed. It contained thirty-six dramas (*Pericles* was omitted), and these are now universally accepted as Shakespeare's. In the Folio edition the plays are not arranged chronologically, nor are the dates of composition given. The dates of the separate Quartos are registered at Stationers' Hall, but these are the dates of the printing. With such scanty evidence to hand to assign the order of the plays, a task fundamental to all discussion of the dramas, much ingenious deductive work has been necessary. The evidence can be divided into three groups.

(1) *Contemporary References.* With one important exception, such are of little value. The exception occurs in a book by Francis Meres (1565–1647), an Elizabethan schoolmaster. In *Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury* (1598) he gives a list of contemporary authors, among whom is Shakespeare. Meres mentions twelve of Shakespeare's plays, along with "his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, and his sugred sonnets among his private friends." This valuable reference supplies us with a list of plays which were written before 1598.

(2) *Internal References.* In the course of the plays there occur passages, more or less obscure, that can be traced to contemporary events. Such are the references to "the imperial votaress" (perhaps Elizabeth) in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to "the

two-fold balls and treble sceptres" (perhaps the Union of 1603) in *Macbeth*, and to a famous eclipse of the moon in the *Sonnets*. Owing to the invariable obscurity of the passages, this class of evidence should be used cautiously, but unfortunately it has been made the basis of much wild theorizing.

(3) *The Literary Evidence.* Soberly examined, and taken strictly in conjunction with the statement of Meres and the dates of the Quartos (when these are available), this type of evidence is by far the most reliable. We can examine the workmanship of the plays, paying attention to the construction of the plots, the force and originality of the characters, the standard of style, the metrical dexterity—in short, the general level of competence. In a general survey of the dramas no great skill is necessary on the part of the reader to observe a distinct variation in craftsmanship. By grading the plays according to their literary development a certain rough approximation of date can be deduced.

(*b*) THE DATES OF THE PLAYS. The following table, which to a large extent is the outcome of generations of discussion and contention, represents a moderate or average estimate of the dates of the plays. It can be only an approximate estimate, for no exact decision can ever be possible.

1590

1 *Henry VI*

1591–2

2 *Henry VI*
3 *Henry VI*

1593

Richard III
Edward III (in part)
The Comedy of Errors

1594

Titus Andronicus
The Taming of the Shrew
Love's Labour's Lost
Romeo and Juliet

1595

A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
King John

1596

Richard II
The Merchant of Venice

1597

1 *Henry IV*

1598

2 *Henry IV*
Much Ado about Nothing

1599

Henry V
Julius Cæsar

1600

The Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It

1601

Hamlet
Twelfth Night

1602

Troilus and Cressida
All's Well that Ends Well

1603

(Theaters closed)

1604

Measure for Measure
Othello

1605

Macbeth
King Lear

1606

Antony and Cleopatra
Coriolanus

1607

Timon of Athens (unfinished)

1608

Pericles (in part)

1609

Cymbeline

1610

The Winter's Tale

1611

The Tempest

1613

The Two Noble Kinsmen (in part)
Henry VIII (in part)

(*c*) CLASSIFICATION OF THE PLAYS. It is customary to group the plays into sets that to some extent traverse the order given above.

(1) *The Early Comedies.* In these plays there is a certain amount of immaturity: the plots show less originality; the characters are less finished; the power of the style is less sustained; the humor is often puerile and quibbling; and there is a large amount of prose. Of this type are *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

(2) *The Histories.* These show an advance, particularly in style. There is more blank verse, which, though it is often stiffly imitative of the older playwrights, abounds in splendid passages. The appearance of such characters as Falstaff in *Henry IV* and other plays is a sign of growing strength.

(3) *The Tragedies.* The great tragedies, such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*, are the climax of Shakespearian art. They reveal the best of his characterization and the full power of his style.

(4) *The Later Comedies.* A mellowed maturity is the chief feature of this group, which contains *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. The creative touch of the dramatist, making living men out of figment, is abundantly in view; the style is notable and serenely adequate; and with the ease of the master the author thoroughly subdues the meter to his will. No more fitting conclusion—rich, ample, and graciously dignified—could be found to round off the work of our greatest literary genius.

4. His Prose. Shakespeare's prose appears all through the plays, sometimes in passages of considerable length. In the aggregate the amount is

quite large. In the earlier comedies the amount is considerable, but the proportion is apt to diminish in the later plays. With regard to the prose, the following points should be observed: (*a*) it is the common vehicle for comic scenes, though used too in serious passages (one of which is given below); (*b*) it represents the common speech of the period, and some of it, as can be seen in *Hamlet*, is pithy and bracing. Even the rather stupid clowning that often takes place cannot altogether conceal its beauty.

We quote a passage from *Hamlet*. The style is quite modern in phrase, and the beauty and grace of it are far beyond the ordinary standard of Shakespeare's literary contemporaries.

> I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, in moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?
>
> *Hamlet*

5. Features of his Plays. The extent, variety, and richness of the plays are quite bewildering as one approaches them. All that can be done here is to set down in order some of the more obvious of their qualities.

(*a*) *Their Originality.* In the narrowest sense of the

term, Shakespeare took no trouble to be original. Following the custom of the time, he borrowed freely from older plays (such as *King Leir*), chronicles (such as Holinshed's), and tales (such as *The Jew*, the part-origin of *The Merchant of Venice*). To these he is indebted chiefly for his plots; but in his more mature work the interest in the plot becomes subordinate to the development of character, the highest achievement of the dramatist's art. He can work his originals deftly: he can interweave plot within plot, as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; he can solidify years of history into five acts, as in *King John* and *Antony and Cleopatra*; and, as in *Macbeth*, he makes the dust of history glow with the spirit of his imagination.

(*b*) *Characters.* (1) In sheer *prodigality of output* Shakespeare is unrivaled in literature. From king to clown, from lunatic and demi-devil to saint and seer, from lover to misanthrope—all are revealed with the hand of the master. Surveying this multitude, one can only cry out, as Hamlet does, "What a piece of work is man!"

(2) Another feature of Shakespeare's characterization is his attitude of *impartiality*. He seems indifferent to good and evil; he has the eye of the creator, viewing bright and dismal things alike, provided they are apt and real. In his characters vice and virtue commingle, and the union is true to the common sense of humanity. Thus the villain Iago is a man of resolution, intelligence, and fortitude; the murderer Claudius (in *Hamlet*) shows affection, wisdom, and fortitude; the peerless Cleopatra is narrow, spiteful, and avaricious; and the beast Caliban has his moments of ecstatic vision. The list could be extended almost without limit, but these

examples must serve.

(3) Hence follows the *vital force* that resides in the creations of Shakespeare. They live, move, and utter speech; they are rounded, entire, and capable. Very seldom, and that almost entirely in the earlier plays, he uses the wooden puppets that are the stock-in-trade of the inferior dramatist. Of such a kind are some of his "heavy" fathers, like Egeus (in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), and his sentimental lovers, like Orsino (in *Twelfth Night*). Yet, as a rule, in the hands of Shakespeare the heavy father can develop into such living beings as the meddlesome old bore Polonius (in *Hamlet*), and the tediously sentimental lover can become the moody and headstrong Romeo, or the virile and drolly humorous Orlando (in *As You Like It*).

(*c*) *Meter.* As in all the other features of his work, in meter Shakespeare shows abnormal range and power. In the earlier plays the blank verse is regular in beat and pause; there is a fondness for the stopped and rhymed couplet; and in a few cases the couplet passes into definite stanza-formation in a manner suggestive of the early pre-Shakespearian comedies.

> *Lysander.* Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
> Scorn and derision never come in tears:
> Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
> In their nativity all truth appears.
> How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
> Bearing the badge of faith to prove them true?
> *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

As Shakespeare becomes more sure of his instrument the verse increases in ease and dexterity; the cadence is varied; the pause is shifted to any position in the line. In the later plays there is an especial fondness for the extra syllable at the end of

the line. And before he finishes he has utterly subdued the meter to his will. In the last line of the extract now given every foot is abnormal:

Lear. And my poor fool is hanged! No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!

King Lear

(*d*) *Style.* For lack of a better name we call Shakespeare's style Shakesperian. One can instantly recognize it, even in other authors, where it is rarely visible. It is a difficult, almost an impossible, matter to define it. There is aptness and quotability in it: sheaves of Shakespeare's expressions have passed into common speech. To a very high degree it possesses sweetness, strength, and flexibility; and above all it has a certain inevitable and final felicity that is the true mark of genius.

The following specimen shows the average Shakespearian style, if such a thing exists at all. It is not extremely elevated or poetical, but it is strong, precise, and individual.

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.

Hamlet

Such a style moves easily into the highest flights of poetry:

(1) That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O! it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.

Twelfth Night

(2) *Cleopatra.*Come, thou mortal wretch,

[*To the asp, which she applies to her breast.*
With thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate
Of life at once untie; poor venomous fool,
Be angry, and despatch....
Charmian. O eastern star!
Cleopatra. Peace, peace!
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?

Antony and Cleopatra

Or it can plumb the depths of terror and despair. The following are the words of a condemned wretch shivering on the brink of extinction:

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendant world; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!

Measure for Measure

The style lends itself to the serenely ecstatic reverie of the sage:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

The Tempest

It can express, on the other hand, the bitterest cynicism:

But, man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.

Measure for Measure

Or, in prose, Shakespeare can put into words the artless pathos of the humble hostess of the inn:

Hostess. Nay, sure, he's not in hell: he's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. A' made a finer end and went away an it had been any christom child; a' parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning o' the tide; for after I saw him fumble with the sheets and play with flowers and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew that there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and a' babbled of green fields. "How now, Sir John?" quoth I: "what, man! be of good cheer." So a' cried out "God, God, God!" three or four times.

Henry V

Shakespeare can rant, and often rants badly; but at its best his ranting glows with such imaginative splendor that it becomes a thing of fire and majesty:

His legs bestrid the ocean; his reared arm
Crested the world; his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,
There was no winter in't, an autumn 'twas
That grew the more by reaping; his delights
Were dolphin-like, they showed his back above
The element they lived in; in his livery
Walked crowns and crownets, realms and islands were
As plates dropped from his pocket.

Antony and Cleopatra

With such a style as this Shakespeare can compass

the world of human emotion, and he does so.

6. Summary. "He was the man," said Dryden, "who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul."

POST-SHAKESPEARIAN DRAMA

In the following section it will be found that, although much of the work was composed during Shakespeare's lifetime, the most typical of the plays appeared after his death. On the whole, moreover, the work marks a decline from the Shakespearian standard, and so we are probably justified in calling this type of drama post-Shakespearian.

1. Ben Jonson (1573–1637) was born at Westminster, and educated at Westminster School. His father died before Jonson's birth, and the boy adopted the trade of his stepfather, who was a master bricklayer. Bricklaying did not satisfy him for long, and he became a soldier, serving in the Low Countries. From this he turned to acting and writing plays, engaging himself, both as actor and playwright, with the Lord Admiral's company (1597). At first he had little success, and the discouragement he encountered then must have done much to sour a temper that was not at any time very genial. In his combative fashion he took part freely in the squabbles of the time, and in 1598 he killed a fellow-actor in a duel, narrowly escaping the gallows. On the accession of James I in 1603 there arose a new fashion for picturesque pageants known as masques, and Jonson turned his energies to supplying this demand, with great success. After this period (160315) he commanded great good-fortune, and during this time his best work was produced. In 1617 he was created poet to the King, and the close

of James's reign saw Jonson the undisputed ruler of English literature. His favorite haunt was the Mermaid Tavern, where he reigned as dictator over a younger literary generation. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and over him was placed the epitaph "O rare Ben Jonson!"

Jonson's works, extremely voluminous and of varying merit, can be classified for convenience into comedies, tragedies, masques, and lyrics. His one considerable prose work, a kind of commonplace book, to which he gave the curious name of *Timber*, is of much interest, but does not affect his general position.

He began with the comedy *Every Man in his Humour*, which was written in 1598; then followed *Every Man out of His Humour* (1599), *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), and *The Poetaster* (1601). These earliest comedies are rather tedious in their characters, for they emphasize unduly the "humor" or peculiar characteristic of each individual. They are, however, ingenious in plot, rich in rugged and not entirely displeasing fun, and full of vivacity and high spirits. The later group of comedies shows a decided advance. The characters are less angular, livelier, and much more convincing; the style is more matured and equable. Such comedies, perhaps the best of all Jonson's dramatic work, are *Volpone, or The Fox* (1605), *Epicene, or The Silent Woman* (1609), and *The Alchemist* (1610). His last comedies are lighter and more farcical, and show less care and forethought. They include *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), *The Devil Is an Ass* (1616), and *The Staple of News* (1625). His last unfinished play, *The Sad Shepherd*, a pastoral comedy, is unapproached among his dramas for its combination of sober reflection, lightness of

fancy, and delicacy of touch. In nearly all his comedies Jonson opened up a vein that was nearly new and was to be very freely worked by his successors—the comedy of London life and humors, reflecting the manners of the day.

His two historical tragedies, *Sejanus his Fall* (1603) and *Catiline his Conspiracy* (1611), are too labored and mechanical to be reckoned as great tragedies, though their author would fain have had them so. They show immense learning, they have power, variety, and insight, but they lack the last creative touch necessary to stamp them with reality, and to give them a living appeal.

As for his masques, they are abundant, graceful, and humorously ingenious. Into them Jonson introduced the device of the anti-masque, which parodied the principal theme. The best of them are *The Masque of Beauty* (1608), *The Masque of Queens* (1609), and *Oberon, the Fairy Prince* (1611).

The lyrics, which are freely introduced into his plays, and the elegies, epitaphs, and other occasional pieces, many of which appeared in a volume called *Underwoods* ("consisting of divers poems"), represent Jonson's work in its sweetest and most graceful phase. His song, a translation from Philostratus, beginning "Drink to me only with thine eyes," is deservedly famous. We cannot resist quoting two brief but typical pieces:

(1) Have you seen but a bright lillie grow,
Before rude hands have touch'd it?
Have you mark'd but the fall of the snow
Before the soyle hath smutch'd it?
Have you felt the wooll of the bever?
Or swan's downe ever?
Or have smelt of the bud of the brier?
Or the nard on the fire?

Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
O so white! O so soft! O so sweet is she!
The Triumph

(2) Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother:
Death, ere thou hast slain another,
Learned, and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee!
Epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke[99]

In the estimation of his own age Jonson stood second to none; to a later generation he is overshadowed by the towering bulk of Shakespeare. But even the enormous prestige of Shakespeare cannot or ought not to belittle the merits of Jonson. Of Jonson we can justly say that he had all good literary gifts except one, and that the highest and most baffling of all—true genius. He had learning—perhaps too much of it; industry and constancy well beyond the ordinary; versatility; a crabbed and not unamiable humor, diversified with sweetness, grace, and nimbleness of wit; and a style quite adequate to his needs. But the summit of it all—the magical phrase that catches the breath, the immortal spirit that creates out of words and buckram "forms more real than living man"—these were lacking; and without these he cannot join the circle of the very great.

2. Francis Beaumont (1584–1616) and **John Fletcher (1575–1625)** combined to produce a great number of plays, said to be fifty-two in all. How much of the joint work is to be assigned to the respective hands is not accurately known.

The elder, Fletcher, was a cousin of Giles and Phineas Fletcher (see (p. 101)), and was born at Rye, Sussex. He was educated at Cambridge, and lived the

life of a London literary man. He died of the plague in 1625. His colleague Beaumont, who was probably the abler of the two, was the son of a judge, Sir Francis Beaumont, was educated at Oxford, and entered the Inner Temple (1600), but was captivated by the attractions of a literary life. He died almost within a month of Shakespeare, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

They excelled in comedy, especially in the comedy of London life. Theirs is not the heavy "humorous" comedy of Jonson, but is lighter and more romantic. Their characters are slighter, but more pleasing and human; their humor is free and genial, and their representation of contemporary life is happy and attractive. Their plots are ingenious and workmanlike, and their incidents numerous and striking. Their style shows a distinct decline from the high standard of Shakespeare. They have a greater fondness for prose, their blank verse is looser and weaker, but they are capable of poetical lines and phrases. Typical comedies are *A King and No King* (1611), esteemed by Dryden the best of them all, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1611), a very agreeable farce, and *The Scornful Lady* (1616). Their tragedies, such as *The Maid's Tragedy* (1619), *Philaster* (1620), suggesting *Twelfth Night*, and *The Faithful Shepherdess* (by Fletcher alone), are not too tragical, and they are diversified by attractive incidents and descriptions.

3. George Chapman (1559–1634) was born at Hitchin. Beyond this fact little is known of him. He took part in the literary life of his time, for his name appears in the squabbles of his tribe. He died in London.

His first play, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1596) was followed by many more, both comical

and tragical. Among them are *Bussy d'Ambois* (1597), *Charles, Duke of Byron* (1608), and *The Tragedie of Chabot* (1639). These are historical plays, dealing with events nearly contemporary with his own time. Chapman's comedies include *All Fools* (1605) and *Eastward Hoe!* (1605), in the latter of which he combined with Jonson and Marston. Chapman writes agreeably and well; he has firmness, competence, and variety, and his comic and tragic powers are considerable. His translation of *Homer* has something of the pace and music of the original.

4. John Marston (1575–1634) was born at Coventry, was educated there and at Oxford, became a literary figure in London, and later took orders. Latterly he resigned his living in Hampshire, and died in London.

Marston specialized in violent and melodramatic tragedies, which do not lack a certain impressiveness, but which are easily parodied and no less easily lead to abuse. They impressed his own generation, who rated him with Jonson. For a later age they are spoiled to a great extent by exaggeration, rant, and excessive speeches. Typical of them are *Antonio and Mellida* (1602) and *Antonio's Revenge* (1602), which were ridiculed by Jonson in *The Poetaster*.

5. Thomas Dekker (1570–1641) was born in London, where his life was passed as a literary hack and playwright. His plays, chiefly comedies, have an attraction quite unusual for the time. They have a sweetness, an arch sentimentality, and an intimate knowledge of common men and things that have led to his being called the Dickens of the Elizabethan stage. His plots are chaotic, and his blank verse, which very frequently gives place to prose, is weak

and sprawling. The best of his plays are *Old Fortunatus* (1600), *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600), and *Satiromastix* (1602). He collaborated with other playwrights, including Ford and Rowley, with whom he wrote *The Witch of Edmonton* (about 1633), and Massinger, in *The Virgin Martyr* (1622).

6. Thomas Middleton (1570–1627) was born in London, wrote much for the stage, and in 1620 was made City Chronologer.

He is one of the most equable and literary of the dramatists of the age; he has a decided fanciful turn; he is a close observer and critic of the life of the time, and a dramatist who on a few occasions can rise to the heights of greatness. His most powerful play, which has been much praised by Lamb and others, is *The Changeling* (1624); others are *Women beware Women* (1622), *The Witch*, which bears a strong resemblance to *Macbeth*, and *The Spanish Gipsy* (1623), a romantic comedy suggesting *As You Like It*. Along with Dekker he wrote *The Roaring Girle, or Moll Cutpurse* (1611), which is a close dramatic parallel to the earliest novels.

7. Thomas Heywood (1575–1650) was born in Lincolnshire about 1575, was educated at Cambridge, and became an author and dramatist in London. He himself asserts that he had a hand ("or at least a main finger") in two hundred and twenty plays, of which twenty-three survive.

Like so many more dramatists of the time, he excelled in his pictures of London life and manners. He was a rapid and light improviser, an expert contriver of stage situations, but otherwise content with passable results, and caring little about the higher flights of the dramatist. His best play is *A Woman Killed with Kindnesse* (1603), which contains

some strongly pathetic scenes; *The English Traveller* (1633) is only slightly inferior. Other plays of his are *The Royall King* (1600), *The Captives* (1624), and a series of clumsy historical dramas, including *King Edward the Fourth* (1600) and *The Troubles of Queene Elizabeth* (1605).

8. John Webster, who flourished during the first twenty years of the seventeenth century, excels his fellows as a tragical artist. Next to nothing is known regarding his life, and much of his work has been lost, but what remains is sufficient to show that he was a writer of no mean ability. Selecting themes of gloomy and supernatural horror, of great crimes and turbulent emotions and desires, he rises to the height of his argument with an ability equal to his ambition. In several respects—in bleak horror and in largeness of tragical conception—he resembles Marlowe; but he is terse and precise when Marlowe is simply turgid; his plots have the inexorable march of Fate itself; and he far excels Marlowe in brief and almost blinding flashes of sorrow and pity. His two great plays are *The White Devil* (1612) and *The Duchess of Malfy* (1623). Other and inferior plays ascribed to him are *The Devil's Law Case* (1623) and *Appius and Virginia*.

9. Cyril Tourneur (1575–1626) seems to have been a soldier and to have served in the Low Countries. He took part in Buckingham's disastrous expedition to Cadiz, and on his return died in Ireland.

In the work of Tourneur we have horrors piled on horrors. His two plays *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1600) and *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611) are melodramatic to the highest degree. He attempts much, but achieves little. He does not lack a certain poetic sensibility;

but he lacks grip, method, and balance, and he is weakest where Webster is strongest.

THE ENGLISH BIBLE: THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

In the last chapter we indicated the growth of the Bible from the earliest to Reformation times. The task of translation was completed by the issue of *King James's Bible*, or the *Authorized Version* (1611).

The need for a standard text was urged during the conference between the dissentient sects held at Hampton Court in 1604. James I, who was present at some stages of the conference, approved of the project. Forty-seven scholars, including the ablest professorial and episcopal talent, were appointed for the task; they were divided into six companies, each receiving a certain portion of the Biblical text for translation; each company revised the work of its fellow-translators. The task, begun in 1607, was completed in 1611. Since that date little of sufficient authority has been done to shake the Authorized Version's dominating position as the greatest of English translations.

It may be of use here to set down some of the more obvious features of this great work.

1. With regard to the actual work of **translation**, it ought to be regarded simply as the climax of a long series of earlier translations. The new translators came to handle a large mass of work already in existence. All the debatable ground in the texts had been fought over again and again, and in a dim fashion a standard was emerging. The translators themselves acknowledge this in the preface to their work: their task, they say, is "to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one." In other words, their task was largely one of

selection and amendment. The reliance upon earlier work resulted in a certain old-fashioned flavor that was felt even in Jacobean times. “It is not the English,” says Hallam, “of Daniel or Ralegh or Bacon.... It abounds, especially in the Old Testament, in obsolete phraseology.” It is a tribute to the compelling power and beauty of the Authorized Version that its archaisms have long been accepted as permissible, and even inevitable. Allowing, however, for all the reliance upon earlier work, one cannot overpraise the sound judgment, the artistic taste, and the sensitive ear of every member of the band who built up such a stately monument to our tongue.

2. Diversity of the Work. One can best appreciate the vastness and complexity of the Bible by recollecting that it is not a single book, but an entire literature, or even two literatures, for both in time and temper the New Testament is separated from the Old. The different books of the Bible were composed at widely different times, and many hands worked at them. Their efforts resulted in a huge collection of all the main species of literature—expository, narrative, and lyrical. These will be noticed in their order below.

3. Unity of the Work. If the Bible were a collection of discordant elements it would not possess its peculiar literary attraction. In spite of the diversity of its sources it has a remarkable uniformity of treatment and spirit. The core and substance of the entire work is the belief and delight in the Divine Spirit; and, added to this, especially in the Old Testament, a fiery faith in the pre-eminence of the Jewish race. With regard to the literary style, from cover to cover it is almost unvaried: firm, clear,

simple, dignified, and thoroughly English. It represents the broad and stable average of the labors of generations of devout and ardent men; and it endureth unshaken.

4. The Expository Portions. Considered from the purely literary point of view, the expository parts (that is, those that contain exhortation, information, or advice) are of least importance. In bulk they are considerable, and include the Book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament and the Pauline Epistles in the New. They have all the distinction of the Biblical style, and they are expressed with clearness, dignity, and precision.

5. The **narrative portions** include the bulk of the Bible, and are of great literary interest and value. In the Old Testament they comprise the Pentateuch and many other books, and in the New Testament they include the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The tone of the Old Testament differs somewhat from that of the New. As can be supposed, the former is often harsher in note, and is sometimes confused and contradictory (from the unsatisfactory condition of some of the texts); the New Testament narrative, which came under the influence of the Greek, is more scholarly and liberal in tone. Both, however, have a breadth, solidity, and noble austerity of style that make the Biblical narrative stand alone. It is perhaps unnecessary to quote, but one short specimen may not be out of place:

> Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.
>
> And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

And, after a little while, another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him; for he is a Galilean.

And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, when he yet spake, the cock crew.

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

St. Luke

6. The Lyrical Portions. These (which include the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, much of the Book of Job, and the frequent passages, such as the song of Sisera, which occur in the narrative books) are perhaps the most important as literature. In addition to their native shrewdness and persistence, the Jews had a strongly emotional strain, which finds wide expression in the Bible. Their poetry, like that of the Old English, was rhythmic; it went by irregularly distributed beats or accents. The English translators to a large extent preserved the Jewish rhythms, adding to them the music, the cadence, the soar and the swing of ecstatic English prose. In theme Jewish poetry is the primitive expression of simple people regarding the relations of man and God and the

universe. Its similes and metaphors are based upon simple elemental things—the heavens, the running water, and the congregations of wild beasts. The emotions are mystically and rapturously expressed, and convey the impression of much earnestness. The following extract is fairly typical of its kind:

> As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.
>
> My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?
>
> My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
>
> When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.
>
> Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.
>
> *The Book of Psalms*

7. The Influence of the Bible. The English Bible has been a potent influence in our literature. Owing largely to their poetical or proverbial nature, multitudes of Biblical expressions have become woven into the very tissue of the tongue: “a broken reed,” “the eleventh hour,” “a thorn in the flesh,” “a good Samaritan,” “sweat of the brow,” and so on. More important, probably, is the way in which the style affects that of many of our greatest writers. The influence is nearly all for the good; for a slight strain of the Biblical manner, when kept artistically within bounds, imparts simplicity, dignity, and elevation.

Bunyan shows the style almost undiluted; but in the works of such widely diverse writers as Ruskin, Macaulay, Milton, and Tennyson the effects, though slighter, are quite apparent.

FRANCIS BACON, BARON VERULAM, VISCOUNT ST. ALBANS (1561–1626)

1. His Life. Bacon was born in London, the son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. The family was connected with the Cecils and other political magnates of the time. Bacon was a delicate youth, and for a time he was educated privately; then he proceeded to Cambridge, and thence entered Gray's Inn (1576). To complete his education he spent three years in France. On his being called to the Bar his family influence helped him to acquire a fair practice; but Bacon was ambitious and longed for the highest rewards that his profession could bestow. He became a member of Parliament in 1584, but the recognition that he expected from the Queen did not come his way, hard though he fought for it. He assisted in the prosecution of the Earl of Essex, a nobleman who had befriended him earlier in his career. Essex, an injudicious man, had involved himself in a charge of treason, and the ingenuity of Bacon was largely instrumental in bringing him to the block. On the accession of James I Bacon, who was never remiss in urging his own claims to preferment, began to experience prosperity, for he was tireless in urging the royal claims before Parliament. He was made a knight in 1603, and Attorney-General in 1613. In the latter capacity he was James's chief agent in asserting and enforcing the King's theories of divine right, and he became thoroughly unpopular with the House of Commons. His reward came in 1618, when

he was appointed Lord Chancellor and created Baron Verulam, and in 1621, when he became Viscount St. Albans. Popular dissatisfaction was mounting against the King and his agents, and when Parliament met in 1620 it laid charges of bribery and corrupt dealings against the Lord Chancellor. Bacon quailed before the storm; made what amounted to a confession of guilt; and was subjected to the huge fine of £40,000 (which was partially remitted), imprisonment during the King's pleasure (which was restricted to four days in the Tower of London), and exile from Court and office. He spent the last five years of his life in the pursuit of literary and scientific works.

2. His Works. Bacon wrote both in Latin and English, and of the two he considered the Latin works to be the more important.

(*a*) His English works include his *Essays*, which first appeared in 1597. Then they numbered ten; but the second (1612) and third (1625) editions raised the number to thirty-eight and fifty-eight respectively. They are on familiar subjects, such as Learning, Studies, Vainglory, and Great Place; and in method they represent the half-casual meditations of a trained and learned mind. His other English works were *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), containing the substance of his philosophy; *Apophthegms* (1625), a kind of jest-book; and *The New Atlantis*, left unfinished at his death, a philosophical romance modeled upon More's *Utopia*.

(*b*) His Latin works were to be fashioned into a vast scheme, which he called *Instauratio Magna*, expounding his philosophical theories. It was laid out on the following plan, but it was scarcely half finished:

(1) *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (1623). This

treatise, in which the English work on the *Advancement of Learning* is embodied, gives a general summary of human knowledge, taking special notice of gaps and imperfections in science.

(2) *Novum Organum* (1620). This work explains the new logic, or inductive method of reasoning, upon which his philosophy is founded. Out of the nine sections into which he divides the subject the first only is handled with any fullness, the other eight being merely named.

(3) *Sylva Sylvarum* (left incomplete). This part was designed to give a complete view of what we call Natural Philosophy and Natural History. The subjects he has touched on under this head are four—the History of Winds, Life and Death, Density and Rarity, Sound and Hearing.

(4) *Scala Intellectus.* Of this we have only a few of the opening pages.

(5) *Prodromi.* A few fragments only were written.

(6) *Philosophia Secunda.* Never executed.

3. His Style. Of Bacon as a philosopher we can only say that he is one of the founders of modern systematic thought. His most important literary work is his *Essays*. In its three versions this work shows the development of Bacon's English style. In the first edition the style is crisp, detached, and epigrammatic, conveying the impression that each essay has arisen from some happy thought or phrase, around which other pithy statements are agglomerated. In the later editions the ideas are expanded, the expression loses its spiky pointedness, and in the end we have an approach to a freer middle style, an approximation to the swinging manner of Dryden. Bacon had no ear for rhythm and

melody; a born rhetorician, he preferred the sharper devices of antithesis and epigram; and he was always clear, orderly, and swiftly precise in his phrasing. Following the fashion of the time, he was free in his use of allusions, conceits, and Latin tags, creating rather a garish ornamental effect; but his style is saved from triviality by his breadth of intellect, by his luminous intensity of ideas, and by his cool man-of-the-world sagacity.

For the sake of comparison we quote the same extract from the first and third editions of the *Essays*. The second extract, it will be noticed, is a studied expansion of the first.

(1) Crafty men contemn them, simple men admire them, wise men use them; for they teach not their own use, but that is a wisdom without them and above them won by observation. Read not to contradict nor to believe, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read but cursorily, and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend.

(2) Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find

> talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtile; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend.
>
> *Of Studies*

OTHER PROSE-WRITERS

1. Roger Ascham (1515–68) is representative of the earliest school of Elizabethan prose. He was born in Yorkshire, and educated privately and at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he became a Fellow (1535) and a teacher of Greek (1540). He took part in the literary and religious disputes of the time, but managed to keep his feet on the shifting grounds of politics. He was appointed tutor to Elizabeth (1548) and secretary to Queen Mary; he visited the Continent as secretary to an embassy; and ultimately was appointed a canon of York Minster.

His two chief works were *Toxophilus* (1544), a treatise, in the form of a dialogue, on archery; and *The Scholemaster* (1570), an educational work

containing some ideas that were then fairly fresh and enlightening. Ascham was a man of moderate literary talent, of great industry, and of boundless enthusiasm for learning. Though he is strongly influenced by classical models, he has all the strong Elizabethan sense of nationality. In *Toxophilus* he declares his intention of "writing this English matter in the English speech for Englishmen." In style he is plain and strong, using only the more obvious graces of alliteration and antithesis.

2. John Lyly (1553–1606) marks another stage in the march of English prose. He was born in Kent, educated at Oxford, and, failing to obtain Court patronage, became a literary man in London. At first he had considerable success, and entered Parliament; but at a later stage his popularity declined, and he died poverty-stricken in London.

We have already mentioned his comedies (see p. 105), which at the time brought him fame and money. But his first prose work, *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* (1579), made him one of the foremost figures of the day. He repeated the success with a second part, *Euphues and his England* (1580). The work is a kind of travel-romance, recounting the adventures of Euphues, a young Athenian. The narrative is interspersed with numerous discussions upon many topics. It was, however, the style of its prose that gave the book its great vogue. It is the first consciously fabricated prose style in the language. It is mannered and affected almost to the point of being ridiculous. Its tricks are obvious and easily imitated, and they are freely applied by the next generation: balanced phrases, intricate alliteration, labored comparisons drawn from classical and other sources, and ornate epithets. The effect is quaint and not

displeasing, but the narrative labors under the weight of it. It certainly suited the growing literary consciousness of its day, and hence its pronounced, though temporary, success.

The following extract will illustrate the euphuistic manner:

> Philautus being a town-born child, both for his own countenance, and the great countenance which his father had while he lived, crept into credit with Don Ferardo one of the chief governors of the city, who although he had a courtly crew of gentlewomen sojourning in his palace, yet his daughter, heir to his whole revenues stained the beauty of them all, whose modest bashfulness caused the other to look wan for envy, whose lily cheeks dyed with a vermilion red, made the rest to blush for shame. For as the finest ruby staineth the colour of the rest that be in place, or as the sun dimmeth the moon, that she cannot be discerned, so this gallant girl more fair than fortunate, and yet more fortunate than faithful, eclipsed the beauty of them all, and changed their colours. Unto her had Philautus access, who won her by right of love, and should have worn her by right of law, had not Euphues by strange destiny broken the bonds of marriage, and forbidden the banns of matrimony.
>
> *Euphues and his England*

3. Richard Hooker (1553–1600) was born near Exeter, and educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he was elected a Fellow (1577). In 1582 he took orders, and later was appointed to a living in Kent, where he died.

His great work, at which he labored during the greater part of his life, was *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. The first four of the proposed eight books

were issued in 1593; he finished one more; and though the remaining three were published under his name when he was dead, it is very doubtful if he was entirely responsible for them. In the work he supports Episcopacy against Presbyterianism. In style he is strongly affected by classical writers; but he usually writes with homeliness and point; his sentences are carefully constructed; the rhythm moves easily; and there is both precision and melody in his choice of vocabulary. His style is an early example of scholarly and accomplished English prose.

4. Sir Thomas Overbury (1581–1613) may be taken as typical of a fairly large class of Elizabethan writers. He was born in Warwickshire, educated at Oxford, and became a figure at the Court of King James. His chief friend at Court was James's favorite Robert Carr, with whom he quarreled over a love-affair. For this Overbury fell into disfavor, and was imprisoned in the Tower, where he was poisoned under mysterious and barbarous circumstances.

Overbury survives in literature as the author of a series of *Characters* (1614). Based on the ancient Greek work of Theophrastus, the book consists of a number of concise character-sketches of well-known types, such as a Milkmaid, a Pedant, a Franklin, and "an Affectate Traveller." The sketches are solely of types, not of individuals, and so lack any great literary merit. But they are important for several reasons: they are a curious development of the pamphlet, which was so common at that time; they are another phase of the "humours" craze, seen so strongly in the Jonsonian and other dramas; and they are an important element in the growth of the essay. In style the book is strongly euphuistic, thus

illustrating another tendency of the time. They were added to and imitated by other writers, including **John Earle (1601–65)**.

5. Robert Burton (1577–1640) was the son of a country gentleman, and was born in Leicestershire. He was educated at Oxford, where, in holy orders, he passed most of his life.

His famous work, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, was first issued in 1621, and then constantly revised and reissued. It is an elaborate and discursive study of melancholy, its species and kinds, its causes, results, and cure. The book—labored, saturnine, and fantastic to an extraordinary degree—has exercised a strong fascination over many scholarly minds, including those of Dr. Johnson and Charles Lamb. Its learning is immense and unconventional, being drawn from many rare authors; its humor curiously crabbed, subdued, and ironical; and its "melancholy," though pervading, is not oppressive. The diction, harsh and unstudied, is rarely obscure; the enormous sentences, packed with quotation and allusion, are loosely knit. Both as a stylist and as a personality Burton occupies his own niche in English literature.

6. The Sermon-writers. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the sermon rose to a level of literary importance not hitherto attained, and afterward rarely equaled. We have already mentioned Donne (see p. 102), probably the most notable of his group, and we give space to two other writers.

(*a*) **James Ussher (1581–1656)** was born in Dublin, and was descended from an ancient Protestant family. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and rose to be Bishop of Meath and

Archbishop of Armagh (1626). In 1640 he visited England, where, owing to the disturbed state of Ireland, he had to remain for the remainder of his life. His many sermons, discourses, and tracts show learning, adroit argument, and a plain and easy style. His *Chronologia Sacra* was for a long time the standard work on Biblical chronology.

(*b*) **Joseph Hall (1574–1656)** was educated at Cambridge, took orders, and became a prominent opponent of the Puritans, among whom was Milton. He was appointed Bishop of Exeter (1627) and of Norwich (1641). When the Puritans rose to power Hall's opinions brought him into disgrace. He was imprisoned, and, though liberated, forbidden to preach. He died in retirement.

Hall's earliest work was in verse, and consisted of a series of satires called *Virgidemiarum* (1597), which were condemned by the Church as being licentious. His theological and devotional works, the product of his later years, are very numerous, and include tracts, sermons, and treatises. Though he is often shallow and voluble, he writes with literary grace. He is without doubt the most literary of the theologians of the time.

7. The Translators. The zeal for learning which was such a prominent feature of the early Elizabethan times was strongly apparent in the frequent translations. This class of literature had several curious characteristics. The translators cared little for verbal accuracy, and sometimes were content to translate from a translation, say from a French version of a Latin text. The translators, moreover, borrowed from each other, and repeated the errors of their fellows. These habits deprived their work of any great pretensions to scholarship;

but they were eager adventurers into the new realms of learning, and to a great extent they reproduced the spirit, if not the letter, of their originals.

One of the first and most popular of the translations was North's *Diall of Princes* (1557), from an Italian original. North also translated Plutarch's *Lives* (1579), a work that had much influence upon Shakespeare and other dramatists. Other classical translations were those of Virgil, done by **Phaer** in 1558 and **Stanyhurst** in 1583, and of Ovid, by **Turberville** in 1567 and by **Chapman** in 1595. Chapman's Translation of Homer (1596) is perhaps the most famous of them all. It is composed in long, swinging lines, and is lively, audacious, and pleasing.

8. The Pamphleteers. All through this period there is a flood of short tracts on religion, politics, and literature. It was the work of a host of literary hacks who earned a precarious existence in London. These men represented a new class of writer. The Reformation had closed the Church to them; the growth of the universities and of learning continually increased their numbers. In later times journalism and its kindred careers supplied them with a livelihood; but at this time they eked out their existence by writing plays and squabbling among themselves in the pages of broadsheets.

In its buoyancy and vigor, its quaint mixture of truculence and petulance, Elizabethan pamphleteering is refreshingly boyish and alive. It is usually keenly satirical, and in style it is unformed and uncouth. The most notorious of the pamphleteers were **Thomas Nash (1567–1601)**, **Robert Greene (1560–92)**, and **Thomas Lodge (1558–1625)**. We quote a well-known passage from a pamphlet of Greene, in which he contrives to

mingle praise of his friends with sly gibes at one who is probably Shakespeare. The style is typical of the pamphlets.

> And thou,[100] no less deserving than the other two,[101] in some things rarer, in nothing inferior; driven (as myself) to extreme shifts, a little have I to say to thee; and were it not an idolatrous oath, I would swear by sweet St. George, thou art unworthy better hap, sith thou dependest on so mean a stay. Base-minded men all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned; for unto none of you (like me) sought those burs to cleave,—those puppets, I mean,—that speak from our mouths,—those antics garnished in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they all have been beholden,—is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholden,—shall (were ye in that case that I am now) be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank-verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shakescene in a country. Oh, that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses, and let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions! I know the best husband of you all will never prove an usurer, and the kindest of them all will never prove a kind nurse: yet, whilst you may, seek you better masters; for it is pity men of such rare wits should be subject to the pleasures of such rude grooms.
>
> *A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

At the beginning of the Elizabethan age English

literary forms were still to a large extent in the making; at the end of the period there is a rich and varied store of most of the chief literary species. All that can be done here is to give the barest outline of this development.

1. Poetry. (*a*) *Lyrical Poetry*. The temper of the age was suited to the lyrical mood, and so the abundance of the lyric is very great. It begins with the first efforts of Wyat and Surrey (1557); it continues through the dramas in all their stages; and it appears in the numerous miscellanies of the period. Then the lyrical impulse is carried on without a break into the melodies of Campion and the darker moods of Donne. The forms of the lyric are many, and on the whole its notes are musical, wild, and natural.

An interesting sub-species of the lyric is the *sonnet*. We have seen how it took two forms—the Italian or Petrarchan form, and the English or Shakespearian type. During this period both kinds flourished, the English kind to a greater degree. Wyat began (1557) with a group of the Italian type; Surrey introduced the English form. Then the sonnet, in one or other of its two forms, was continued by Sidney in *Astrophel and Stella* (published in 1591), by Spenser, by Shakespeare, by Daniel in *Delia* (1592), and by Watson in *Heoatompathia, or Passionate Century of Sonnets* (1582). Later in the period the sonnet was less popular, though Drayton wrote at least one of great power.

(*b*) *Descriptive and Narrative Poetry*. This is a convenient title for a large and important class of poems. In this period it begins with such works as Sackville's *Induction* (1555), and continues with Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (1598) and

Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). It culminates in the sumptuous allegorical poetry of Spenser; and it begins its decline with the Spenserians of the type of the Fletchers and with Drayton's *Endimion and Phœbe* (1600). The pastoral, which is a kind of descriptive poem, is seen in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579), in Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals* (1613), and in Drayton. Almost purely descriptive poetry is represented in Drayton's *Polyolbion* (1612); and a more strongly narrative type is the same poet's *England's Heroical Epistles* (1597). All these poems are distinguished by strong descriptive power, freshness of fancy, and sometimes by positive genius of style.

(*c*) *Religious*, *satirical*, and *didactic poetry* cannot take a position equal in importance to the rest. During the period the satirical intent is quite strong, but it does not produce great poetry. Gascoigne's *Steel Glass* (1576) is one of the earliest satires; and it is followed by Donne's *Satires* (1593) and Hall's *Satires* (1597). Drayton's *Harmony of the Church* (1591) is religious in motive; so are several poems of Donne, and also many of those of the Jesuit **Robert Southwell (1561–95)**.

2. Drama. The opening of the Elizabethan period saw the drama struggling into maturity. The early type of the time was scholarly in tone and aristocratic in authorship. An example of the earliest type of playwright is **Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (1554–1628)**, who distinguished himself both as a dramatic and lyrical poet.

To this stage succeeded that of Shakespeare, which covered approximately the years 1595 to 1615. Of this drama all we can say here is that it is the crown and flower of the Elizabethan literary

achievement, and embodies almost the entire spirit both of drama and poetry.

The decline begins with Jonson, and continues with Beaumont and Fletcher, Dekker, Heywood, and the other dramatists mentioned in this chapter. The decline is made clear in several ways: in the narrowing of the ample Shakespearian motive, which comprises all mankind, into themes of temporary, local, and fragmentary importance; in the lack of creative power in the characterization, resulting (as in Jonson) in mere types or "humors," or (as in Dekker and Fletcher) in superficial improvisation, or in ponderous tragical figures (as in Webster and Tourneur); and lastly, in the degradation of the style, which will be noted below. Sometimes the decline is gilded with delicate fancy, as in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, or in the exquisite *Parliament of Bees* (1607) by **John Day (1574–1640)**; but the grace and charm of such plays cannot conceal the falling-off in power and imagination.

With regard to the development of the different dramatic types, we have already noted that tragedy developed first; in Shakespeare all kinds received attention, tragedy most of all. In post-Shakespearian drama light comedy was the most popular species, chiefly because the tragic note of exalted pity had degenerated into melodrama and horrors.

A special word is perhaps necessary on the *masque*, which during this time had a brief but brilliant career. The masque is a short dramatic performance composed for some particular festive occasion, such as the marriage or majority of a great man's son; it is distinguished by ornate stage-setting, by lyrics, music, and dancing, and by allegorical characters. It finds a place in Shakespeare's *Tempest*

and other plays; it is strongly developed in the works of Jonson, Fletcher, and other poets of the time; and it attains its climax during the next age in the *Comus* (1637) of Milton.

3. Prose. In Elizabethan times the development of prose was slower and slighter than that of poetry.

(*a*) The *essay*, beginning in the pamphlet, character-sketch, and other miscellaneous writing, develops in the work of Bacon. Its rise will be sketched more fully in a future chapter (see p. 268).

(*b*) The *novel* has some meager but significant beginnings in More's *Utopia* (1516), Sidney's *Arcadia* (published in 1590), Lyly's *Euphues* (1579), Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1626), and most of all in Nash's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594). The rise of the novel is also reserved for a later chapter (see p. 336).

(*c*) *Miscellaneous prose*, in the pamphlets, theological works, sermons, translations, travels, and such abnormalities as Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), is exceedingly voluminous and important. We have here a large, loose, and varied mass of English prose, the central exercising-ground of the average prose-writer, that is to be the foundation of many important groups of the future.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

1. Poetry. The period immediately preceding was that of the clumsy poetry of Hawes, Skelton, and their kind; succeeding it is the strength and beauty of Elizabethan poetry. Between these two extremes the different stages of development are fairly well marked.

(*a*) The earliest period (say from 1550–80) is that of Wyat, Surrey, Sidney, and the University Wits.

This is the formative and imitative period, during which the dependence upon classical originals is particularly strong. The style has the precision and the erratic character of the diligent pupil. There are few deliberate innovations, and lapses into barbarism are not unknown. In this period appear the sonnet, blank verse, and many of the beautiful lyrical metrical forms. The lyrical style is least restrained by the influence of classical models.

(*b*) The Spenserian and Shakespearian stage (from about 1580 to 1615) is the stage of highest development. The native English genius, having absorbed the lessons of foreign writers, adds to them the youth and ardor of its own spirit. The result is a fullness, freshness, and grandeur of style unequaled in any other period of our literature. There are the lyrics and allegories of Spenser; the poems, dramas, and lyrics of Shakespeare; and the innumerable miscellanies, poems, and plays of other writers. The style is as varied as the poems; but the universal note is the romantic one of power and ease.

(*c*) In the second decade of the seventeenth century the decline is apparent. The inspired phraseology, the wealth and flexibility of vocabulary, and the general bloom of the style pass into the lightness of fancy and the tinkling unsubstantial verse of the nature of Campion's. Or the high seriousness degenerates into the gloomy manner of the Websterian tragedy. The handling of blank verse is typical of the movement. The sinewy Shakesperian blank verse becomes nerveless; in drama prose is commoner in quantity and coarser in fiber. In the lyric much of the old technical dexterity survives, but the deeper qualities of passion and sincerity are less common and robust.

2. Prose. Unlike that of poetry, the style of prose enjoys a steady development, continued from the previous age, and maintained through the Elizabethan age. Euphuism, which appeared early in this epoch, was a kind of literary measles incidental to early growth, and it quickly passed away, leaving the general body of English prose healthier than before. There is an increase in the raw material of prose in the shape of many foreign words that are imported; there is a growing expertness in sentence- and paragraph-construction and in the more delicate graces of style, such as rhythm and melody. The prose of Hooker and Bacon (in his later stages) represents the furthest development of the time. Prose style has yet a great deal to learn, but it is learning fast.

TABLE TO ILLUSTRATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

DATE >	POETRY			DRAMA	
	Lyric	Narrative-Descriptive	Didactic	Comedy	
1550					
1560	Wyat[103]	Sackville[102] Surrey[103]			
1570					
1580		Spenser[105]	Gascoigne[104]		
				Lyly	Pee Kyd Greene

1590					Mar
1600	Daniel	Donne Shakespeare[108] Marlowe	Drayton	Nash Shakespeare	Cha
1610	Campion Donne	G. Fletcher		Jonson Dekker Marston	Sha Jon Heywoo
1620		Drayton		Beaumor Fletcher	Wel
1630				Middleto	
1640		P. Fletcher			

EXERCISES

1. The following extracts illustrate the growth of the English lyric from earliest times. Arrange the passages approximately in order of development, adding dates when it seems possible. Write a note on the style of each, and point out in what respects it is typical of its author or period.

(1) Still to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be powdered, still perfumed:
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all the adulteries of art:
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

JONSON, *Epicene*

(2) Son icche herde that mirie note
Thider I drogh;
I fond her in an herber swot
Under a bough
With joie enough.
Son I asked: "Thou mirie mai
Hwi sinkestou ai?"
Nou sprinkes the sprai,
All for love icche am so seek
That slepen I ne mai.

Old Song

(3) A blissful life thou says I lead;
Thou wouldest know thereof the stage.
Thou wost well when thy Perle con schede,
I was full young and tender of age;
But my Lord the Lomb, through his God-hede,
He took myself to his maryage,
Coround me queen in bliss to brede[111]
In length of dayes that ever shall wage.
And seised in all his heritage
His lef[112] is; I am wholly his;
His praise, his price, and his parage
Is root and ground of all my bliss.

Pearl

(4) Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
O sweet content!
Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed?
O punishment!
Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed
To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?

O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!
Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
Honest labour bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

Canst drink the waters of the crisped spring?
O sweet content!
Swim'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears?
O punishment!
Then he that patiently want's burden bears
No burden bears, but is a king, a king!
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!
Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
Honest labour bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

DEKKER, *Sweet Content*

2. In the following passages, which illustrate the development of blank verse, examine the metrical features (such as the scansion, variation of the pause, and the melody) of each, and mention if any improvement is apparent.

(1) It was the time when granted from the gods,
The first sleep creeps most sweet in weary folk,
Lo, in my dream before mine eyes, methought
With rueful cheer I saw where Hector stood
(Out of whose eyes gushed streams of tears),
Drawn at a car as he of late had been,
Distained with bloody dust, whose feet were bowl'n[113]
With the strait cords wherewith they haled him.

SURREY, *Æneid*, 1557

(2) That age is dead and vanished long ago,
Which thought that steel both trusty was and true
And needed not a foil of contraries,
But shewed all things even as they were in deed.
In stead whereof, our curious years can find
The crystal glass, which glimpseth brave and bright,
And shews the thing much better far than it,
Beguiled with foils, of sundry subtle sights
So that they seem and covet not to be.

GASCOIGNE, *The Steel Glass*, 1576

(3)*Prospero.* Of the king's ship
The mariners, say how thou hast disposed
And all the rest o' the fleet.
Ariel. Safely in harbour
Is the king's ship: in the deep nook, where once
Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew
From the still-vex'd Bermoothes, there she's hid:
The mariners all under hatches stow'd;
Who, with a charm join'd to their suffer'd labour,
I have left asleep: and for the rest o' the fleet
Which I dispersed, they all have met again
And are upon the Mediterranean flote,
Bound sadly home for Naples,
Supposing that they saw the king's ship wreck'd
And his great person perish.
SHAKESPEARE, *The Tempest*, 1611

3. Comment upon the style, meter, and general level of excellence shown in the following sonnets. Point out any development that is observable.

(1) The sweet season, that bud and bloom forth brings,
With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale.
The nightingale, with feathers new, she sings;
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale;
Summer is come, for every spray now springs.
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale:
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;
The fishes fleet with new repaired scale;
The adder all her slough away she flings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies small;
The busy bee her honey how she mings!
Winter is worn, that was the flowers' bale,
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.
SURREY, *To Spring*, 1557

(2) Sweet is the rose, but growes upon a brere;
Sweet is the juniper, but sharpe his bough;
Sweet is the eglantine, but pricketh nere,
Sweet is the firbloome, but his braunches rough;
Sweet is the cyprese, but his rynd is tough;
Sweet is the nut, but bitter is his pill;[114]
Sweet is the broome flowre, but yet sowre enough;
And sweet is moly, but his root is ill;
So, every sweet, with soure is tempred still,

That maketh it be coveted the more:
For easie things that may be got at will
Most sorts of men doe set but little store.
Why then should I accompt of little paine
That endlesse pleasure shall unto me gaine!
SPENSER, *Amoretti*, 1595

(3) Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part,—
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And innocence is closing up his eyes,
—Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou mightest him yet recover!
DRAYTON, 1620

4. Hooker's is sometimes considered to be the most highly developed of Elizabethan prose styles. In the following two extracts examine the vocabulary, sentence-construction, and general competence of the first, and compare it with the second, which was written about two hundred years earlier.

(1) Touching musical harmony, whether by instrument or by voice, it being but of high and low in sounds a due proportionable disposition, such notwithstanding is the force thereof, and so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have been thereby induced to think that the soul itself by nature is, or hath in it, harmony; a thing which delighteth all ages, and beseemeth all states; a thing as seasonable in grief as in joy; as decent being added unto actions of greatest weight and solemnity, as being used when men most sequester themselves from action. The reason

hereof is an admirable facility which music hath to express and represent to the mind, more inwardly than any other sensible mean, the very standing, rising and falling, the very steps and inflections every way, the turns and varieties of all passions whereunto the mind is subject; yea, so to imitate them, that, whether it resemble unto us the same state wherein our minds already are, or a clean contrary, we are not more contentedly by the one confirmed, than changed and led away by the other. In harmony, the very image and character even of virtue and vice is perceived, the mind delighted with their resemblances, and brought by having them often iterated into a love of the things themselves. For which cause there is nothing more contagious and pestilent than some kinds of harmony; than some, nothing more strong and potent unto good.

HOOKER, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, 1592

(2) This Emperor Prester John, when he goeth in to battle, against any other lord, he hath no banners borne before him: but he hath three crosses of gold, fine, great and high, full of precious stones: and every of the crosses be set in a chariot, full richly arrayed. And for to keep every cross, be ordained ten thousand men of arms, and more than a hundred thousand men on foot, in manner as men would keep a standard in our countries, when that we be in land of war. And this number of folk is without the principal host, and without wings ordained for the battle. And when he hath no war, but rideth with a privy retinue, then he hath borne before him but a cross of tree, without peinture, and without gold or silver or precious stones; in remembrance, that Jesu Christ suffered death upon a cross of tree.

MANDEVILLE, *Travels*, 1400

5. In what respects is each of the following

extracts typical of its author and its age? Write a very brief appreciation of the style of each.

(1) Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.—
Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in those lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wittenberg be sacked;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.

MARLOWE, *Doctor Faustus*

(2) Iffida, the water standing in her eyes, clasping my hand in hers, with a sad countenance answered me thus:

"My good Fidus, if the increasing of my sorrows, might mitigate the extremity of thy sickness, I could be content to resolve myself into tears to rid thee of trouble: but the making of a fresh wound in my body is nothing to the healing of a festered sore in thy bowels: for that such diseases are to be cured in the end, by the names of their original. For as by basil the scorpion is engendered and by the means of the same herb destroyed: so love which by time and fancy is bred in an idle head, is by time and fancy banished from the heart: or as the salamander which, being a long space nourished in the fire, at the last quencheth it, so affection having taken hold of the fancy, and living as it were in the mind of the lover, in tract of time altereth and changeth the heat, and turneth it to chillness.

LYLY, *Euphues and his England*

(3) Cozen german to idleness, and a

concomitant cause which goes hand in hand with it, is *nimia solitudo*, too much solitariness—by the testimony of all physicians, cause and symptom both; but as it is here put for a cause, it is either coact, enforced, or else voluntary. Enforced solitariness is commonly seen in students, monks, friars, anchorites, that, by their order and course of life, must abandon all company, society of other men, and betake themselves to a private cell; *otio superstitioso seclusi* (as Bale and Hospinian well term it), such as are the Carthusians of our time, that eat no flesh (by their order), keep perpetual silence, never go abroad; such as live in prison, or some desert place, and cannot have company, as many of our country gentlemen do in solitary houses; they must either be alone without companions, or live beyond their means, and entertain all comers as so many hosts, or else converse with their servants and hinds, such as are unequal, inferior to them, and of a contrary disposition; or else, as some do, to avoid solitariness, spend their time with lewd fellows in taverns, and in ale-houses, and thence addict themselves to some unlawful disports, or dissolute courses.

BURTON, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*

(4) Mr Peter, as one somewhat severe of nature, said plainly, that the rod only was the sword that must keep the school in obedience, and the scholar in good order. Mr Wotton, a man of mild nature, with soft voice, and few words, inclined to Mr Secretary's judgment, and said, "In mine opinion the school-house should be in deed, as it is called by name, the house of play and pleasure, and not of fear and bondage; and as I do remember, so saith Socrates in one place of Plato. And therefore, if a rod carry the fear of a sword it is no marvel if those that be fearful of nature choose rather to forsake the play, than to stand

always within the fear of a sword in a fond man's handling."

ASCHAM, *The Scholemaster*

(5) Come little babe, come silly soul,
Thy father's shame, thy mother's grief,
Born as I doubt to all our dole,
And to thyself unhappy chief:
Sing lullaby and lap it warm,
Poor soul that thinks no creature harm.

Thou little think'st and less dost know
The cause of this thy mother's moan;
Thou want'st the wit to wail her woe,
And I myself am all alone;
Why dost thou weep, why dost thou wail,
And know'st not yet what thou dost ail?

Come little wretch, ah silly heart,
Mine only joy; what can I more?
If there be any wrong thy smart,
That may the destinies implore;
'Twas I, I say, against my will;
I wail the time, but be thou still.

A Sweet Lullaby
(from *The Arbor of Amorous Devices*)

(6) Ere long they come where that same wicked wight
His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave,[115]
Far underneath a craggie clifty pight,
Darke, dolefull, dreary, like a greedy grave,
That still for carrion carcases doth crave:
On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly Owle,
Shrieking his balefull note, which ever drave
Far from that haunt all other chearefull fowle;
And all about it wandring ghostes did wayle and howle.

And all about old stockes and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit nor leafe was ever seene,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees;
On which had many wretches hanged beene,
Whose carcases were scattred on the greene,
And throwne about the clifts. Arrived there,
That bare-head knight, for dread and dolefull teene,
Would faine have fled, ne durst approchen neare;

But th' other forst him staye, and comforted in
feare.

That darksome cave they enter, where they find
That cursed man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullein mind:
His griesie lockes, long growen and unbound,
Disordered hong about his shoulders round,
And his face, through which his hollow eyne
Lookt deadly dull, and stared as astound;
His raw-bone cheekes, through penurie and pine,
Were shronke into his jawes, as he did never dine.

SPENSER, *The Faerie Queene*

6. What features of Shakespeare's life and literary work does Arnold refer to in the following sonnet? How far do his statements appear to you inaccurate or exaggerated?

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask—thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his stedfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality;
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-
secure,
Didst tread on earth unguess'd at. Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Shakespeare*

7. Compare very carefully the two given extracts from Shakespeare's plays. Observe the handling of each: the simplicity or ornateness of diction, the power of expression, and the strength and flexibility of the blank verse. On these grounds, which would you say was taken from an early and which from a later?

(1) *Cordelia.* He wakes; speak to him.
Doctor. Madam, do you: 'tis fittest.
Cordelia. How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?
Lear. You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.
Cordelia. Sir, do you know me?
Lear. You are a spirit, I know: when did you die?
Cordelia. Still, still, far wide!
Doctor. He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.
Lear. Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?
I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity,
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
Of my condition!

King Lear

(2) *Portia.* It must not be. There is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state. It cannot be.
Shylock. A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!
Portia. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.
Shylock. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.
Portia. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee.
Shylock. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven.
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.
*Portia.*Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart.—Be merciful:
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

The Merchant of Venice

8. Explain and discuss the following statements concerning Shakespeare. Whenever you can, illustrate with examples from the plays.

(1) He was not of an age, but for all time.—JONSON.

(2) Panting time toiled after him in vain.—JOHNSON.

(3) The genius of Shakespeare was an innate universality.

KEATS.

(4) His plays are distinguished by signal adherence to the great laws of nature, that all opposites tend to attract and temper each other.—COLERIDGE.

(5) The striking peculiarity of Shakespeare's mind was its power of communicating with other minds, so that it contained a universe of thought and feeling within itself.—HAZLITT.

9. What were the signs of the "dramatic decline" that set in after Shakespeare? Mention some dramatists whose plays show this decline.

10. Try to account for the weakness of English prose when compared with the poetry of the time.

(1) No single prose writer of the time, not even Hooker, holds the same rank that Spenser holds in poetry.—SAINTSBURY.

(2) The poets and dramatists of the age of Elizabeth completed their work quickly, and attained, by leaps and bounds, to the consummate perfection of their diction. But prose style grows more slowly; and its growth is hindered rather than quickened by the very variety of its subject. —CRAIK.

11. In what respects is the title "Elizabethan literature" open to objection when it is applied to the matter of this chapter? Suggest other titles.

12. To what extent were the University Wits

immature dramatists? What was their contribution to the English drama?

13. “The age of Elizabeth made the most of both native and classical elements.” Discuss this statement.

14. It is frequently stated that during the second half of the Elizabethan period drama weakened and prose strengthened. Confirm or confute the statement.

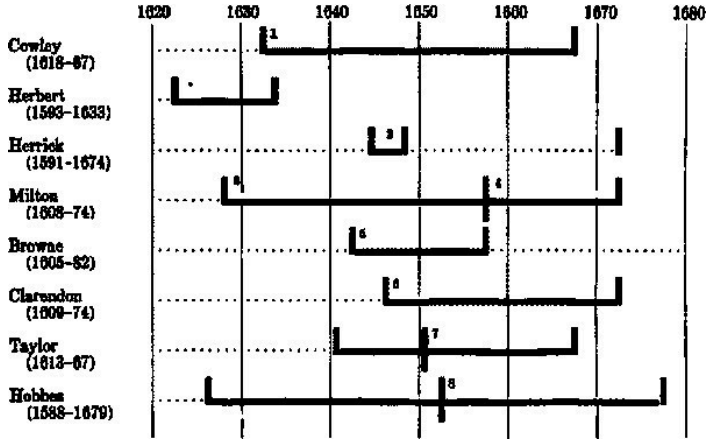
15. How was this time “the Golden Age of the lyric”?

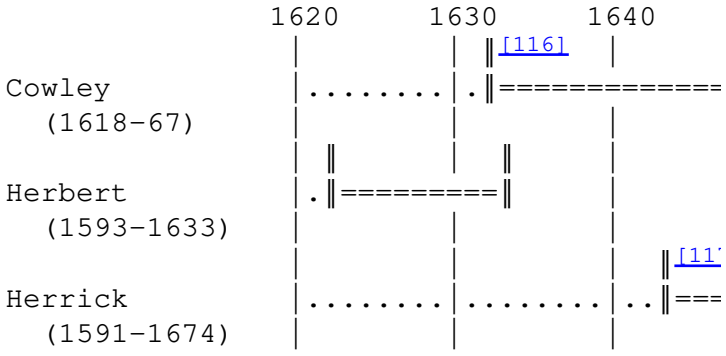
CHAPTER VI

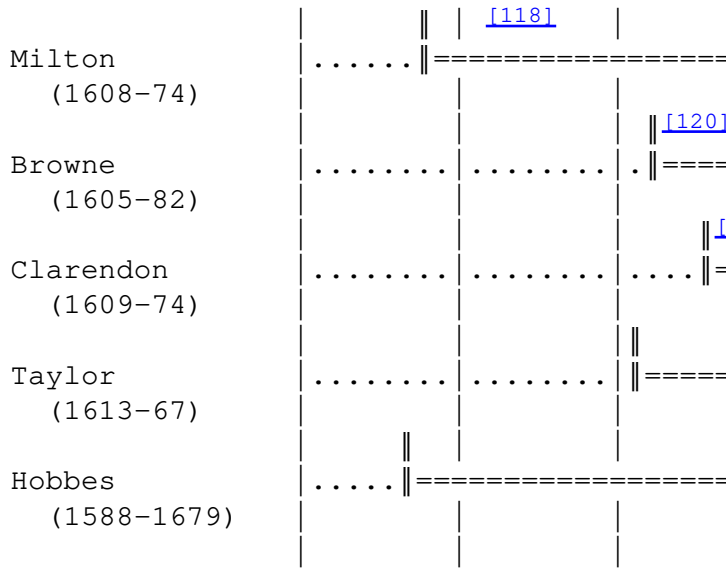
THE AGE OF MILTON

TIME-CHART OF THE CHIEF AUTHORS

The thick line indicates approximately the period of active literary production.







THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1630–60)

The entire period covered by this chapter is dominated by the Civil War. The earlier years are marked by the quarrels and alarms which led up to actual hostilities in 1642; the middle of the period is occupied with the spasmodic fighting that lasted till the execution of Charles I in 1649; and the last portion covers the establishment of the Commonwealth, the rise and disappearance of Cromwell (1654–58), the confusion following upon his death, and the final restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

1. The Reaction. During this period the decline from the high Elizabethan standard is apparent in several ways. (*a*) The output, especially of poetry, is much smaller, and the fashion is toward shorter poems, especially the lyric of a peculiar type. (*b*)

There is a marked decay in the exalted poetical fervor of the previous age. In the new poetry there is more of the intellectual play of fancy than of passion and profundity. And, especially in prose, there is a matured melancholy that one is apt to associate with advancing years. (*c*) In prose there is a marked increase in activity, which is an almost invariable accompaniment of a decline in poetry.

2. The Pressure of Historical Events. Viewed from a broad aspect, the Civil War was only a domestic incident in English history; but the very narrowness of the issue intensified the bitterness of the contest. It divided the people into two factions, and among other things vitally affected the literature of the time. Poetry was benumbed and lifeless, and prose assumed a fierce and disputatious character.

3. The Dominance of Milton. The age is distinguished by the efforts of Milton to keep literature alive. Upon his "Atlantean shoulders" he bears its reputation. Other poets were scrappy and uneven, like the "Metaphysicals"; or flat and uninspired, like Cowley; or shallow and trivial, like Denham. In Milton alone, and even in the prose of Milton to a considerable extent, we find satisfying quantity and quality.

4. The Metaphysical Poets. This term was first used by Johnson, who applied it to Donne and Cowley. It was applied to a kind of poetry, usually lyrical poetry, that often startled the reader by the sudden leaps of its fancy into remoteness and (in exaggerated instances) absurdity. The fashion was popular just before the Civil War broke out, and it can be seen in the works of Herrick, Crashaw, Herbert, Vaughan, and others. More detailed examination of this curious poetical mode will be

found in the notices of these poets.

5. The Cavalier Poets. This name is often loosely applied to the Metaphysical poets; but the latter were usually of a religious and mystical cast, whereas the Cavalier poets were military and swashbuckling in disposition. They were well represented by Lovelace and Suckling.

6. The Expansion of Prose. The development of prose is carried on from the previous age. In spite of the hampering effects of the civil strife, the prose output was copious and excellent in kind. There was a notable advance in the sermon; pamphlets were abundant; and history, politics, philosophy, and miscellaneous kinds were well represented. In addition, there was a remarkable advance in prose style.

7. The Collapse of the Drama. Many things combined to oppress the drama at this time. Chief among these were the civil disturbances and the strong opposition of the Puritans. In temper the age was not dramatic. It is curious to note that Milton's greatest work, which in the Elizabethan age would probably have been dramatic in form, took on the shape of the epic. The actual dramatic work of the period was small and unimportant; and the unequal struggle was terminated by the closing of the theaters in 1642.

JOHN MILTON (1608–74)

1. His Life. Milton was born in Bread Street, Cheapside, London. His father was a money-scrivener, an occupation that combined the duties of the modern banker and lawyer. Milton was educated at St. Paul's School, London, and at Cambridge. At the university his stubborn and irascible nature

declared itself, and owing to insubordination he was "sent down" for a term. On taking his final degree (1632) he abandoned his intention of entering the Church and retired to Horton, a small village in Buckinghamshire, some seventeen miles from London, whither his father had withdrawn from business.

Milton's next few years were those of a sequestered man of letters. Poetry, mathematics, and music were his main studies. In 1638 he left for a tour on the Continent, staying some months in Italy, where he met many scholars and literary men. He was recalled to England by the news that civil war was imminent. He settled down in London and set up a small private school, and when hostilities broke out a year or two later he took no part in the fighting. His pen, however, was active in support of the Parliamentary cause, to which he was passionately attached.

In 1643 he married a woman much younger than himself, and almost immediately his wife left him, and did not return for two years. This unfortunate circumstance led Milton to write two strong pamphlets on divorce, which caused a great scandal at the time. Then in 1649, after the execution of the King, he was appointed by the Commonwealth Government Secretary for Foreign Tongues. In this capacity he became secretary to the Council of State, and drafted Latin documents for transmission to foreign Powers. In addition, he wrote numerous pamphlets in support of the republican cause. By this time his eyesight was failing; and when the Restoration came in 1660 to ruin his hopes, it found him blind, poor, and alone. He escaped, however, from the severe punishments that were inflicted

upon many prominent Roundheads. He was slightly punished by a nominal imprisonment; retired to an obscure village in Buckinghamshire to write poetry; and died in London, where he was buried.

2. His Prose. Most of Milton's prose was written during the middle period of his life (1640–60), when he was busy with public affairs. The prose works have an unusual interest, because as a rule they have a direct bearing on either his personal business or public interests. In all they amount to twenty-five pamphlets, of which twenty-one are in English and the remaining four in Latin.

He began pamphleteering quite early (1641), when he engaged in a lively controversy with Bishop Hall over episcopacy. Then, while teaching, he wrote a rather poor tract, *Of Education* (1644). When his wife deserted him he composed two pamphlets on divorce (1643–4), which scandalized the public by the freedom of their opinions and the slashing nature of their style. The critics of the pamphlets sought to confound Milton on a technical matter by pointing out that he had not licensed the books, as required by law. To this Milton retorted with the greatest of all his tracts, *Areopagitica* (1644), a noble and impassioned plea for the liberty of the Press. Later works include a defense (in Latin) of the execution of Charles I and of other actions of the Commonwealth Government. During the last years of his life Milton partly completed a *History of Britain* and other scholastic works.

When we consider the style of Milton's prose we must keep in mind how it was occasioned. His pamphlets were cast off at white heat and precipitated into print while some topic was in urgent debate either in Milton's or the public mind.

Hence in method they are tempestuous and disordered; voluble, violent, and lax in style. They reveal intense zeal and pugnacity, a mind at once spacious in ideals and intolerant in application, a rich fancy, and a capacious scholarship. They lack humor, proportion, and restraint; but in spite of these defects they are among the greatest controversial compositions in the language. A short extract will illustrate some of the Miltonic features:

> I deny not but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors: for books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragons' teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.
>
> *Areopagitica*

3. His Poetry. The great bulk of Milton's poetry was written during two periods separated from each other by twenty years: (*a*) the period of his university career and his stay at Horton, from 1629 to 1640; and (*b*) the last years of his life, from about

1660 to 1674. The years between were filled by a few sonnets.

(*a*) While still an undergraduate Milton began to compose poems of remarkable maturity and promise. They include the fine and stately *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1629), and the poems *On Shakespeare* (1630) and *On Arriving at the Age of Twenty-three* (1631). These poems show Milton's command of impressive diction and his high ideals, both literary and religious. While at Horton (1634) he composed *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, two longish poems in octosyllabic couplets dealing with the respective experiences of the gay and thoughtful man. The pieces are decorative rather than descriptive, artificial rather than natural, but they are full of scholarly fancy and adroit poetical phrasing. *Comus* (1637) belongs to this period, and is a masque containing some stiff but beautiful blank verse and some quite charming lyrical measures. *Lycidas* (1637) is an elegy on his friend Edward King, who was drowned on a voyage to Ireland.

Lycidas, which is to be reckoned as among the highest of Milton's achievements, is something quite new in English poetry. In form it is pastoral, but this artificial medium serves only to show the power of Milton's grip, which can wring from intractable material the very essence of poetry. The elegy has the color and music of the best Spenserian verse; but it has a climbing majesty of epithet and a dignified intensity of passion that Spenser does not possess. Its meter is an irregular stanza-sequence and rhyme-sequence of a peculiar haunting beauty.

> For, so to interpose a little ease,
> Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise;
> Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
> Wash far away,—where'er thy bones are hurled,

Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides
Where thou perhaps, under the whelming tide,
Visitest the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold....

(*b*) This period (1660–74) gives us the poetry of the matured Milton. The work of the middle years is composed of a few sonnets. These, with some others written at different times, sufficiently show Milton's command of the Italian form, which he uses throughout. He gives it a sweep and sonorous impressiveness that set him alone beside Wordsworth, who in this respect is his poetical successor. The best of Milton's sonnets are *On his Blindness* and *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont.*

The great work of this time is *Paradise Lost.* It was begun as early as 1658, and issued in 1667. At first it was divided into ten books or parts, but in the second edition it was redivided into twelve. In form it follows the strict unity of the classical epic; in theme it deals with the fall of man; but by means of introduced narratives it covers the rebellion of Lucifer in heaven, the celestial warfare, and the expulsion of the rebels. In conception the poem is spacious and commanding; it is sumptuously adorned with all the detail that Milton's rich imagination, fed with classical and Biblical lore, can suggest; the characters, especially that of Lucifer, are drawn on a gigantic scale, and do not lack a certain tragic immensity; and the blank verse in which the work is composed is new and wonderful. This type of blank verse has founded a tradition in English; it has often been imitated and modified, but never paralleled. It lacks the suppleness of the Shakespearian measure; but it is instinct with beauty and scholarly care. It is

almost infinite in modulation; varied cunningly in scansion, in pause, in cadence, and in sonorous dignity of music. It has its lapses into wordiness and bombast, but the lapses are few indeed.

In the following extract the construction of the blank verse should be carefully observed. The variation of foot, pause, and melody is worthy of the closest study.

> No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all
> The multitude of angels, with a shout
> Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
> As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heaven rung
> With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
> The eternal regions. Lowly reverent
> Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground,
> With solemn adoration, down they cast
> Their crowns inwove with amarant and gold—
> Immortal amarant, a flower which once
> In Paradise, fast by the tree of life,
> Began to bloom; but soon for man's offence
> To Heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,
> And flowers aloft, shading the fount of life,
> And where the river of bliss, through midst of Heaven,
> Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream.

In 1671 Milton issued his last volume of poetry, which contained *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. The former poem, which tells of Christ's temptation and victory, is complementary to the earlier epic, and Milton hoped that it would surpass its predecessor. In this his hopes were dashed. It is briefer and poorer than *Paradise Lost*; it lacks the exalted imagination, the adornment, and the ornate rhythms of the earlier poem. There is little action, the characters are uninteresting, and the work approaches *Paradise Lost* only in a few outstanding passages.

Samson Agonistes, which tells of Samson's death while a prisoner of the Philistines, has a curious interest, for in the Biblical hero Milton saw more than one resemblance to himself. In form the work has the strict unity of time, place, and action universal in Greek tragedy. In style it is bleak and bare, in places harsh and forbidding; but in several places Milton's stubborn soul is wrung with pity and exalted by the hope that looks beyond. The speech of Samson's father over his dead son is no inappropriate epitaph for Milton himself:

> Come, come, no time for lamentation now,
> Nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself
> Like Samson, and heroically hath finished
> A life heroic, on his enemies
> Fully revenged, hath left them years of mourning,
> To himself and father's house eternal fame;
> And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
> With God not parted from him, as was feared,
> But favouring and assisting to the end.
> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

4. Features of his Poetry. (*a*) *The Puritan Strain.* All through his life Milton's religious fervor was unshaken. Even his enemies did not deny his sincerity. It is seen even in one of his earliest sonnets:

> All is, if I have grace to use it so,
> As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye.

It persists even to the end, when it runs deeper and darker. In *Paradise Lost*, for example, his chief motive is to "justify the ways of God to men."

This religious tendency is apparent in (1) the choice of religious subjects, especially in the later poems; (2) the sense of responsibility and moral

exaltation; (3) the fondness for preaching and lecturing, which in *Paradise Lost* is a positive weakness; (4) the narrowness of outlook, strongly Puritanical, seen in his outbursts against his opponents (as in *Lycidas*), in his belief regarding the inferiority of women, and in his scorn for the "miscellaneous rabble."

(*b*) *The Classical Strain.* Curiously interwoven with the severity of his religious nature is a strong bent for the classics, which is pagan and sensuous. His learning was wide and matured; he wrote Latin prose and verse as freely as he wrote English. His classical bent is apparent in (1) his choice of classical and semi-classical forms—the epic, the Greek tragedy, the pastoral, and the sonnet; (2) the elaborate descriptions and enormous similes in *Paradise Lost*; (3) the fondness for classical allusion, which runs riot through all his poetry; (4) the dignity of his style, and its precision and care. His very egoism takes a high classical turn. In his blindness he compares himself with

> Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
> And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old.

In his choice of diction we have the classical element abundantly apparent; and, lastly, the same element appears in the typical Miltonic grandeur and frigidity, the arrogant aloofness from men and mortals.

(*c*) *His Poetical Genius.* As a poet Milton is not a great innovator; his function is rather to refine and make perfect. Every form he touches acquires a finality of grace and dignity. The epic, the ode, the classical drama, the sonnet, the masque, and the elegy—his achievements in these have never been

bettered and seldom approached. As a metrist he stands almost alone. In all his meters we observe the same ease, sureness, and success.

(*d*) *His Position in Literature.* In literature Milton occupies an important central or transitional position. He came immediately after the Elizabethan epoch, when the Elizabethan methods were crumbling into chaos. His hand and temper were firm enough to gather into one system the wavering tendencies of poetry, and to give them sureness, accuracy, and variety. The next generation, lacking the inspiration of the Elizabethans, found in him the necessary stimulus to order and accuracy; and from him, to a great extent, sprang the new "classicism" that was to be the rule for more than a century.

OTHER POETS

1. Abraham Cowley (1618–67) was born in London, the son of a wealthy citizen. He was educated at Westminster School and at Cambridge, where he distinguished himself as a classical scholar. In the Civil War he warmly supported the King; followed the royal family into exile, where he performed valuable services; returned to England at the Restoration; and for the remainder of his life composed books in retirement.

Cowley, even more than Pope and Macaulay, is the great example of the infant prodigy. When he was ten he wrote a long epical romance, *Piramus and Thisbe* (1628), and two years later produced an even longer poem called *Constantia and Philetus* (1630). All through his life he was active in the production of many kinds of work—poems, plays, essays, and histories. His best-known poem was *The Davideis* (1637), a rather dreary epic on King David, in heroic

couplets. Other poems were *The Mistress* (1647), a collection of love-poems, and the *Pindarique Odes*, which are a curious hybrid between the early freedom of the Elizabethans and the classicism of the later generation. His prose works included his *Essays* and *Discourse concerning Oliver Cromwell* (1661).

Both in prose and poetry Cowley was a man of various methods, showing the wavering moods of the transitional poet. His heroic couplets and irregular odes foreshadow the vogue of the approaching "correctness"; his essays, in their pleasant egoism and miscellaneous subject-matter, suggest Addison; and his prose style, plain and not inelegant, draws near to the mode of Dryden. His variety pleased many tastes; hence the popularity that was showered upon him during his day. But he excelled in no particular method; and hence the partial oblivion that has followed.

2. The Metaphysical Poets. The works of this group of poets have several features in common: (i) the poetry is to a great extent lyrical; (ii) in subject it is chiefly religious or amatory; (iii) there is much metrical facility, even in complicated lyrical stanzas; (iv) the poetic style is sometimes almost startling in its sudden beauty of phrase and melody of diction, but there are unexpected turns of language and figures of speech (hence the name of the group).

(*a*) **Robert Herrick (1591–1674)** was born in London, and educated at Westminster School and at Cambridge, where he lived for fourteen years. He was appointed to a living in Devonshire, where he died.

His two volumes of poems are *Noble Numbers* (1647) and *Hesperides* (1648). Both are collections of

short poems, sacred and profane. In them he reveals lyrical power of a high order; fresh, passionate, and felicitously exact, but at the same time meditative and observant. Herrick was strongly influenced by Jonson and the classics; he delighted in the good things of this world; but that did not prevent his having a keen enjoyment of nature and a fresh outlook upon life. Among the best known of his shorter pieces are *To Anthea*, *To Julia*, and *Cherry Ripe*.

(*b*) **George Herbert (1593–1633)** was born at Montgomery Castle, educated at Westminster School and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was appointed Fellow and reader, took holy orders, and was given in turn livings near Huntingdon and at Bemerton, near Salisbury.

None of his poems was published during his lifetime. On his death-bed he gave to a friend the manuscript of *The Temple*, a collection of religious poems in various meters. The poems, of a high quality, are inspired with a devout piety which is often fantastically expressed and quaintly figured. His poetry is not so "metaphysical" as that of some others of his group; but neither does it rise to the great heights that they sometimes achieve.

(*c*) **Richard Crashaw (1613–50)**, the son of a clergyman, was born in London, and educated at the Charterhouse and at Cambridge. During the Civil War, in which he was a strong Royalist, he was compelled to escape to France, where he became a Roman Catholic. At a later stage he went to Rome and to Loretto. At the latter place he died and was buried.

Crashaw represents the best and the worst of the Metaphysical poets. At his best he has an energy and

triumphant rapture that, outside the poems of Shelley, are rarely equaled in English; at his worst he is shrill, frothy, and conceited. His style at its best is harmonious, precise, and nobly elevated; at its worst it is disfigured by obscurity, perversity, and unseemly images. His chief work is *Steps to the Temple* (1646).

We quote an extract to show the exalted mood to which his poetry can ascend:

> Live in these conquering leaves; live all the same;
> And walk through all tongues one triumphant flame;
> Live here, great heart;[124] and love, and die, and kill;
> And bleed, and wound, and yield, and conquer still.
> Let this immortal life where'er it comes
> Walk in a crowd of loves and martyrdoms.
> Let mystic deaths wait on't; and wise souls be
> The love-slain witnesses of this life of thee.
> O sweet incendiary! show here thy art,
> Upon this carcase of a hard cold heart....
> Oh thou undaunted daughter of desires!
> By all thy power of lights and fires;...
> By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire;
> By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;
> By the full kingdom of that final kiss
> That seized thy parting soul, and sealed thee his;...
> Leave nothing of myself in me.
>
> *The Flaming Heart*

(*d*) **Henry Vaughan (1622–95)** was born in Wales, and was descended from an ancient family. He went to London to study law, then turned to medicine, and practiced at Brecon. His books include *Poems* (1646), *Olor Iscanus* (1647), *Silex Scintillans* (1650), and *Thalia Rediviva* (1678).

Vaughan's love-poems, though they are often prettily and sometimes beautifully phrased, are inferior to his religious pieces, especially those in

Silex Scintillans. His religious fervor is nobly imaginative, and strikes out lines and ideas of astonishing strength and beauty. His regard for nature, moreover, has a closeness and penetration that sometimes (for example, in *The Retreat*) suggests Wordsworth.

(*e*) **Thomas Carew (1595–1645)** was born in Kent, educated at Oxford, and studied law in the Middle Temple. He attained to some success as a courtier, but later died in obscurity. The date of his death is uncertain, but it was probably 1645.

His *Poems* (1640) show his undoubted lyrical ability. The pieces are influenced by Donne and Jonson, but they have a character of their own. The fancy is warmly colored, though it is marred by license and bad taste. We quote a lyric which can be taken as representative of the best of its kind. Its fancy is too rich and beautiful to be called fantastic, and its golden felicity of diction is rarely equaled.

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.

Ask me no more whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day,
For, in pure love, heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past,
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more if east or west
The phœnix builds her spicy nest,
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

3. The **Cavalier poets** are lyrical poets, and deal chiefly with love and war.

(*a*) **Richard Lovelace (1618–58)** was born at Woolwich, was educated at the Charterhouse and at Oxford, and became an officer in the King's household. When the Civil War broke out he was imprisoned by the Roundheads; and, being liberated on parole, could do little actively to assist Charles. At a later stage he saw some soldiering in France, returned to England, and died in obscure circumstances.

His volume *Lucasta* (1649) contains the best of his shorter pieces, which had appeared at different times previously. He is essentially the poet of attractive scraps and fancies, elegantly and wittily expressed. Some of his lyrics, such as *To Althea, from Prison* and *To Lucasta, Going to the Wars*, have retained their popularity.

(*b*) **Sir John Suckling (1609–42)** was born in Middlesex, and at the age of eighteen fell heir to a large fortune. He was educated at Oxford, traveled on the Continent, served as a volunteer under Gustavus Adolphus, and became a favorite of Charles I. He was implicated in Royalist plots, and escaped abroad (1640), where he died under conditions that are somewhat mysterious.

To some extent (for he seems to have lacked physical courage) Suckling was the cavalier of the romances and the Restoration plays—gay, generous, and witty. His poems largely reflect these characteristics. As a poet he has great ability, but he is usually the elegant amateur, disdaining serious and sustained labor. Some of his poems, such as the *Ballad upon a Wedding* (see p. 186), and "Why so pale and wan, fond lover?" show the tricksy elegance that

is his chief attraction.

DRAMA

1. Philip Massinger (1583–1640) was born at Salisbury, educated at Oxford, and became a literary man in London, writing plays for the King's Men, a company of actors. If we may judge from his begging letters that survive, he found in dramatic work little financial encouragement. He died and was buried in London.

Massinger did much hack-work, and was fond of working out topical and moral themes; so that a large amount of his work is of little permanent importance. The best of his many plays are *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625) and *The City Madam* (1632), two quite fine comedies; and *The Duke of Milan* (1618) and *The Unnatural Combat* (1619), quite respectable tragedies. The level of Massinger's workmanship is laudably high; he is remarkably uniform in quality; and in a few cases (as in that of Sir Giles Overreach in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*) he has created characters of real distinction. He followed the fashion of the time in collaborating with other dramatists. *The Virgin Martyr*, produced jointly with Dekker, is perhaps the most important of this class of play.

2. John Ford (1586–1640) was born in Devonshire, educated at Oxford, and studied, though he seems never to have practiced, law. He became an active producer of plays, chiefly tragedies, both on his own account and in collaboration with other playwrights.

In his nature Ford had a morbid twist which gave him a strange liking for the horrible and the

unnatural. His plays are unequal in quality; but the most powerful of them are prevented from being revolting by their real tragic force and their high literary aims. In *The Broken Heart* (acted in 1629) he harrows the reader's feelings almost beyond endurance; his *Perkin Warbeck* (1634), a historical tragedy, is reckoned to be the best historical drama outside of Shakespeare; and in *The Witch of Edmonton* (about 1633) he collaborated with Dekker and Rowley to produce a powerful domestic drama. Others of the sixteen plays attributed to him are *The Lover's Melancholy* (1629), *Love's Sacrifice* (1633), and *The Fancies Chaste and Noble* (1638).

SIR THOMAS BROWNE (1605–82)

Browne may be taken as representative of the best prose-writers of the period.

1. His Life. He was born in London, educated at Winchester and Oxford, and studied medicine. For a time he practiced in Oxfordshire; then he traveled abroad, receiving his degree of M.D. at Leyden. Returning to London (1634), he soon removed to Norwich, where for the remainder of his life he successfully practiced as a doctor.

2. His Works. Almost alone among his contemporaries, Browne seems to have been unaffected by the commotions of the time. His prose works, produced during some of the hottest years of civil contention, are tranquilly oblivious of unrest. His books are only five in number, are individually small in size, and are of great and almost uniform merit. *Religio Medici* (1642), his confession of faith, is a curious mixture of credulity and skepticism; *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, or *Vulgar Errors* (1646), shared the same mental inconsistency, resembles the

work of Burton in its out-of-the-way learning; *Hydriotaphia or Erne Buriall* (1658), commonly considered to be his masterpiece, contains reflections on human mortality induced by the discovery of some ancient funeral urns; *The Garden of Cyrus* (1658) is a treatise on the quincunx. The last work, *Christian Morals*, was published after his death.

3. His Style. As a philosopher Browne is either obscure and confusing, as in *Religio Medici*, or unoriginal and obvious, as in *Hydriotaphia*. His learning, though it is wide and accurate, is too far-fetched and strange to be of much practical use. But as a literary stylist he is very valuable indeed. He shows the ornate style of the time in its richest bloom. His diction is strongly Latinized, sometimes to the limit of obscurity; and he has the scholastic habit of introducing Latin tags and references. In this he resembles Burton; but in other respects he is far beyond the author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. His sentences are carefully wrought and artistically combined into paragraphs; and, most important from the purely literary point of view, the diction has a richness of effect unknown among other English prose-writers. The rhythm is harmonious, and finishes with carefully attuned cadences. The prose is sometimes obscure, rarely vivacious, and hardly ever diverting; but the solemnity and beauty of it have given it an enduring fascination. A brief extract will illustrate some of its qualities:

> Pious spirits who passed their days in raptures of futurity, made little more of this world, than the world that was before it, while they lay obscure in the chaos of preordination, and night of their fore-beings. And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, ecstasies, exolution, liquefaction,

> transformation, the kiss of the spouse, gustation of God, and ingression into the divine shadow, they have already had an handsome anticipation of heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, and the earth in ashes unto them.
>
> To subsist in lasting monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names and predicament of chimeras, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their Elysiums. But all this is nothing in the metaphysics of true belief. To live, indeed, is to be again ourselves, which being not only an hope, but an evidence in noble believers, 'tis all one to lie in St Innocent's churchyard, as in the sands of Egypt. Ready to be anything, in the ecstasy of being ever, and as content with six foot as the *moles* of Adrianus.
>
> *Hydriotaphia*

OTHER PROSE-WRITERS

1. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1609–74), was born in Wiltshire, educated at Oxford, and studied law. A man of excellent address, he was a successful lawyer, and became a member of the House of Commons. At first he was attached to the Parliamentary side, but he separated from the party on account of their attitude to the Church. He changed over to the Royalists, and thenceforward became one of the foremost advocates of the King's cause. After the downfall of the Royalists he accompanied the young Charles into exile; and at the Restoration he was appointed Lord Chancellor and raised to the peerage as Earl of Clarendon. He was too severe for the frivolous Restoration times, was exiled (1667), and died in France. His body was buried in Westminster Abbey.

His great work, *The History of the Great Rebellion*,

was begun as early as 1646 and finished during the years of his last exile. It was not published till 1704. To some extent the work is based on his own knowledge of the struggle; it lacks proportion and complete accuracy; but the narrative is strong and attractive, and it contains masterly character-sketches of some of the chief figures in the struggle. It is composed in long, lumbering sentences, loaded with parentheses and digressions, but the style is readable. It is the most important English work of a historical nature up to the date of its issue.

2. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) was born at Malmesbury, and was the son of a clergyman. He finished his education at Oxford, and became tutor to the future Earl of Devonshire. He supported the Royalist cause, was exiled by the Roundheads, and at the Restoration was awarded a pension. The remainder of his long life was devoted to literature.

Hobbes took an active part in the intellectual broils of the period, and much of his work is violently contentious. His chief book was *The Leviathan* (1651), which expounded his political theories. The ardor of his opinions embroiled him with both of the chief political parties, but the abuse that it occasioned gave the book an immense interest. The style in which it is written is hard, clear, and accurate—almost the ideal medium for sustained exposition and argument.

3. Jeremy Taylor (1613–67) is the most prominent literary divine of the period. The son of a barber, he was born and educated at Cambridge, though latterly he removed to Oxford. Taking holy orders, he distinguished himself as an ardent expounder of the Royalist cause, and for a time he was imprisoned by the Parliamentary party. At the

Restoration he was rewarded by being appointed to the Irish bishoprics of Down and Dromore. He died in Ireland.

A learned, voluble, and impressive preacher, Taylor carried the same qualities into his prose works, which consisted of tracts, sermons, and theological books. His most popular works, in addition to his collections of sermons, were *The Liberty of Prophesying* (1647), *Holy Living* (1650), and *Holy Dying* (1651). In his writings he is fond of quotations and allusions and of florid, rhetorical figures, such as simile, exclamation, and apostrophe; and his language, built into long, stately, but comprehensible sentences, is abundant, melodious, and pleasing.

4. Thomas Fuller (1608–61) was born in Northamptonshire, his father being a clergyman. He was educated at Cambridge, and took holy orders. He received various appointments, and by his witty sermons attracted the notice of Charles I. During the Civil War he was a chaplain to the Royalist forces; but when his side was defeated he made his peace with the Parliamentary party and was permitted to carry on his literary labors. He died the year after the Restoration.

Fuller had an original and penetrating mind, a wit apt for caustic comment, and an industry that remained unimpaired till the end of his life. His literary works are therefore of great interest and value. His serious historical books include *The History of the Holy War* (1639), dealing with the Crusades, and *The Church-History of Britain* (1655). Among his pamphlets are *Good Thoughts in Bad Times* (1645), and *An Alarum to the Counties of England and Wales* (1660). The work that has given him his

reputation is his *Worthies of England*, published by his son in 1662. It shows his peculiar jocosity at its best.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

1. Poetry. (*a*) *The Lyric.* The period is rich in lyrical poetry of a peculiar kind. The theme is chiefly love or religion. Most of the love-poems are dedicated to ladies of the usual literary convention, such as Althea, Celia, and Phyllis, who both in name and nature resemble the stock characters of the artificial pastoral poetry. The language addressed to such creations cannot be that of deep and genuine passion; it is rather that of polite compliment, verbal quibble, or courtly jest. This type of lyric is a charming literary exercise, but hardly the inspired searching of the lover's heart. We have already noticed the poems of Herrick, Lovelace, and Carew as being representative of this class. To these names may be added those of **George Wither (1588–1667)**, who writes freshly and sweetly, **Andrew Marvell (1621–78)**, who sometimes reveals real passion, and the numerous miscellaneous songwriters, mostly anonymous, who in inspired moments could produce such charming lyrics as "Phillada flouts me."

The religious lyric, on the other hand, as we can see in the case of Crashaw and Vaughan, is frequently passionately inspired; but the passions are vaguely expressed; and we have commented upon the incongruity that frequently disfigures the style. In the case of Milton his lyrics are superbly phrased, but they too lack spontaneity. His sonnets, among the noblest of their class, have much more depth of feeling.

(*b*) *The Epic.* The true epic treats of a sublime subject in the grand manner. In some respects

Beowulf is an epic, but strictly speaking the epic does not appear till this age. Cowley's *Davideis* (1637) and Davenant's *Gondibert* (1651) aspire to be great epics; but though they subscribe to the rules governing the outward form of the species they lack the inner spirit and they are failures. Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1658) has the heat and inspiration, but the Puritan bias in his nature led him to the rather unsuitable subject of the fall of man. It is unsuitable because it is weak in heroic action. Much more appropriate would have been the story of King Arthur, which for a long time he thought of using. Otherwise Milton's treatment of the subject is strictly orthodox. Nominally at least he adheres to the epical unity of action; he draws his characters with a wide sweep; and the style is a triumph of English epical style. His *Paradise Regained* (1671) is worked out on the same lines, but it is shorter and weaker than the earlier epic.

(*c*) *The Ode.* In Spenser's *Epithalamion* and *Prothalamion* we have seen the irregular ode attain to a high degree of perfection. In this age we observe the appearance of the Pindaric ode, which was to be so popular in the succeeding generations. Though it appears to be irregular, the Pindaric ode is really bound by stringent rules; its language is ornately artificial; and its diction mannered and unreal. Therefore it is suited to the needs of a transitional period that desires artificiality with a show of freedom. Cowley's *Pindarique Odes* (1656) are the first of their class in English.

(*d*) *Descriptive and Narrative Poetry.* In this wide class we may include Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, Herrick's pastoral poems, and Crashaw's religious-descriptive pieces. To these may be added the *Cooper Hill* (1641) of **Sir John Denham (1615–**

69), a descriptive poem much praised in its day, and the romantic poem *Pharonnida* (1659) by **William Chamberlayne (1619–89)**. In all these poems we may observe the growing tendency to avoid contact with actual wild nature, and to seek rather the conventional and bookish landscapes familiar in the more artificial classical authors. Already the new classicism is declaring itself.

2. Drama. Earlier in this chapter we have noticed the decline and temporary collapse of the drama (1642). The plays of Massinger sustain the expiring spirit of the great Elizabethans; those of Ford follow the tragical school of Webster and Tourneur. Other playwrights are **James Shirley (1596–1666)**, who wrote some pleasing comedies of London life, such as *The Lady of Pleasure* (1637), and the feebler writers **Suckling** and **Davenant**.

3. Prose. While the period is almost devoid of narrative prose of the lighter sort, it is quite rich in prose of other kinds.

(*a*) *The Sermon.* This period has been called "the Golden Age of the English pulpit." No doubt the violent religious strife of the time has much to do with the great flow of sermon writing, which is marked with eloquence, learning, and strong argument. In addition to Jeremy Taylor and Fuller, already mentioned, we may notice **Robert South (1634–1716)**, who writes rather more briefly and simply than the rest, **Isaac Barrow (1630–77)**, learned and copious, and **Richard Baxter (1615–91)**, a Nonconformist, whose *Saints' Everlasting Rest* (1649) has survived all his preachings.

(*b*) *Philosophical Works.* On the moral side there are the works of Sir Thomas Browne; on the political those of Hobbes; and on the religious side the books

of **John Hales (1584–1656)**. Works of this type show a growing knowledge and advancing scholarship, joined sometimes to quaint conceits and artless credulity.

(*c*) *Historical Works.* In this class Clarendon's and Fuller's works stand pre-eminent. The development of the history will be noticed in a future chapter (see p. 340).

(*d*) *Miscellaneous Prose.* In this large and varied group may be included the pamphlets of Milton, Hobbes, Fuller, and many more; the attractive books of **Isaac Walton (1593–1683)**, whose *Compleat Angler* (1653) is the classic of its kind; the interesting *Resolves*, short miscellaneous essays, of **Owen Fellltham (1602–68)**; and the *Letters* (1645), an early type of essay-journalism, of **James Howell (1594–1666)**.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

1. Poetry. In surveying the poetical style of the age one is aware of conflicting tendencies, a state of affairs quite in keeping with the transitional nature of the time.

(*a*) The *lyrical style* shows a decline from the natural splendors of the Elizabethan age; but it shows an increase in care, in polish, and in actual metrical dexterity. Moreover, in the best examples of the time we find a melodious resonance and beauty that is quite peculiar to the period. The lyric of Carew quoted on p. 172 illustrates this felicity both of sound and expression. The startling "metaphysical" quality of the works of many of the poets has been commented upon. It is revealed at its worst in the works of **John Cleveland (1613–58)**, whose more violent efforts came to be known as

"*Clevelandisms*." The following is a mild example of his manner:

> The flowers, called out of their beds,
> Start and raise up their drowsy heads;
> And he that for their colour seeks,
> Will find it mantling in her cheeks,
> Where roses mix; no civil war
> Between her York and Lancaster.
> The marigold, whose courtier face
> Echoes the sun, and doth unlace
> Her at his rise, at his full stop
> Packs and shuts up her gaudy shop,
> Mistakes her cue, and doth display:
> Thus Phillis antedates the day.
>
> *On Phillis, walking before Sunrise*

(*b*) In *blank verse* conflicting movements are also apparent. In Milton the style reaches a magnificent climax. But in the drama, especially in the drama of minor playwrights of the ability of Suckling and Davenant, it becomes a huddle of verse and prose, so bad that one hesitates to say where the verse ends and the prose begins. It is the last stage of poetical decrepitude.

(*c*) The *heroic couplet* begins to appear, ushering in its long reign. We have it appearing as early as Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579) and Sandys's *Ovid* (1626); but the true stopped couplet, as used by Dryden and developed by Pope, is usually set down to the credit of Cowley's *Davideis* (1637), or Denham's *Cooper's Hill* (1641), or the shorter poems of **Edmund Waller (1606–87)**, who wrote stopped couplets as early as 1623. The heroic couplet will receive further notice in the next chapter.

TABLE TO ILLUSTRATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

DATE	POETRY			DRAMA	
	Lyric	Epic	Descriptive	Comedy	Trag

1630	Wither Milton[125]		Cowley	Massinger	Ford
1640	Herbert Suckling Carew	Cowley	Milton	Suckling Davenant	
1650	Crashaw Vaughan Herrick Lovelace	Davenant	Denham		
1660	Marvell Cowley	Milton[129]	Chamberlayne		
1670					Milto

2. Prose. In prose also we see the opposing tendencies. The principal movement is toward ornate prose, in Browne, Jeremy Taylor, Clarendon, and in

the Scottish writer **William Drummond (1585–1649)**, whose *Cypress Grove* (1616) is in the fashionable funereal vein. In the middle style we have the precision of Hobbes in *The Leviathan*. At the other extreme from the ornate, the miscellaneous writers adopt great simplicity. Of this class, which includes Howell and Fellltham, the best example is Isaac Walton, whose artless prose is shown in the following specimen:

> *Piscator.* O sir, doubt not but that angling is an art. Is it not an art to deceive a trout with an artificial fly? a trout that is more sharp-sighted than any hawk you have named, and more watchful and timorous than your high-mettled merlin is bold! and yet I doubt not to catch a brace or two to-morrow for a friend's breakfast. Doubt not, therefore, sir, but that angling is an art, and an art worth your learning; the question is rather, whether you be capable of learning it? for angling is somewhat like poetry, men are to be born so—I mean with inclinations to it, though both may be heightened by discourse and practice; but he that hopes to be a good angler must not only bring an inquiring, searching, observing wit, but he must bring a large measure of hope and patience, and a love and propensity to the art itself; but having once got and practised it, then doubt not but angling will prove to be so pleasant that it will prove to be like virtue, a reward to itself.
>
> *The Compleat Angler*

EXERCISES

1. The following extracts illustrate the good and bad features of the "metaphysical" style in poetry. Comment upon each feature as it appears to you, and estimate the value of the style as a literary medium.

(1) Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two,
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must
Like th' other foot obliquely run,
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

DONNE, *A Valediction forbidding Mourning*

(2) But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near,
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song: then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust:
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

MARVELL, *To his Coy Mistress*

(3) When, like committed linnets, I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
And glories of my King;
When I shall voice aloud, how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlarged winds that curl the flood
Know no such liberty.

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

If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.
LOVELACE, *To Althea, from Prison*

(4) Each little pimple had a tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit.
DRYDEN, *Upon the Death of the Lord Hastings*

(5) The plants, whose luxury was lopped,
Or age with crutches underpropped,
Whose wooden carcases are grown
To be but coffins of their own,
Revive, and at her general dole,
Each receives his ancient soul.
CLEVELAND

(6) Her finger was so small, the ring,
Would not stay on, which they did bring,
It was too wide a peck:
And to say the truth (for out it must)
It looked like the great collar (just)
About our young colt's neck.

Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out,
As if they feared the light:
But O, she dances such a way!
No sun upon an Easter-day
Is half so fine a sight.

Her cheeks so rare a white was on,
No daisy makes comparison,
(Who sees them is undone),
For streaks of red were mingled there,
Such as are on a Catherine pear
The side that's next the sun.
SUCKLING, *A Ballad upon a Wedding*

2. Compare the following examples of Milton's earlier and later blank verse respectively. Observe the metrical dexterity, the cadence, and the vowel-music.

(1) They left me then, when the gray-hooded even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed

Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts; 'tis likeliest
They had engaged their wandering steps too far;
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me: else, O thievish night,
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,
That nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?

Comus

(2) Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair,
Presented with a universal blank
Of nature's works to me expung'd and ras'd,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.

Paradise Lost

3. The following paragraph is fairly typical both of the prose of Jeremy Taylor and of that of the period in general. Point out the good and bad qualities of the style, and estimate its value.

Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God. For so have I seen 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 sighings 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. So is the prayer of a good man: when his affairs have required business, and his business was matter of discipline, and his discipline was to pass upon a sinning person, or had a design of charity, his duty met with the infirmities of a man, and anger was its instrument; and the instrument became stronger than the prime agent, and raised a tempest, and overruled the man; and then his prayer was broken, and his thoughts were troubled, and his words went up towards a cloud; and his thoughts pulled them back again, and made them without intention; and the good man sighs for his infirmity, but must be content to lose that prayer, and he must recover it when his anger is removed, and his spirit is becalmed, made even as the brow of Jesus, and smooth like the heart of God; and then it ascends to heaven upon the wings of the holy dove, and dwells with God, till it returns, like the useful bee, laden with a blessing and the dew of heaven.

JEREMY TAYLOR, *On Prayer*

4. Explain the references in the following passages. What parts of Milton's character and literary works are emphasized?

(1) Nor second he, that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secret of th' abyss to spy.
He passed the flaming bounds of place and time
—
The living throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.

GRAY, *The Progress of Poesy*

(2) Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour.[131]
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters; altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

WORDSWORTH, *To Milton*

(3) He left the upland lawns and serene air
Wherefrom his soul her noble nurture drew,
And reared his helm among the unquiet crew
Battling beneath; the morning radiance rare
Of his young brow amid the tumult there
Grew grim with sulphurous heat and sanguine dew:
Yet through all soilure they who marked him knew
The sign of his life's dayspring, calm and fair.
But when peace came, peace fouler far than war,
And mirth more dissonant than battle's tone,
He, with a scornful sigh of that clear soul,
Back to his mountain clomb, now bleak and frore,
And with the awful night he dwelt alone,
In darkness, listening to the thunder's roll.

ERNEST MYERS, *Milton*

5. "Milton neither belonged to nor founded a school." Expand this statement, and try to account for the truth of it.

6. Point out the effects, good and bad, of the civil and religious strife upon the literature of the time.

7. "Both in prose and poetry the period is a turning-point in the history of English literature." Discuss this statement.

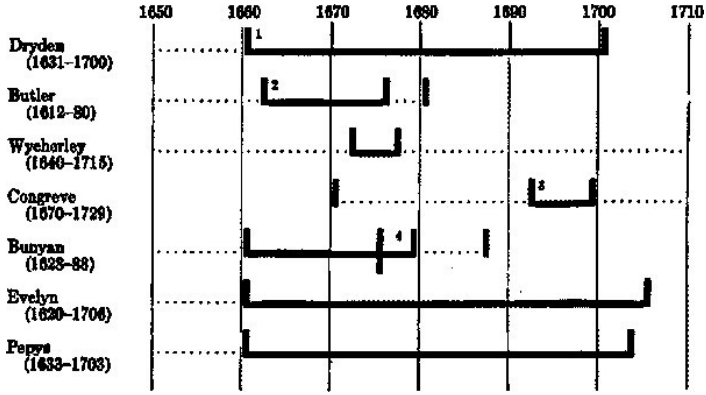
8. Write a brief essay on “The Poetry of Puritanism.”

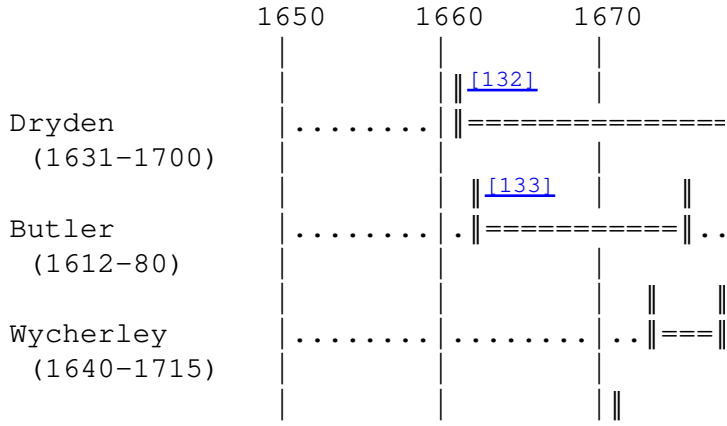
CHAPTER VII

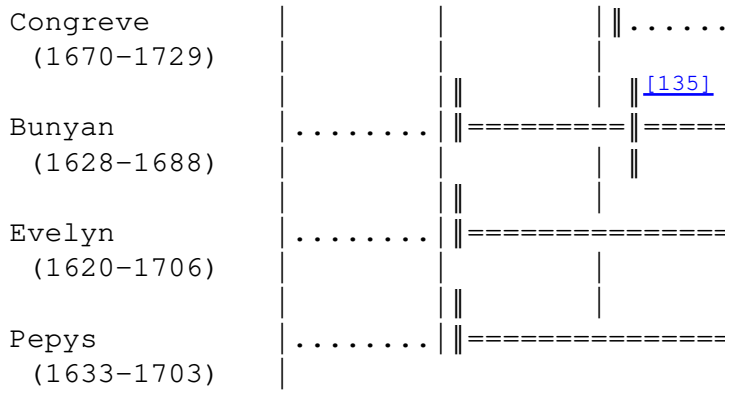
THE AGE OF DRYDEN

TIME-CHART OF THE CHIEF AUTHORS

The thick line shows the period of active literary work.







THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1660–1700)

Three historical events deeply influenced the literary movements of the time: the Restoration of the year 1660; the Roman Catholic controversy that raged during the latter half of Charles II's reign; and the Revolution of the year 1688.

1. The Restoration (1660). The Restoration of Charles II brought about a revolution in our literature. With the collapse of the Puritan Government there sprang up activities that had been so long suppressed that they flew to violent excesses. The Commonwealth had insisted on gravity and decorum in all things; the Restoration encouraged a levity that often became immoral and indecent. Along with much that is sane and powerful, this latter tendency is prominent in the writing of the time, especially in the comedies.

2. The Religious Question. The strength of the religious-political passions of the time is reflected in the current literature. The religion of the King was suspect; that of his brother James was avowedly Papist; and James was the heir-apparent to the crown. There was a prevalent suspicion of the

Catholics, which, though it might have been groundless, was of such depth and intensity that it colors all the writings of the time. The lies of Titus Oates added to the popular frenzy, so that when the Earl of Shaftesbury sought to exclude James from the throne and supplant him by the Duke of Monmouth it needed all the efforts of Charles (himself secretly a Roman Catholic) to save his brother. The famous poem of Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, is an outstanding example of a kind of poem that abounded during those troubled years.

3. The Revolution (1688). James succeeded to the throne in 1685; but so soon did he reveal his Roman Catholic prejudices that he was rejected in three years and was replaced by Protestant sovereigns. Henceforth religious passions diminish in intensity; and the literature of the succeeding years tends to emphasize the political rather than the religious side of public affairs.

THE NEW CLASSICISM

By the year 1660 Elizabethan romanticism had all but spent itself. Of the great figures of the earlier era only one survived, John Milton, and he had still to write *Paradise Lost*; but in everything Milton was of the past. At the Restoration he retired and worked in obscurity, and his great poem reveals no signs of the time in which his later years were cast.

At the Restoration the break with the past was almost absolute. It involved our literature in the deepest degree; subject and style took on a new spirit and outlook, a different attitude and aim. Hence a post-Restoration period is often set up as the converse and antithesis of the previous Elizabethan age. It is called *classical*, as opposed to the

Elizabethan *romanticism*. Though the contrast between the two epochs need not be over-emphasized, yet the differences are very great. Let us see in what respects the new spirit is shown.

1. Imitation of the Ancients. Lacking the genius of the Elizabethans, the authors of the time turned to the great classical writers, in particular to the Latin writers, for guidance and inspiration. This habit, quite noticeable during the time of Dryden, deepened and hardened during the succeeding era of Pope—so much so that the latter laid down as a final test of excellence

> Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
> To copy nature is to copy them.

2. Imitation of the French. Charles II had spent most of his years of exile in France, and when he returned to England he brought with him a new admiration for French literature. In particular the effects of this penetrated very deeply into the drama, especially into comedy, the most copious literary product of the Restoration. Of French comedy the great Molière was the outstanding exponent, and his influence was very great. In the more formal tragedy French and classical models were combined to produce a new type called the *heroic play*. The type is well represented by Dryden's *Tyrannic Love*.

3. The "Correct" School. The Elizabethans too had drawn upon the ancients, but they used their gains freely and joyously, bending the work of the classical authors to their own wills. The imitative work of the new school was of a frigid and limited quality. The school of Dryden was loath to alter; the age of Pope abandoned freedom altogether. Pope puts it thus:

> Those Rules of old, discovered, not devised,
> Are Nature still, but Nature methodised.

Thus they evolved a number of "rules," which can usefully be summarized in the injunction "Be correct." "Correctness" means avoidance of enthusiasm; modern opinions moderately expressed; strict care and accuracy in poetical technique; and humble imitation of the style of the Latin classics.

Dryden did not attain altogether to this ideal. Pope and his immediate successors called him "copious," thus hinting at a lack of care and an unrestrained vigor that were survivals of an earlier virility. Yet Dryden has the new tendency very clearly marked. To him Dr. Johnson first applied the epithet "Augustan," saying that Dryden did to English literature what Augustus did to Rome, which he "found of brick and left of marble." Dryden is the first great exponent of the new ideas that were to dominate our literature till the end of the eighteenth century.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

1. His Life. Dryden's life was a long one. It was, in addition, an exceedingly fruitful one. For forty years he continued to produce an abundance of literary works of every kind—poems, plays, and prose works. The quality of it was almost unfailingly good, and at the end of his life his poetry was as fresh and vivacious as it had been in the prime of his manhood.

Of Dryden it can be said without qualification that he is representative of his age. Indeed, it has been urged as a fault against his character that he adapted himself with too facile a conscience to the changing fortunes of the times. His earliest work of any

importance is pre-Restoration, and consists of a laudation of Oliver Cromwell. At the Restoration he changed his views, attaching himself to the fortunes of Charles II and to the Church of England. This loyalty brought its rewards in honors and pensions, so that for many years Dryden was easily the most considerable literary figure in the land. Yet his career was not without its thorns, for smaller men were busy with their slanders. On the accession of James II in 1685 Dryden changed his faith and political persuasion, becoming a Roman Catholic. To his new beliefs he adhered steadfastly, even when in 1688 the Revolution brought certain disasters to such public men as adhered to Catholicism. Thus Dryden lost his posts of Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal. The Laureateship was conferred on Shadwell, his most rancorous foe; and Dryden retired with dignity to sustain his last years with his literary labors. To this last period of his career we owe some of his finest translations and narrative poems. When he died in 1700 he was accorded a splendid funeral in Westminster Abbey, though it was many years before his grave was marked by a tombstone.

2. His Poetry. Dryden began his life's work with poetry; he concluded it with poetry; and the years between are starred with the brightness of his greater poems. As early as February, 1664, Pepys records in his diary that he met "Mr. Dryden, the poet"; and he remained "Mr. Dryden, the poet," till the day of his death. It is therefore as a poet that Dryden is chiefly to be judged.

His first published poem of any consequence was a series of heroic stanzas on the death of the Protector Oliver Cromwell (1659). It consists of thirty-seven quatrains of no particular merit. They move stiffly,

and are quite uninspired by any political or personal enthusiasm, but they show a certain angular force and a little metrical dexterity. Two stanzas will show the art of the earliest Dryden:

> His grandeur he derived from Heaven alone,
> For he was great, ere Fortune made him so;
> And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,
> Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.
>
> No borrowed bays his temples did adorn,
> But to our crown he did fresh laurels bring;
> Nor was his virtue poisoned, soon as born,
> With the too early thoughts of being king.

In 1660 he made a great step forward in poetical craftsmanship by publishing *Astræa Redux*, in celebration of Charles II's return. The poem represents a complete reversal of the poet's political opinions; but it is nevertheless a noteworthy literary advance. In its handling of the subject it shows a firmer grip and stronger common sense; in its style a new command of sonorous and dignified phrasing; and (as important a feature as any of the others) it is written in the heroic couplet.

> Methinks I see those crowds on Dover's strand,
> Who in their haste to welcome you to land
> Choked up the beach with their still growing store,
> And made a wilder torrent on the shore.

Here we see Dryden, though not yet at his best, coming to his own. The couplet marches with a steady but animated ring and swing. Its phrasing is apt and vivid; and it possesses a strength and music that are new. It marks the beginning of that adherence to the use of the couplet which was to be Dryden's lifelong habit, and which was to mark a new epoch in our literature.

Two other poems of this year—one on the

coronation and one addressed to the Chancellor, Clarendon,—resemble *Astræa Redux* in their main features, and are little inferior.

In 1666 he produced *Annus Mirabilis*, dealing with the extraordinary events of the year, particularly the Fire of London and the Dutch war. The poem is long, and often dull. When he attempts "style" he is sometimes florid and ridiculous. Moreover, the meter returns to the quatrain. The work is inferior to those of 1660, but is still an advance on the stanzas to Cromwell.

For more than fifteen years succeeding this Dryden devoted himself almost entirely to the writing of plays. Then, about 1680, events both political and personal drove him back to the poetical medium, with results both splendid and astonishing. Political passions over the Exclusion Bills were at their height, and Dryden appeared as the chief literary champion of the monarchy in the famous satirical allegory *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681). Absalom is the Duke of Monmouth, the unfortunate aspirant to the succession; and Achitophel is his daring but injudicious counselor Shaftesbury. These two are surrounded by a cluster of lesser politicians, upon each of whom Dryden bestows a Biblical name of deadly aptness and transparency. The satire is of amazing force and range, rarely stooping to scurrility, but punishing its victims with devastating scorn and a wrathful aloofness; and it takes shape in the best quality of Dryden's couplet. Long practice in dramatic couplet-writing had now given Dryden a new metrical facility, tightening and strengthening the measure, and giving it crispness and energy without allowing it to become violent and obscure. We give a specimen of this measure, which in many

ways represents the summit of Dryden's poetical achievement:

> Of these the false Achitophel was first;
> A name to all succeeding ages curst:
> For close designs and crooked counsels fit;
> Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
> Restless, unfixed in principles and place;
> In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace:
> A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
> And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.
> A daring pilot in extremity;
> Pleased with the danger when the waves went high,
> He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,
> Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
> Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
> Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
> Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
> Punish a body which he could not please;
> Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
> And all to leave what with his toil he won,
> To that unfeathered two-legged thing—a son.

Of such satire as this Dryden himself says not unfairly, "It is not bloody, but it is ridiculous enough. I avoided the mention of great crimes, and applied myself to the representing of blind sides and little extravagances." The hitting is hard, but not foul.

Next year he produced another political poem, *The Medal*, which called forth an answer from an old friend of Dryden's, Shadwell. Dryden retorted in *MacFlecknoe*, a personal lampoon of gigantic power and ferocity, but degraded with much coarseness and personal spite. A similar poem is the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, to which poem Dryden contributed a violent attack on Shadwell, giving him the name of Og. The main part of the work was composed by Nahum Tate, a satellite of Dryden's.

A new poetical development was manifest in *Religio Laici* (1682) and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687). The first poem is a thesis in support of the English Church; the second, written after the accession of James, is an allegorical defense of the Roman Catholic faith. Alterations like these in Dryden's opinions gave free play to the gibes of his enemies. In spite of their difference in opinion, these poems have much in common: a clear light of argument, a methodical arrangement of ideas, and a mastery of the couplet that often lifts the drabness of the expository theme into passages of noble feeling and splendor. The allegorical treatment of *The Hind and the Panther* allows of a livelier handling; but the poem is very long, consisting of more than one part, and much of it is dogmatic assertion and tedious argument.

After the Revolution, when he was driven from his public appointments, Dryden occupied himself chiefly with translations. He once more used the couplet medium, turning Virgil, Ovid, and Boccaccio into English, and adapting Chaucer to the taste of his time. The translation is so free that much of it is Dryden's own, and all of it teems with his own individuality. We give a passage to illustrate both the latest phase of his couplet and his power as a narrative poet:

> Scarce the third glass of measured hours was run,
> When like a fiery meteor sunk the sun,
> The promise of a storm; the shifting gales
> Forsake by fits and fill the flagging sails;
> Hoarse murmurs of the main from far were heard,
> And night came on, not by degrees prepared,
> But all at once; at once the winds arise,
> The thunders roll, the forky lightning flies.
> In vain the master issues out commands,
> In vain the trembling sailors ply their hands;
> The tempest unforeseen prevents their care,

> And from the first they labour in despair.
> The giddy ship betwixt the winds and tides,
> Forced back and forwards, in a circle rides,
> Stunned with the different blows; then shoots amain,
> Till counterbuffed she stops, and sleeps again.
>
> *Cymon and Iphigenia*

Though it is small in bulk, Dryden's lyrical poetry is of much importance. The longest and the best-known pieces of this class are his *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687) and *Alexander's Feast*, written for the same anniversary in 1697. Both show Dryden as a master of melodious verse and of a varied and powerful style. The numerous lyrics that appear in his plays are charming. One stanza will illustrate this sweetly facile phase of the poet's art:

> On a bank, beside a willow,
> Heaven her covering, earth her pillow,
> Sad Amynta sighed alone;
> From the cheerless dawn of morning
> Till the dews of night returning,
> Singing thus she made her moan:
> "Hope is banished,
> Joys are vanished,
> Damon, my beloved, is gone!"

His numerous prologues and epilogues, written in couplets, show abundant wit and vivacity, yet they habitually appeal to the worst instincts of his audiences, being very often coarse and unmannerly.

3. His Drama. In his dramatic work, as elsewhere, Dryden is a faithful reflex of his time. His methods and objects vary as the public appreciation of them waxes and wanes, with the result that he gives us a historical summary of the popular fancy.

His first play was a comedy, *The Wild Gallant* (1663), which had but a very moderate success. It has the complicated plot of the popular Spanish

comedies and the "humors" of Jonson's. After this unsuccessful attempt at public favor Dryden turned to tragedy, which henceforth nearly monopolizes his dramatic work.

His tragedies fall into two main groups:

(*a*) *The Heroic Play*. This is a new type of the tragedy that became prominent after the Restoration, and of which Dryden is one of the earliest and most skillful exponents. The chief features of the new growth are the choice of a great heroic figure for the central personage; a succession of stage incidents of an exalted character, which often, through the inexpertness of the dramatist, became ridiculous; a loud and ranting style; and the rhymed couplet. Dryden's *Rival Ladies* (1663) is a hybrid between the comic and heroic species of play; *The Indian Emperor* (1665), *Tyrannic Love* (1669), *The Conquest of Granada* (1670), and *Aurengzebe* (1675) show the heroic kind at its best and worst. Though Dryden is heavily weighted with the ponderous mechanism of the heroic play, his gigantic literary strength is often sufficient to give it an attraction and a kind of heavy-footed animation.

(*b*) *His Blank-verse Tragedies.* The heroic play was so easily parodied and made ridiculous, that the wits of the Restoration were not slow to make a butt of it. Their onslaughts were not without their effect on Dryden, for already in *Aurengzebe* a shamefaced weakening of the heroic mannerisms is apparent. In the prologue to this play Dryden fairly admits it, saying that he

> Grows weary of his long-loved mistress, Rime.
> Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,
> And Nature flies him like enchanted ground.

His next play, *All for Love, or The World well Lost* (1678), is in blank verse, and is considered to be his dramatic masterpiece. For subject he chose that of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. It was a daring thing to attempt what Shakespeare had already done; but Dryden, while following the earlier play somewhat closely, never actually copies it. He produces a play of a distinctly different nature, and of a high merit. The characters are well drawn and animated, and the style, though lacking the daimonic force of Shakespeare's at his best, is noble and restrained. We give Dryden's handling of the death of Cleopatra, a passage which should be compared with that of Shakespeare given on p. 121.

(*Antony is lying dead on the stage; Charmion and Iras, the Queen's two handmaidens, are in attendance on her.*)

Charmion. To what end
These ensigns of your pomp and royalty?
Cleopatra. Dull that thou art! Why, 'tis to meet my love;
As when I saw him first, on Cydnos' bank,
All sparkling, like a goddess....
Haste, haste, both,
And dress the bride of Antony.
Charmion. 'Tis done.
Cleopatra. Now seat me by my lord; I claim this place....
Reach me the casket.
Iras. Underneath the fruit
The aspic lies.
Cleopatra. Welcome, thou kind deceiver!
[*Putting aside the leaves.*
Thou best of thieves, who with an easy key
Dost open life, and, unperceived by us,
Even steal us from ourselves....
Haste, bare my arm, and rouse the serpent's fury.
[*Holds out her arm, and draws it back.*
Coward flesh,
Wouldst thou conspire with Cæsar to betray me,
As thou wert none of mine? I'll force thee to it,
And not be sent by him,
But bring, myself, my soul to Antony.

[*Turns aside, and then shows her arm bloody.*
Take hence; the work is done....
Charmion. The next is ours.
Iras. Now, Charmion, to be worthy
Of our great queen and mistress.
[*They apply the aspics.*
Cleopatra. Already, death, I feel thee in my veins:
I go with such a will to find my lord,
That we shall quickly meet.
A heavy numbness creeps through every limb,
And now 'tis at my head: my eyelids fall,
And my dear love is vanquished in a mist.
Where shall I find him, where? O turn me to him,
And lay me on his breast! Cæsar, thy worst;
Now part us, if thou canst. [*Dies.*
[*Iras sinks down at her feet, and dies; Charmion stands behind her chair, as dressing her head.*

After the Revolution he wrote *Don Sebastian* (1690), *Cleomenes* (1691), and *Love Triumphant* (1694). The last was a tragi-comedy and a failure. The other two, however, were quite up to the average of his plays. In addition, at various stages of his career he collaborated with Lee in two other tragedies, and attempted, with lamentable results, to improve upon Shakespeare's *Tempest* and *Troilus and Cressida*.

4. His Prose. Dryden's versatility is apparent when we observe that in prose, as well as in poetry and drama, he attains to primacy in his generation. In the case of prose he has one rival, John Bunyan. No single item of Dryden's prose work is of very great length; but in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesie* (1668), in his numerous dedicatory epistles and prefaces, and in the scanty stock of his surviving letters we have a prose *corpus* of some magnitude. The general subject of his prose is literary criticism, and that of a sane and vigorous quality. The style is free, but not too free; there are slips of grammar, but they are not many. The *Essay of Dramatic Poesie* is his

longest single prose work. It is cast into dialogue form, in which four characters, one of whom is Dryden himself, discuss such well-worked themes as ancients *versus* moderns and blank verse *versus* rhyme. Studded throughout the book are passages of rare ability, one of which is the following, which illustrates not only his prose style, but also his acute perception of literary values:

> To begin, then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who, of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation. He was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,
>
> *Quantum lenta solent inter viburna*
> *cupressi.*
>
> VIRG., *Ecl., i, 26*

RESTORATION COMEDY

In comedy alone Dryden showed a certain incapacity; his mind seemed to be too rugged and unresilient to catch the sharper moods of the current wit. Fortunately this weakness of his was atoned for

by the activities of a brilliant group of dramatists who made Restoration comedy a thing apart in English literature.

The new comedy, of a slower growth than the new heroic play, owed much of its inspiration to French comedy. It marked a new stage in the civilization of England. The plays of the Shakespearian era were beginning to be thought out of date. In his diary Evelyn notes that "the old plays begin to disgust this refined age." Though the age was no doubt refined in certain respects, it was also decadent, and this decadent spirit is reflected in its comedy.

The novel features of the type are:

(*a*) The theme is mainly of courtiers and their class, their vices and affectations, their love-intrigues and money-grabbing. The characters are still to a great extent those of the "humorsome" quality so common in the time of Jonson. Their names reveal their dispositions: Sir Fopling Flutter; Scrub (a servant); Colonel Bully; Sir John Brute; Squire Sullen; Gibbet (a highwayman); Lady Bountiful. Such characters as these are involved in plots of great and unnatural complication, with much bustle and unlimited love-intrigue. In rare cases, as in some of the plays of Shadwell, the characters are much more human and the conditions more natural; and then we obtain deeply interesting glimpses of the habits of the time. But in general the whole atmosphere of the comedies is artificial and unreal.

(*b*) The prevailing love-theme is treated in a characteristic fashion which is fortunately rare in English. It is not handled coarsely; indeed, the age shows a ridiculous squeamishness at the grosser forms of vice; but it is handled with a cool licentiousness and a vicious pleasure that are often

exceedingly clever, but always repulsive. It is art, but art of a perverted kind.

(*c*) The style of the comedy suits the treatment. It is prose of a neat and brilliant kind: deft and forcible, clean-cut and precise. The style of Congreve, a specimen of which is given below, is a model of its kind.

William Congreve (1670–1729). Though Congreve is not the first in time, he is probably the first in merit among the comedy-writers. He had a long life, but a glance at the table at the head of the chapter will show that only a short period of his life was productive of literary work. His plays were produced between 1693 and 1700. The last play was not successful, and repeated attacks were forthcoming upon his defects, so he wrote no more.

His first comedy was *The Old Bachelor* (1693); then came *The Double Dealer* (1693 or 1694), *Love for Love* (1695), and *The Way of the World* (1700). In 1697 he produced one tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, which had no success. The earlier plays have a slight touch of seriousness, which is rarer still in the later comedies.

All are marked by the same features. The characters are numerous, brilliant, and sharply defined. In each case, however, they are too one-sided to be real; but they fulfill their purpose in the plays. The plots are full of scandalous notions delicately adumbrated; and the style is as keen and deadly as a sharp sword.

The following is a passage from *The Way of the World*. Two gentleman are backbiting an acquaintance.

Fainall. He comes to town in order to equip

himself for travel.

Mirabell. For travel! Why the man that I mean is above forty.

Fainall. No matter for that; 'tis for the honour of England, that all Europe should know that we have blockheads of all ages.

Mirabell. I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools.

Fainall. By no means, 'tis better as 'tis; 'tis better to trade with a little loss, than to be quite eaten up with being overstocked.

Mirabell. Pray, are the follies of this knight-errant, and those of the squire his brother, anything related?

Fainall. Not at all; Witwoud grows by the knight, like a medlar grafted on a crab. One will melt in your mouth, and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all pulp, and the other all core.

Mirabell. So one will be rotten before he be ripe, and the other will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.

OTHER COMEDY-WRITERS

1. William Wycherley (1640–1715). The productive period of Wycherley's life was brief but fruitful. He produced four plays in five years: *Love in a Wood* (1672), *The Gentleman Dancing Master* (1673), *The Country Wife* (1675), and *The Plain Dealer* (1677). He was a man of good family, and he was at Court, where he seems to have been no better than the average courtier of his time.

His contemporaries call his plays "manly." By this they probably refer to a boisterous indecency that riots through his comedies, in which nearly every

person is a fool, and every clever man a rogue and a rake. He is much coarser in the grain than Congreve, and cannot keep his work at such a high level. Yet he shows much wit in handling dialogue, and has a sharp, though distorted, vision for human weaknesses.

2. George Etheredge (1635–91). Not much is known regarding the life of Etheredge; but he appears to have been a courtier, and to have served abroad. If all stories about him are true, he had an ample share of the popular vices. He is said to have been killed by tumbling downstairs while drunk. His three plays are *The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub* (1664), *She Would if She Could* (1668), and *The Man of Mode* (1676). They are more uneven than Wycherley's, and at their worst are grosser; but they are clever, and can be lively and amusing.

3. Sir John Vanbrugh (1666–1726). Vanbrugh's career, though much of it is obscure, seems to have been a varied one, for at different times he was a soldier, a herald, and an architect. His best three comedies are *The Relapse* (1697), *The Provoked Wife* (1698), and *The Confederacy* (1705).

In the general opinion Vanbrugh is held to be a good second to Congreve, but his plays are exceedingly unequal. His wit is rather more genial than is common at this time, and sometimes his touch is firm and sure.

4. Thomas Shadwell (1640–92). Dryden's abuse of Shadwell has given the latter a notoriety that he scarcely deserves. Little is known about his life except that he was created Poet Laureate at the deposition of Dryden in 1688. He wrote many plays, some of which were popular in their day. The best three are *The Sullen Lovers* (1668), *The Squire of*

Alsatia (1688), and *Bury Fair* (1689).

Shadwell is coarse without being clever to atone for it. His characters are often wooden and unreal, but he has the knack of laying his hand on good material. His *Squire of Alsatia* is full of interesting information about the life of the time, and Scott drew largely upon it for *The Fortunes of Nigel*.

5. George Farquhar (1678–1707). He had an adventurous career, was in turn a clergyman, an actor, and a soldier, and died when he was thirty years old. The pathos of his early death has given him a fame of its own. He wrote seven plays, the best of which are the last two, viz., *The Recruiting Officer* (1706) and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707).

Farquhar comes late among the Restoration dramatists, and by this time the cynical immorality of the age seems to have worn thin. His temper is certainly more genial, and his wit, though it has lapses, is more decorous. *The Beaux' Stratagem* (see pp. 225–6) is a lively and ingenious comedy with a cleverly engineered plot.

RESTORATION TRAGEDY

With regard to tragedy, Dryden is amply representative of his age. The period is less rich in tragedy than it is in comedy, for several reasons. (*a*) The spirit of the time was too irresponsible and vivacious to provide a healthy breeding-ground for this type of play. (*b*) The average poetical standard was not high; and tragedy of a superior type needs a high level of poetic merit. (*c*) There was a lack of fresh models, the tragedians being dependent on the Elizabethan plays (which were not popular), and on the classical French tragedies. Yet there are a few tragedians who deserve a brief mention.

1. Thomas Otway (1651–85). As was so often the case with the dramatists of the time, Otway had a varied and troubled career, closed with a miserable death. His first play, *Alcibiades*, was produced about 1675; then followed *Don Carlos* (1676), *The Orphan* (1680), and his masterpiece, *Venice Preserved* (1682).

Venice Preserved (see p. 226) for long held the reputation of being the best tragedy outside Shakespeare, and that reputation has kept it in the forefront. It shows his work at its best. It has a rugged and somber force, and reveals a considerable skill in working out a dramatic situation. But Otway tends to lay on the horrors too thickly; his style is unreliable, and his comic passages are farce of the coarsest kind. If he is second to Shakespeare, he is a very bad second.

2. Nathaniel Lee (1653–92). Lee's life is the usual tale of mishaps, miseries, and drunkenness, with a taint of madness as an additional calamity. He wrote many tragedies, some of which are *Nero* (1673), *Sophonisba* (1676), *The Rival Queens* (1677), and *Mithridates* (1678). He also collaborated with Dryden in the production of two plays.

During his own time Lee's name became a byword to distinguish a kind of wild, raving style, which in part at least seems to have been a product of his madness. But he can write well when the spirit is in him; he has a command of pathos, and all through his work he has touches of real poetic quality.

3. Elkanah Settle (1648–1724). Settle was in some ways the butt of his literary friends, and Dryden has given him prominence by attacking him in his satires. In his day he obtained some popularity with a heroic play, *The Empress of Morocco* (1673). It is a poor specimen of its kind, but his other dramas

are worse.

4. John Crowne (1640–1703). Crowne is another of the dramatists who attacked Dryden and who were in turn assailed by the bigger man. A voluminous playwright, Crowne's best-known works are the tragedies of *Caligula* (1698), a heroic play, and *Thyestes*, in blank verse, and a comedy, *Sir Courtly Nice* (1685). Crowne is quite a good specimen of the average Restoration dramatist. The plays show considerable talent and a fair amount of skill in versification.

5. Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718). During his lifetime Rowe was a person of some importance, and was made Poet Laureate in 1714. His best-known plays are *Tamerlane* (1702), *The Fair Penitent* (1703), and the popular *Jane Shore* (1714). Johnson says of him, "His reputation comes from the reasonableness of some of his scenes, the elegance of his diction, and the suavity of his verse."

POETRY

Samuel Butler (1612–80). Besides Dryden and the tragedy-writers the only considerable poet of the period is Samuel Butler, and his fame rests on one work, *Hudibras*.

As a middle-aged man Butler saw the rough and tumble of the Civil War, and was nearly fifty when the Restoration occurred. He seems to have been of humble birth and to have served as a kind of superior menial in a number of noble households. In the course of these several occupations he acquired the varied knowledge that he was to put to good use in his poem. In 1663 he published *Hudibras*, which was at once a success. Two other parts followed in 1664 and 1678 respectively.

Hudibras was topical, for it was a biting satire on the Puritans, who were the reverse of popular when the King returned. In general outline it is modeled upon the adventures of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, who find their respective parallels in Sir Hudibras and his squire Ralpho. Sir Hudibras is a Puritan knight who undergoes many absurd adventures; but the poem lacks the real pathos and genuine insight of its great Spanish original. It is wholly, almost spitefully, satirical. The poem is composed artfully. The adventures are well chosen in order to throw the greatest amount of ridicule on the maladroit hero; the humor, though keen and caustic, is never absolutely brutal in expression; there is a freakish spattering of tropes and a mock-solemn parade of scholastic learning; and (a feature that added immeasurably to its success) it is cast in an odd jigging octosyllabic couplet. This meter of *Hudibras* is remarkable. It is varied and yet uniform, and it carries the tale with an easy relish. Though it is sometimes almost doggerel, it has always a kind of distinction, and each couplet is clenched with an ingenious rhyme that is the most amusing feature of all.

> He was in logic a great critic,
> Profoundly drilled in analytic;
> He could distinguish, and divide
> A hair 'twixt south and south-west side;
> On either which he would dispute,
> Confute, change hands, and still confute;
> He'd undertake to prove by force
> Of argument a man's no horse;
> He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,
> And that a lord may be an owl—
> A calf, an alderman—a goose, a justice—
> And rooks, committee-men and trustees.
>
> He'd run in debt by disputation,
> And pay with ratiocination:

All this by syllogism, true
In mood and figure, he would do.
For rhetoric, he could not ope
His mouth but out there flew a trope;
And when he happened to break off
I' th' middle of his speech, or cough,
H' had hard words, ready to show why.
And tell what rules he did it by:
Else, when with greatest art he spoke,
You'd think he talked like other folk;
For all a rhetorician's rules
Teach nothing but to name his tools.

PROSE-WRITERS

1. John Bunyan (1628–88). In the domain of Restoration prose Bunyan alone contests the supremacy of Dryden. And Bunyan stands in a class by himself.

The main facts of his life are well known. He himself has given them an imperishable shape in his *Grace Abounding* (1666), a kind of religious autobiography. Though the statements of this book need not be taken too literally, he seems to have misspent his youth. He draws a horrible picture of his own depravity; but as religious converts are well known to delight in depicting their original wickedness in the darkest colors, this need not be taken too seriously. He served as a soldier in the Civil War, and seems to have been no better than the ordinary soldier. Religious conversion came to him about 1656, saving him, according to his own account, from everlasting fire. In the flood of his new enlightenment he became a preacher, and, being unlicensed, was arrested. He was cast into Bedford jail, and remained there for twelve years (1660–72). He was released, and obtained a license; but this was canceled in 1675, and he was imprisoned for six months. Beginning with this latter period we have all his most famous works: *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1677),

The Life and Death of Mr. Badman (1680), and *The Holy War* (1682). He was eventually set at liberty, and spent his last years preaching in peace.

Except for *Grace Abounding*, all Bunyan's major works are allegorical. In each case the allegory is worked out with ease, force, and clearness. Readers of all ages enjoy the narrative, while they follow the double meaning without an effort. The allegorical personages—for example, Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Mrs. Diffidence, Giant Despair, Madame Wanton, My Lord Hategood, Mr. Standfast—are fresh and apt, and are full of an intense interest and a raw dramatic energy. Their individual adventures combine and react with a variety that keeps the story from monotony, and yet the simple idea of a forward journey is never lost. The plot, working upon the fortunes of the different characters, gives us the nearest approach to the pure novel that had so far been effected. The numerous natural descriptions are simply done, but they are full of a great unspoilt ability. Lastly, Bunyan's style is unique in prose. Though it is undoubtedly based upon the great Biblical models, it is quite individual. It is homely, but not vulgar; strong, but not coarse; equable, but not monotonous; it is sometimes humorous, but it is never ribald; rarely pathetic, but never sentimental. It has remained the pattern of a plain style, and is one of the masterpieces of the English language.

The following extract gives us an idea of Bunyan's narrative and descriptive power, and is a fair specimen of his masculine prose:

> I saw them in my dream, so far as this valley reached, there was, on the right hand, a very deep ditch; that ditch it is into which the blind have led the blind in all ages, and have both there

> miserably perished. Again, behold, on the left hand, there was a very dangerous quag, into which even if a good man falls, he finds no bottom for his feet to stand on: into that quag King David once did fall, and had no doubt therein been smothered, had not He that is able plucked him out. The pathway was here also exceeding narrow, and therefore good Christian was the more put to it: for when he sought, in the dark, to shun the ditch on the one hand, he was ready to tip over into the mire on the other; also, when he sought to escape the mire, without great carefulness he would be ready to fall into the ditch. Thus he went on, and I heard him here sigh bitterly; for besides the danger mentioned above, the pathway here was so dark, that oft-times when he lifted up his foot to set forward, he knew not where, or upon what, he should set it next. About the midst of the valley I perceived the mouth of Hell to be; and it stood also hard by the way-side. And ever and anon the flame and smoke would come out in such abundance, with sparks and hideous noises, that he was forced to put up his sword, and betake himself to another weapon, called All-prayer. So he cried, in my hearing, "O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." Thus he went on a great while, yet still the flames would be reaching towards him. Also he heard doleful voices, and rushings to and fro; so that sometimes he thought he should be torn to pieces or trodden down like mire in the streets.
>
> *The Pilgrim's Progress*

2. Lord Halifax (1633–95). Halifax was an outstanding figure in the House of Lords during the exciting times of the Exclusion Bills, of which he was the chief opponent. He ranks high as an orator; as an author his fame rests on a small volume called *Miscellanies*. The book contains a number of political tracts, such as *The Character of a Trimmer*, and a

piece of a more general character called *Advice to a Daughter*. In his writings Halifax adopts the manner and attitude of the typical man of the world: a moderation of statement, a cool and agreeably acid humor, and a style devoid of flourishes. In him we find a decided approach to the essay-manner of Addison.

3. Sir William Temple (1628–99). Temple also was a politician of some importance, filled diplomatic posts abroad, and was a moderate success in affairs at home. He is an example of the moneyed, leisured semi-amateur in literature. He wrote little and elegantly, as a gentleman should, and patronized authors of lesser fortune and greater genius. His best work is his *Essay on Poetry*. His style resembles that of Halifax in its mundane, cultured reticence; but at times he has higher flights, in which he shows some skill in the handling of melodious and rhythmic prose.

4. John Tillotson (1630–94). In Tillotson we have one of the popular preachers of the time, and his *Sermons* is mentioned by Addison as being a standard work of its class. He is a literary descendant of the great school of Jeremy Taylor and Thomas Fuller, but his style lacks their richness and melody, though it gains in clearness and crispness.

5. The Diarists. By a coincidence it happened that the two most famous diary-writers in English were working at the same time, and during this period. Not dissimilar in several respects, their works show both the drawbacks and the advantages of the diary manner. The books are private documents, and so have no formal pretensions to literary excellence in style, which is not an undiluted misfortune. Yet the style is often ragged and incoherent, and much

reading at it produces a feeling of flatness and monotony. But, on the other hand, being private jottings, they are intimate, and so are interesting, full of information concerning public and personal affairs, and containing illuminating comments on people and incidents.

(*a*) Of the two **Samuel Pepys (1633–1703)** is the less worthy as a man, but his very human quality makes him the livelier and the more interesting. By occupation he was a kind of civil servant in the Admiralty, and prospered so well that he became a member of Parliament and Secretary to the Admiralty. His diary, which was meant to be strictly personal, was written in cipher, and the reading of it gives one the impression of surreptitiously peeping into his back window when the blinds are up. By a multitude of detail the book shows Pepys to have been mean and lustful; vain and trivial; ambitious, and yet without the resolution that should attend it. Yet withal he is intensely human and alive, full of a magpie alertness; and in addition he has the gift of inspiring in his readers the same vividness of curiosity. We could ill spare Pepys from among those mortals who have become immortal in their own despite.

> *May 1st, 1669*—Up betimes. Called by my tailor, and here first put on a summer suit this year; but it was not my fine one of flowered tabby vest and coloured camelot tunic, because it was too fine with the gold lace at the bands, that I was afraid to be seen in it; but put on the stuff suit I made the last year, which is now repaired; and so did go to the office in it, and sat all the morning, the day looking as if it would be foul. At noon home to dinner, and there find my wife extraordinary fine, with her flowered tabby gown

> that she made two years ago, now laced exceeding pretty; and, indeed, was fine all over; and mighty earnest to go, though the day was very lowering; and she would have me put on my fine suit, which I did. And so anon we went alone through the town with our new liveries of serge, and the horses' manes and tails tied with red ribbons, and the standards gilt with varnish, and all clean, and green reins, that people did mightily look upon us; and, the truth is, I did not see any coach more pretty, though more gay, than ours all the day.

(*b*) **John Evelyn (1620–1706)** is the other diarist, and is much more respectable and much less amusing than Pepys. His diary is a more finished production in the matter of style, and may have been produced with an eye on the public. The style is only moderate in quality, and has little of the freshness that distinguishes Pepys'. The diary, however, is full of accurate information, and in some of the more moving incidents, such as that of the Great Fire, it warms into something like real eloquence.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

Viewed as a whole, this period is seen to be one of transition; and, being so, it is to a large extent one of stagnation, time's dead low-water. The Elizabethan fervor had spent itself, and the new classicism was still in the making. Yet the time is important in the development of literary forms and style.

1. Poetry. (*a*) *The Lyric.* The form of the lyric shows little change. In bulk it is inconsiderable, for the lyrical spirit is largely in abeyance. Outside Dryden, who is the best example of the lyrical bard, we have the slight work of the courtiers, the **Earl of Dorset (1637–1706)**, the **Earl of Rochester (1647–80)**, and **Sir Charles Sedley (16391701)**. These

were fashionable men, taking their poetry with fashionable irresponsibility. Their poems, which nearly all deal with the love-theme in an artificial manner, have a decided charm and skill, being modeled on the Caroline poems that were the mode before the Civil War. Of real originality there is hardly a trace.

(*b*) *The Ode.* Once more Dryden towers pre-eminent in this class of poem. His two odes on the anniversary of St. Cecilia's Day and his other ode on the death of Mrs. Anne Killigrew are among the best of any period. Written in the irregular Pindaric meter, they are full of the high passion that gives the artificial medium some real fire and energy. We give the opening lines of the elegiac poem:

> Thou youngest Virgin-Daughter of the skies,
> Made in the last promotion of the blest;
> Whose palms, new plucked from Paradise,
> In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
> Rich with immortal green above the rest:
> Whether, adopted to some neighbouring star,
> Thou roll'st above us in thy wandering race,
> Or in procession fixed and regular
> Moved with the heaven's majestic pace,
> Or called to more superior bliss,
> Thou tread'st with seraphim the vast abyss.

(*c*) *The Satire.* Several circumstances combined to make this age abound in satirical writing. It was a period of bitter political and personal contention, of easy morals and subdued enthusiasms, of sharp wit and acute discrimination. For these reasons satire acquired a new importance and a sharper edge.

The older satire, such as is represented in the poems of Donne and of Andrew Marvell (1621–78), was of a more general kind, and seemed to have been written with deliberate clumsiness and obscurity. These habits were repugnant to the ideals

of the new age, whose satire is more personal and more vindictive. Its effect is immensely more incisive, and it obtains a new freshness and point by the use of the heroic couplet, in which it is almost wholly written. Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* is an excellent example of the political satire, while his *MacFlecknoe* shows the personal type. Literary satire is also well represented in *The Rehearsal* (1671), which parodied the literary vices of the time, especially those of the heroic play. This work, which was reproduced year after year, with topical hits in every new edition, was the work of several hands, though the Duke of Buckingham receives the chief credit. Butler's *Hudibras* is a satire on the Puritans. The miscellaneous satire of John Oldham (1653–83) had much of the earlier clumsiness.

(*d*) *Narrative poetry.* Dryden's translations and adaptations of Chaucer, Virgil, Ovid, and Boccaccio are the chief examples of this form. Among others, he gives us Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale*, *The Knight's Tale*, and several tales from Boccaccio. There is no fresh development to record. Butler's *Hudibras* is narrative of a kind, though the chief interest is satirical.

2. Drama. The development of the drama is considerable. We summarize briefly what has already been indicated.

(*a*) In *tragedy* the most novel in the matter of form is the *heroic play*, whose peculiarities have already been pointed out on p. 199. There is little further development. The tragical faculty is weakening all through the period, even in comparison with the post-Shakespearian plays. This type of play is best represented by Dryden's *All for Love* and Otway's *Venice Preserved*. The characters are becoming more

stagy, and the situations are made as horrible as the ingenuity of the dramatist can devise.

(*b*) In *comedy* the advance is noteworthy. The comedy of "humors" is dying out, though considerable traces of it are still visible. The influence of the French is giving the comedy a new "snap" and glitter, and the almost universal medium is prose. Congreve's *Way of the World* (1700), Wycherley's *Country Wife* (1675), and Farquhar's *Beaux' Stratagem* (1707) are good examples.

3. Prose. With the exception of the work of Dryden and Bunyan, the prose work of the time is of little moment. Dryden's prose is almost entirely devoted to literary criticism; Bunyan's contribution shows a remarkable development of the prose allegory. The remainder of the prose-writers deal with political and miscellaneous subjects, with, in addition, some theological and historical writing.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

The main tendency of the age, in all departments of literature, is toward a clear, plain, and forcible style.

1. Poetry. The new movement was seen most clearly in the development of the *heroic couplet*, which was soon to spread throughout poetry and through much of the drama. As we have seen (p. 182), in the previous age the couplet had become so loose that it resembled a cross between prose and verse. An exponent of such a measure is Chamberlayne (1619–89):

> Poor love must dwell
> Within no climate but what's parallel
> Unto our honoured births; the envied fate
> Of princes oft these burdens find from state

> When lowly swains, knowing no parent's voice
> Of negative, make a free and happy choice.

This is a curious liquid measure. The pause is irregularly distributed, and the rhythm is light and easy.

Cowley and Denham likewise obtain much credit for the introduction of the new measure; but the chief innovator is Edmund Waller (1606–87). Dryden, in his dedication to *The Rival Ladies* says, "Rime has all the advantages of prose besides its own. But the excellence and dignity of it were never fully known till Mr. Waller first taught it." An extract from Waller will suffice:

> While in this park I sing, the listening deer
> Attend my passion, and forget to fear;
> When to the beeches I report my flame,
> They bow their heads, as if they felt the same,
> To gods appealing, when I reach their bowers,
> With loud complaints, they answer me in showers.

The note here is quite different from that of the previous extract. The tread of the meter is steady and almost uniform, and the pauses cluster about the middle and the end of the lines. It must be noted, too, that a large proportion of Waller's poetry took this form.

Dryden adopted the heroic couplet, but he improved upon the wooden respectability of his predecessors' verse. While he retained all the couplet's steadiness and force, he gave it an additional vigor, a sinewy elegance, and a noble rhythm and beauty. It is worth while giving another example of his couplet:

> A milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on the lawns and in the forest ranged;
> Without unspotted, innocent within,

She feared no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds
And Scythian shafts; and many winged wounds
Aimed at her heart; was often forced to fly,
And doomed to death, though fated not to die.
DRYDEN, *The Hind and the Panther*

In its own fashion this passage is as melodious and powerful as some of the noblest lines of Milton.

In other forms of poetry the style contains little to be commented upon. The *blank verse* continues the disintegration that (with the exception of the verse of Milton) began with the death of Shakespeare. We give a good example of this Restoration blank verse:

Through a close lane as I pursued my journey,
And meditating on the last night's vision,
I spied a wrinkled hag, with age grown double,
Picking dry sticks, and mumbling to herself;
Her eyes with scalding rheum were galled and red,
And palsy shook her head; her hands seemed withered;
And on her crooked shoulder had she wrapped
The tattered remnant of an old striped hanging.
OTWAY, *The Orphan*

In this passage we can observe the absence of the high poetic fire of the Elizabethans and the lack of the thunderous depth of Milton. Observe the regularity of the beat, the uniformity of the pauses, and the frequency of the hypermetrical ending. There is, nevertheless, a certain somber, dogged attraction about the style of the passage. The average blank verse of the time is much less regular, and much less attractive.

The *lyric* still shows a reflection of the Caroline manner, as can be seen in the following example:

Love still has something of the sea,
  From whence his mother rose;
No time his slaves from doubt can free,

Nor give their thoughts repose.

They are becalmed in clearest days,
And in rough weather tossed;
They wither under cold delays,
Or are in tempests lost.

SEDLEY (*out of seven stanzas*)

This lyric has an undoubted sweetness of expression, though it is artificial in thought.

2. Prose. Though the prose writing of the period is not great in bulk, it shows a profound change in style. Previous writers, such as Browne, Clarendon, and Hobbes, had done remarkable and beautiful work in prose, but their style had not yet found itself. It was wayward and erratic, often cumbrous and often obscure, and weighted with a Latinized construction and vocabulary. In Dryden's time prose begins definitely to find its feet. It acquires a general utility and a permanence; it is smoothed and straightened, simplified and harmonized. This is the age of average prose, and prepares the way for the work of Swift and Addison, who stand on the threshold of the modern prose style. Less than forty years intervene between Dryden and Sir Thomas Browne; yet Dryden and his school seem to be nearer the twentieth century than they are to Browne.

Not that Dryden's style is flawless. It is sometimes involved and obscure; there are little slips of grammar and many slips of expression; but on the average it is of high quality, and the impression that the reader receives is one of great freshness and abounding vitality. Further examples of this good average style will be found in the work of Temple and Halifax.

In the case of Bunyan the style becomes plainer still. But it is powerful and effective, and bears the

narrative nobly. Pepys and Evelyn have no pretensions to style as such, but their work is admirably expressed, and Evelyn in especial has passages of more elevated diction.

In some authors of the period we find this desire for unornamented style degenerating into coarseness and ugliness. Such a one is **Jeremy Collier (1650–1726)**, whose *Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage* (1698) caused a great commotion in its day. It attacked the vices of the stage with such vigor that it is said to have driven some of the playwrights from their evil courses. The style of this famous book is so colloquial that it becomes in places ungrammatical. **Thomas Sprat (1635–1713)** was another disciple of the same school. He wrote on the newly formed Royal Society, which demanded from its members, "a close, naked, natural way of speaking." This expresses the new development quite well. A greater man than Sprat but a fellow-member of the Royal Society, was **John Locke (1632–1704)**, who in his famous *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690) put the principle into practice. Locke's style is bare to baldness, but it is clear. We give an example:

> Some men are remarked for pleasantness in raillery; others, for apologues, and apposite, diverting stories. This is apt to be taken for the effect of pure nature, and that the rather, because it is not got by rules, and those who excel in either of them, never purposely set themselves to the study of it as an art to be learnt. But yet it is true, that at first some lucky hit, which took with somebody, and gained him commendation, encouraged him to try again, inclined his thoughts and endeavours that way, till at last he insensibly got a facility in it without perceiving how; and that is attributed wholly to nature, which was

much more the effect of use and practice. I do not deny that natural disposition may often give the first rise to it; but that never carries a man far without use and exercise, and it is practice alone that brings the powers of the mind as well as those of the body to their perfection. Many a good poetic vein is buried under a trade, and never produces anything for want of improvement. We see the ways of discourse and reasoning are very different, even concerning the same matter, at court and in the university. And he that will go but from Westminster Hall to the Exchange, will find a different genius and turn in their ways of talking; and one cannot think that all whose lot fell in the city were born with different parts from those who were bred at the university or inns of court.

TABLE TO ILLUSTRATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

DATE	POETRY			DRAMA	
	Lyrical	Narrative	Satirical and Didactic	Tragedy	Comedy
1650 1660					
	Dryden	Dryden	Butler		
					Dryden
	Dorset				Etheredge
	Sedley			Dryden	
	Rochester				
1670					Shadwell

1680			Oldham	Lee Otway	Wycherley
1690			Shadwell Dryden[137] Dryden[138]	Rowe Dryden[139]	
1700	Dryden[140]	Dryden[141]			Congreve Vanbrugh Farquhar

In one prominent case we have a survival of the more elaborate style of the past, and that is in the history of **Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715)**, Bishop of Salisbury, whose *History of his own Times* was published after his death. The style of the book is modeled on that of Clarendon. Burnet's style is not of the same class as that of his predecessor: it has lapses into colloquialism; its sentences are snipped into small pieces by means of frequent colons and semicolons; and he has not Clarendon's command of vocabulary.

EXERCISES

1. The two following lyrics are respectively of the

Restoration and the Caroline periods. Compare and contrast them in (*a*) subject, (*b*) style, and (*c*) meter. Summarize the effect of either of them, and say which you prefer and why you prefer it.

(1) Love in fantastic triumph sate,
Whilst bleeding hearts around him flowed,
For whom fresh pains he did create,
And strange tyrannic power he showed.
From thy bright eyes he took his fires,
Which round about in sport he hurled;
But 'twas from mine he took desires
Enough t' undo the amorous world.

From me he took his sighs and tears,
From thee his pride and cruelty;
From me his languishment and fears,
And every killing dart from thee:
Thus thou, and I, the god have armed
And set him up a deity;
But my poor heart alone is harmed,
While thine the victor is, and free.

APHRA BEHN (1640–89)

(2) 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.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a Spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or any thing.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew
Ne'er to be found again.

To Daffodils, HERRICK (1591–1674)

2. Write a brief criticism of the following passage of Dryden's prose. Comment upon (*a*) the vocabulary, (*b*) the type of sentence, (*c*) any colloquialisms or slips of grammar, and (*d*) its value as literary criticism.

> He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation, in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta could not have described their natures better, than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different; the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other as much as the mincing Lady Prioress, and the broad-speaking, gap-toothed Wife of Bath. But enough of this; there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that "Here is God's plenty." We have our forefathers and great-granddames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general

characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of monks and friars, and canons, and lady abbesses, and nuns; for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of Nature, though everything is altered.

Preface to the "Fables"

3. The extracts given below illustrate the development of the stopped couplet. Point out briefly the change that comes over the meter, paying attention to (*a*) the regularity of the accent, (*b*) the pause, and (*c*) the cæsura.

(1) The sable mantle of the silent night
Shut from the world the ever-joysome light.
Care fled away, and softest slumbers please
To leave the court for lowly cottages.
Wild beasts forsook their dens on woody hills,
And sleightful otters left the purling rills;
Rooks to their nests in high woods now were flung,
And with their spread wings shield their naked young.
When thieves from thickets to the cross-ways stir,
And terror frights the lonely passenger;
When naught was heard but now and then the howl
Of some vile cur, or whooping of the owl.

WILLIAM BROWNE, 1620

(2) Oh, virtue's pattern, glory of our times,
Sent of past days to expiate the crimes;
Great King, but better far than thou art great,
Whom state not honours but who honours state;
By wonder born, by wonder first installed,
By wonder after to new kingdoms called;
Young, kept by wonder from home-bred alarms,
Old, saved by wonder from pale traitor's harms,
To be for this thy reign, which wonders brings,
A king of wonder, wonder unto kings.
If Pict, Dane, Norman, thy smooth yoke had seen,
Pict, Dane, and Norman, had thy subjects been;
If Brutus knew the bliss thy rule doth give,
E'en Brutus joy would under thee to live.

For thou thy people dost so dearly love,
That they a father more than prince thee prove.
DRUMMOND, 1630

(3) The seas are quiet when the winds give o'er;
So, calm are we when passions are no more!
For then we know how vain it was to boast
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost.
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes
Conceal that emptiness which age descries.

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made;
Stronger by weakness, wiser, men become
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.
WALLER, 1687

(4) See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;
See thy bright altars thronged with prostrate kings,
And heaped with products of Sabæan springs!
For thee Idume's spicy forests blow,
And seeds of golden Ophir's mountains glow.
See heaven its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day.
POPE, 1730

4. In the following extract from Bunyan explain carefully the literal meaning that lies behind the allegory. Remark upon (*a*) its clearness, (*b*) its appropriateness and beauty. Add a note on Bunyan's style, especially with regard to its connection with the Bible.

But we will come again to this valley of humiliation. It is the best and most fruitful piece of ground in all these parts. It is fat ground, and, as you see, consisteth much in meadows; and if a man was to come here in summer-time, as we do now, if he knew not anything before thereof, and if he also delighted himself in the sight of his eyes, he might see that which would be delightful

to him. Behold how green this valley is! also how beautiful with lilies! I have known many labouring men that have got good estates in this valley of humiliation. “For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble”; for indeed it is a very fruitful soil, and doth bring forth handfuls. Some also have wished that the next way to their father’s house were here, that they might be troubled no more with either hills or mountains to go over; but the way is the way, and there’s an end.

5. The following extracts illustrate respectively Restoration comedy and tragedy:

(1) (*This is part of a scene between Aimwell, a gentleman who is staying at an inn, and Gibbet, a highwayman, who is trying to insinuate himself into his company by calling himself a military officer.*)

Enter GIBBET

Gibbet. Sir, I’m yours.

Aimwell. ’Tis more than I deserve, sir, for I don’t know you.

Gibbet. I don’t wonder at that, sir, for you never saw me before—[*aside*]—I hope.

Aimwell. And pray, sir, how came I by the honour of seeing you now?

Gibbet. Sir, I scorn to intrude upon any gentleman, but my landlord—

Aimwell. O sir, I ask your pardon, you’re the captain he told me of?

Gibbet. At your service, sir.

Aimwell. What regiment, may I be so bold?

Gibbet. A marching regiment, an old corps.

Aimwell [*aside*]. Very old, if your coat be

regimental. [*Aloud*] You have served abroad, sir?

Gibbet. Yes, sir, in the plantations,'twas my lot to be sent into the worst service; I would have quitted it indeed, but a man of honour, you know —Besides, 'twas for the good of my country that I should be abroad: anything for the good of one's country—I'm a Roman for that.

Aimwell. You found the West Indies very hot, sir?

Gibbet. Ay, sir, too hot for me.

Aimwell. Pray, sir, han't I seen your face at Will's coffee-house?

Gibbet. Yes, sir, and at White's too.

Aimwell. And where is your company now, captain?

Gibbet. They an't come yet.

Aimwell. Why, d'ye expect them here?

Gibbet. They'll be here to-night, sir.

Aimwell. Which way do they march?

Gibbet. Across country.

FARQUHAR, *The Beaux' Stratagem*

Remark upon the style of the dialogue, and how it suits the situation.

(2) (*This extract occurs near the end of "Venice Preserved," Otway's famous tragedy. Pierre, a conspirator against the Venetian Senate, is about to be tortured publicly on the wheel. His friend Jaffier, who has wronged Pierre, has come to witness the execution.*)

Officer. The day grows late, sir.
Pierre. I'll make haste. O Jaffier!
Though thou'st betrayed me, do me some way justice.
Jaffier. No more of that: thy wishes shall be satisfied....

[*Going away, Pierre holds him.*
Pierre. No—this—no more![*He whispers Jaffier.*
*Jaffier.*Ha! is't then so?
*Pierre.*Most certainly.
Jaffier. I'll do't.
*Pierre.*Remember.
*Officer.*Sir.
*Pierre.*Come, now I'm ready.
[*He and Jaffier ascend the scaffold.*
Captain, you should be a gentleman of honour.
Keep off the rabble, that I may have room
To entertain my fate and die with decency.
Come!
[*Takes off his gown. Executioner prepares to bind him.*
*Priest.*Son!
*Pierre.*Hence, tempter!
*Officer.*Stand off, priest.
Pierre. I thank you, sir.
You'll think on't.[*To Jaffier.*
Jaffier. 'Twon't grow stale before to-morrow.
Pierre. Now, Jaffier! Now I am going. Now—
[*Executioner having bound him.*
Jaffier. Have at thee, thou honest heart!
Then, here! [*Stabs him.*
And this is well too![*Stabs himself.*
*Priest.*Damnable deed!
Pierre. Now thou hast indeed been faithful.
This was done nobly—we've deceived the Senate.
Jaffier. Bravely.
Pierre. Ha! Ha! Ha!—Oh! Oh!—[*Dies.*
*Jaffier.*Now, you curs'd rulers,
Thus of the blood ye've shed I make libation,
And sprinkle it mingling; may it rest upon you,
And all your race: be henceforth peace a stranger
Within your walls; let plagues and famine waste
Your generations—O poor Belvidera!...
I'm sick—I'm quiet—[*Dies.*

Remark upon the power of this scene, the skill shown in the variation of the speeches, the use of colloquialisms, and the climax. Does it strike you as being overdone? Add a note on the meter.

6. The following is Dryden's character-sketch of the Duke of Buckingham, who receives the name of Zimri. (Dryden, in his *Essay on Satire*, says: "How

easy it is to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! but how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave without using any of these opprobrious names! There is a vast difference between the slovenly butchering of a man and the fineness of stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place.... The character of Zimri, in my *Absalom and Achitophel*, is, in my opinion, worth the whole poem. It is not bloody, but it is ridiculous enough.")

> Some of their chiefs were princes of the land;
> In the first rank of these did Zimri stand,
> A man so various that he seemed to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
> Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
> Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
> But in the course of one revolving moon
> Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
> Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
> Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
> Blest madman who could every hour employ
> With something new to wish or to enjoy!
> Railing and praising were his usual themes,
> And both, to show his judgment, in extremes:
> So over violent or over civil
> That every man with him was God or Devil.
> In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;
> Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
> Beggared by fools whom still he found too late,
> He had his jest, and they had his estate.
> He laughed himself from Court; then sought relief
> By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:
> For spite of him, the weight of business fell
> On Absalom and wise Achitophel;
> Thus wicked but in will, of means bereft,
> He left not faction, but of that was left.

From this passage quote the lines which hint that Buckingham is respectively "a fool, a blockhead, or a knave" without actually calling him so. Quote other lines that seem to be particularly effective. Remark upon the style of the couplet: the meter, the position

of the pause, and the kind of rhyme. Finally, write a paragraph summarizing the effect the passage produces on the reader.

7. The passage given below is an extract from Dryden's earliest printed poem (1658). Compare it with the passage given in the last exercise.

> Each little pimple had a tear in it,
> To wail the fault its rising did commit,
> Who, rebel-like, with their own lord at strife,
> Thus made an insurrection 'gainst his life.
> Or were these gems sent to adorn his skin,
> The cabinet of a richer soul within?
> No comet need foretell his change drew on,
> Whose corpse might seem a constellation.
>
> *Upon the Death of the Lord Hastings*

8. Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full resounding line,
The long majestic march, the energy divine.

POPE

From the passages already quoted give extracts to show the truth of the above statement.

9. Use the following quotation to sketch the development of English prose from the death of Shakespeare to the death of Dryden:

> When we find Chapman, the Elizabethan translator of Homer, expressing himself in his preface thus: "Though truth in her very nakedness sits in so deep a pit, that from Gades to Aurora and Ganges few eyes can sound her, I hope yet those few here will so discover and confirm, that, the date being out of her darkness in this morning of our poet, he shall now gird his temples with the sun,"—we pronounce that such a prose is intolerable. When we find Milton writing: "And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he, who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable

> things, ought himself to be a true poem,"—we pronounce that such a prose has its own grandeur, but that it is obsolete and inconvenient. But when we find Dryden telling us: "What Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write," then we exclaim that here at last we have the true English prose, prose such as we would all gladly use if we only knew how. Yet Dryden was Milton's contemporary.
>
> MATTHEW ARNOLD

10. "A good deal of the unconquerable individuality of the earlier part of the century survives in it, and prevents monotony. After Addison everybody tries to write like Addison; after Johnson almost everybody tries to write like Johnson. But after Dryden everybody dare not yet try to write like Dryden." (Saintsbury.) Show how far this statement applies to the prose style of the age.

11. "The characteristic feature of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is that it is the only work of its kind which possesses a strong human interest." (Macaulay.) Show how Bunyan, in plot, characters, and style, arouses this "strong human interest" in his allegory. From this point of view compare him with Spenser, who, Macaulay says, does not arouse this interest.

12. The period of Dryden is often called "the Age of Satire." Account for the prominence of satire in this period, and point out some of the effects it had on current and the succeeding writing.

13. What are the main features of Restoration drama?

14. "No man exercised so much influence on the

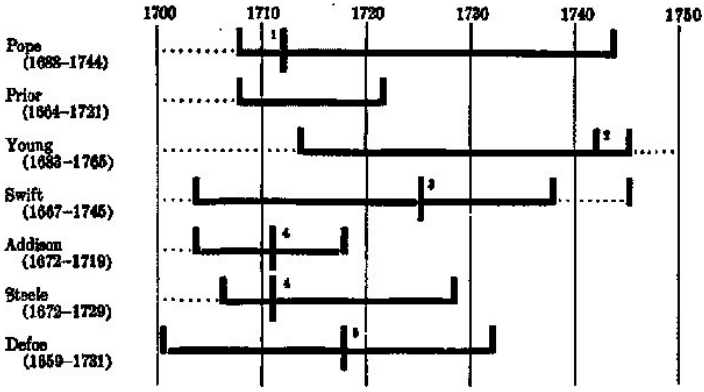
age. The reason is obvious. On no man did the age exercise so much influence." (Macaulay.) How far is this statement true of Dryden?

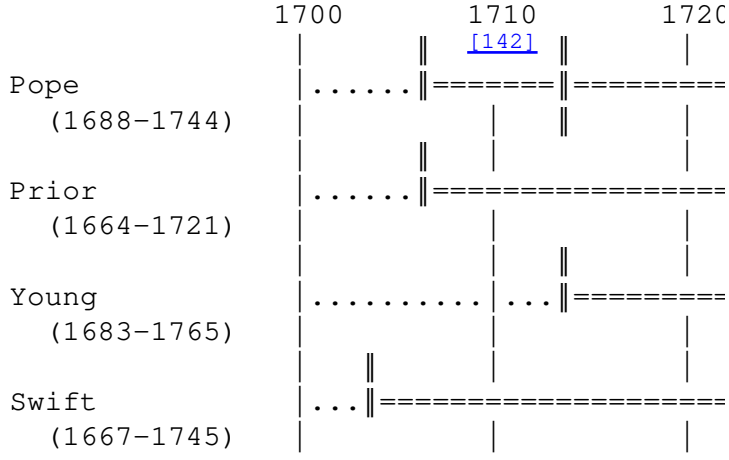
CHAPTER VIII

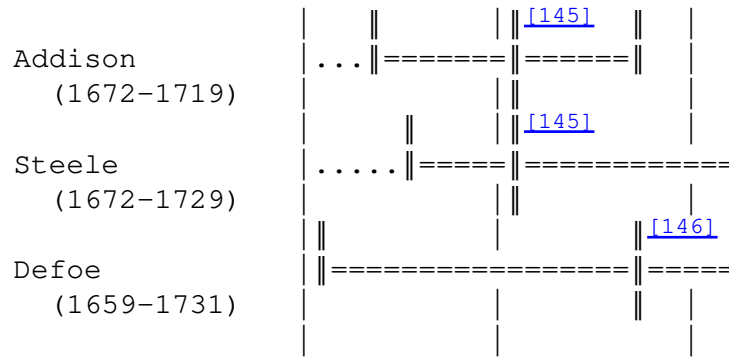
THE AGE OF POPE

TIME-CHART OF THE CHIEF AUTHORS

The thick line shows the period of active literary work







THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1700–50)

In the beginning of the eighteenth century the old quarrels take on new features.

1. The Rise of the Political Parties. In the reign of Charles II the terms “Whig” and “Tory” first became current; by the year 1700 they were in everybody’s mouth. About that time domestic politicians became sharply cleft into two groups that were destined to become established as the basis of the British system. Domestic affairs, while they never approached the stage of bloodshed, took on a new acrimony that was to affect literature deeply. Actual points of political faith upon which the parties were divided are not of great importance to us here; but, generally speaking, we may say that the Whig party stood for the pre-eminence of personal freedom as opposed to the Tory view of royal divine right. Hence the Whigs supported the Hanoverian succession, whereas the Tories were Jacobites. The Tories, whose numbers were recruited chiefly from the landed classes, objected to the foreign war upon the score that they had to pay taxes to prolong it; and the Whigs, representing the trading classes generally, were alleged to be anxious to continue the war, as it brought them increased prosperity. In the

matter of religion the Whigs were Low Churchmen and the Tories High Churchmen.

2. The Foreign War. This War of the Spanish Succession was brilliantly successful under the leadership of Marlborough, who, besides being a great general, was a prominent Tory politician. The Tories, as the war seemed to be indefinitely prolonged, supplanted (1710) the Whigs, with whom they had been co-operating in the earlier stages of the war, and in 1713 they concluded the war by the unfortunate Treaty of Utrecht. Contemporary literature is much concerned both with the war and the peace.

3. The Succession. When Anne ascended the throne the succession seemed to be safe enough, for she had a numerous family. Nevertheless, her children all died before her, and in 1701 it became necessary to pass the Act of Settlement, a Whig measure by which the crown was conferred upon the House of Hanover. On the death of Anne, in the year 1714, the succession took effect, in spite of the efforts of the Tories, who were anxious to restore the Stuarts. The events of this year 1714 deeply influenced the lives of Addison, Steele, Swift, and many other writers of lesser degree.

THE AGE OF PROSE

The age of Pope intensified the movement that, as we have seen, began after the Restoration. The drift away from poetical passion was more pronounced than ever, the ideals of “wit” and “common sense” were more zealously pursued, and the lyrical note was almost unheard. In its place we find in poetry the overmastering desire for neatness and perspicuity, for edge and point in style, and for

correctness in the technique of the popular forms of poetry. These aims received expression in the almost crazy devotion to the heroic couplet, the aptest medium for the purpose. In this type of poetry the supreme master is Pope; yet even the most ardent admirer of Pope must admit his defects as a poet of the passions. Indeed, one of his most competent biographers[147] asserts that "most of his work may be fairly described as rhymed prose, differing from prose not in substance or in tone of feeling, but only in the form of expression."

Thus the poet who is admitted to be far and away the most important of the age is considered to be largely prosaic. On the other hand, the only other great names of the period—Swift, Addison, Steele, Defoe—are those of prose-writers primarily, and prose-writers of a very high quality.

The main reason for this temporary predominance of prose is hard to discover. One can put it down only to the mysterious ebb and flow, the alternate coming and going, of the spirit of poetry. This alternation is noticeable through all the stages of our literary history, and nowhere is it more distinct than in the century we are discussing. The spirit of poetry was soaring to its culmination in the Elizabethan age; during the era of Dryden it was fluttering to earth; in Pope's lifetime it was crouching "like veiled lightnings asleep"; but it was soon to arise with new and divine strength.

Some other outstanding conditions of the age remain to be considered. Most of them, it will be noticed, help to give prose its dominating position.

1. Political Writing. We have already noticed the rise of the two political parties, accompanied by an increased acerbity of political passion. This

development gave a fresh importance to men of literary ability, for both parties competed for the assistance of their pens, bribed the authors with places and pensions (or promises of them), and admitted them more or less deeply into their counsels. In previous ages authors had had to depend on their patrons, often capricious beings, or upon the length of their subscription lists; they now acquired an independence and an importance that turned the heads of some of them. Hardly a writer of the time is free from the political bias. Swift became a virulent Tory, Addison a tepid Whig; Steele was Whig and Tory in turn. It was indeed the Golden Age of political pamphleteering, and the writers made the most of it.

2. The Clubs and Coffee-houses. Politicians are necessarily gregarious, and the increased activity in politics led to a great addition to the number of political clubs and coffee-houses, which became the *foci* of fashionable and public life. In the first number of *The Tatler* Steele announces as a matter of course that the activities of his new journal will be based upon the clubs. “All accounts of Gallantry, Pleasure and Entertainment shall be under the article of White’s Chocolate-House; Poetry under that of Will’s Coffee-House; Learning under the title of Grecian; Foreign and Domestic News you will have from Saint James’ Coffee-House.” These coffee-houses became the “clearing-houses” for literary business, and from them branched purely literary associations such as the famous Scriblerus and Kit-Cat Clubs, those haunts of the fashionable writers which figure so prominently in the writings of the period.

3. Periodical Writing. The development of the periodical will be noticed elsewhere (see pp. 267–8).

It is sufficient here to point out that the struggle for political mastery led both factions to issue a swarm of *Examiners*, *Guardians*, *Freeholders*, and similar publications. These journals were run by a band of vigorous and facile prose-writers, who in their differing degrees of excellence represent almost a new type in our literature.

4. The New Publishing Houses. The interest in politics, and probably the decline in the drama, caused a great increase in the size of the reading public. In its turn this aroused the activities of a number of men who became the forerunners of the modern publishing houses. Such were Edmund Curll (1675–1747), Jacob Tonson (1656–1736), and John Dunton (1659–1733). These men employed numbers of needy writers, who produced the translations, adaptations, and other popular works of the time. It is unwise to judge a publisher by what authors say of him, but the universal condemnation leveled against Curll and his kind compels the belief that they were a breed of scoundrels who preyed upon authors and public, and (what is more remarkable) upon one another. The miserable race of hack-writers—venomously attacked by Pope in *The Dunciad*—who existed on the scanty bounty of such men lived largely in a thoroughfare near Moorfields called Grub Street, the name of which has become synonymous with literary drudgery.

5. The New Morality. The immorality of the Restoration, which had been almost entirely a Court phenomenon and was largely the reaction against extreme Puritanism, soon spent itself. The natural process of time was hastened by opinion in high quarters. William III was a severe moralist, and Anne, his successor, was of the same character. Thus

we soon see a new tone in the writing of the time, and a new attitude to life and morals. Addison, in an early number of *The Spectator*, puts the new fashion in his own admirable way: "I shall endeavour to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality." Another development of the same spirit is seen in the revised opinion of women, who are treated with new respect and dignity. Much coarseness is still to be felt, especially in satirical writing, in which Swift, for instance, can be quite vile; but the general upward tendency is undoubtedly there.

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667–1745)

1. His Life. Swift was born in Dublin, and, though both his parents were English, his connection with Ireland was to be maintained more or less closely till the day he died. His father dying before Jonathan's birth, the boy was thrown upon the charity of an uncle, who paid for his education in Ireland. He seems to have been very wretched both at his school at Kilkenny and at Trinity College, Dublin, where his experiences went to confirm in him that savage melancholia that was to endure all his life. Much of this distemper was due to purely physical causes, for he suffered from an affection of the ear that ultimately touched his brain and caused insanity. In 1686, at the age of nineteen, he left Trinity College (it is said in disgrace), and in 1689 entered the household of his famous kinsman Sir William Temple, under whose encouragement he took holy orders, and on the death of Temple in 1699 obtained other secretarial and ecclesiastical appointments. His real chance came in 1710, when the Tories overthrew the Marlborough faction and came into office. To them Swift devoted the gigantic powers of

his pen, became a political star of some magnitude, and, after the manner of the time, hoped for substantial rewards. He might have become a bishop, but it is said that Queen Anne objected to the vigor of his early writings; and in the wreck of the Tory party in 1715 all he could save was the Deanery of St. Patrick's, in Dublin. An embittered man, he spent the last thirty years of his life in gloom, and largely in retirement. He was involved in obscure but not dishonorable philanderings with Esther Johnson (Stella) and Esther Vanhomrigh (Vanessa), whose names figure prominently in his personal writings. His last years were passed in silence and lunacy, and he expired (in Johnson's words) "a driveller and a show."

2. His Poetry. Swift would have been among the first to smile at any claim being advanced for him on the score of his being a great poet, yet in bulk his verse is considerable, and in quality it is striking. His poems were to a large extent recreations: odd verses (sometimes humorously doggerel) to his friends; squibs and lampoons on his political and private enemies, including the famous one on Partridge, the quack astrologer; and one longish one, *Cadenus and Vanessa* (1730), which deals with his fancy for Esther Vanhomrigh. In his poems he is as a rule lighter of touch and more placable in humor than he is in his prose. His favorite meter is the octosyllabic couplet, which he handles with a dexterity that reminds the reader of Butler in *Hudibras*. He has lapses of taste, when be becomes coarse and vindictive; and sometimes the verse, through mere indifference, is badly strung and colloquially expressed.

The following is from some bitter verses he wrote (1735) on his own death just before the final night of

madness descended. Note the fierce misery inadequately screened with savage scorn.

> Yet thus, methinks, I hear them speak:
> "See, how the Dean begins to break!
> Poor gentleman, he droops apace!
> You'll plainly find it in his face.
> That old vertigo in his head
> Will never leave him, till he's dead.
> Besides, his memory decays:
> He recollects not what he says;
> He cannot call his friends to mind;
> Forgets the place where last he dined;
> Plies you with stories o'er and o'er;
> He told them fifty times before.
> How does he fancy we can sit
> To hear his out-of-fashion wit?
> But he takes up with younger folks,
> Who for his wine will bear his jokes.
> Faith, he must make his stories shorter,
> Or change his comrades once a quarter:
> In half the time he talks them round,
> There must another set be found."

3. His Prose. Almost in one bound Swift attained to a mastery of English prose, and then maintained an astonishing level of excellence. His first noteworthy book was *The Battle of the Books*, published in 1704. The theme of this work is a well-worn one, being the dispute between ancient and modern authors. At the time Swift wrote it his patron, Sir William Temple, was engaged in the controversy, and Swift's tract was in support of his kinsman's views. Swift gives the theme a half allegorical, mock-heroic setting, in which the books in a library at length literally contend with one another. The handling is vigorous and illuminating, and refreshed with many happy remarks and allusions. The famous passage where a bee, accidentally blundering into a spider's web, argues down the bitter remarks of the spider, is one of Swift's happiest efforts.

The Tale of a Tub, also published in 1704, though it was written as early as 1696, is regarded by many as Swift's best work. It certainly reveals his power at its highest. It is a religious allegory, perhaps suggested by the work of Bunyan, on three men: Peter, who stands for the Roman Catholic Church; Jack, who represents the extreme Protestant sects; and Martin, the personification of the Anglican and Lutheran Churches. Each of the three has a coat left to him by his father, and they have many experiences, beginning with the changes that they make on the coats that have been left to them. As a narrative the book soon loses clearness and coherence; but later a ferocious assault is developed by Swift upon Peter and Jack. Martin escapes more lightly than the others, and this is unusually discriminating on the part of the author. The chief interest in the book lies in Swift's uncanny penetration of intellect, which thrusts itself into all manner of human activities, and also in the weight and blighting scorn of his comment upon those activities. The satire is irresistible. Nothing escapes it; nothing can resist it. When he has finished we feel he has made a wilderness of everything we call sacred and beautiful.

The great strength of Swift's satiric method lies in its cosmic elemental force. Unlike that of Pope, it is never paltry or mean. It has a terrifying intensity, caused by an aloofness that is inflexible, dominating, and unchallengeable. Yet *The Tale of a Tub*, while it fully reveals the power that stamps him as a writer of the first rank, throws into prominence the faults that seriously mar his achievement. His satire is too indiscriminate, lashing out at whatever comes in the way, whether it be good or bad. Secondly, it is often violent and revoltingly cruel. Thirdly, it can be

coarse and indecent. These flaws, partly the common vices of the time, are likewise the fruit of his mental malady, and they deepen as he grows older.

The following extract shows the suggestiveness of his allegory, the corrosive power of his satire, and his redoubtable style:

> Whenever it happened that any rogue of Newgate was condemned to be hanged, Peter would offer him a pardon for a certain sum of money; which when the poor caitiff had made all shifts to scrape up, and send, his lordship would return a piece of paper in this form:
>
> "To all mayors, sheriffs, jailors, constables, bailiffs, hangmen, etc. Whereas we are informed that A. B. remains in the hands of some of you, under the sentence of death: We will and command you, upon sight hereof to let the said prisoner depart to his own habitation whether he stands condemned for murder, etc., etc., for which this shall be your sufficient warrant; and if you fail hereof, God damn you and yours to all eternity; and so we bid you heartily farewell. Your most humble man's man, Emperor Peter."
>
> The wretches, trusting to this, lost their lives and money too. Peter, however, became outrageously proud. He has been seen to take three old high-crowned hats and clap them on his head three-storey high, with a huge bunch of keys at his girdle, and an angling-rod in his hand. In which guise, whoever went to take him by the hand in the way of salutation, Peter, with much grace, like a well-educated spaniel, would present them with his foot; and if they refused his civility, then he would raise it as high as their chops, and give them a damned kick in the mouth, which has ever since been called a salute.
>
> *The Tale of a Tub*

The next period of his life (1704–14) was occupied mainly in the composition of political tracts, some of which are of great power. Several of them were written for *The Examiner*, a Tory journal. They include *Remarks on the Barrier Treaty* (1712) and *The Public Spirit of the Whigs* (1714). To this period also belongs the *Journal to Stella*, which is a kind of informal private log-book written by him and sent regularly to Esther Johnson. It has all Swift's shrewdness and vivacity, without much of the usual scorn and coarseness. It is not as intimate and revealing as the diary of Pepys, yet it gives us many glimpses of the inner man: vain and arrogant, ambitious and crafty, but none the less a generous and considerate friend and a loyal ally.

During the third period—that of his final stay in Ireland—the shadow deepens. The earlier years produce one of the most compelling efforts of his pen. He supported the Irish in their revolt against "Wood's halfpence," writing in their cause his *Drapier's Letters* (1724). This gained for him an almost embarrassing popularity. Then followed some miscellaneous political work, and then his longest and most famous book, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). The main idea of this book is an old one, being at least as old as the time of Lucian, a Greek writer of the second century: it deals with imaginary voyages, in Gulliver's case among the pigmies (Lilliputians), the giants (Brobdingnagians), the moonstruck philosophers (Laputans), and the race of horses, with their human serfs the Yahoos.

Gulliver's Travels resembles its fellow-allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* in its popularity and human interest; but in temper the two books are worlds apart. Bunyan views human failings with a

discerning eye, but he accepts them with a benign quiescence, and with a tempered faith in man's ultimate redemption. Swift, on the other hand, said to Pope, "I heartily hate and detest that animal called man," and this book is an elaboration of that attitude. He magnifies man into a giant, and then he diminishes him into a mannikin, and he finds him wicked and insolent and mean; he regards man in his wisdom, and he finds him a fool; in despair, in the last book of the *Travels*, he turns from man altogether, and in the brute creation he discovers a charity and sagacity before which humanity grovels as a creature beastly beyond measure. The last stages of the book are morbid and revolting to the point of insanity.

The two earlier stages of the *Travels* have a charm and vivacity that delight old and young. The bitterness of the satire lurks in the allegory, but it is so delicately tinseled over that it does not repel. The crowded incidents are plausible and lively, and they are often spiced with a quaint and alluring humor; his comments upon mankind are shrewd and arresting, as well as satirical, and are yet not brutal nor obscene. The style is Swift's best: not mannered or labored; clean, powerful, and tireless; easy without being slovenly, and as clear as summer noonday.

> The queen, who often used to hear me talk of my sea-voyages, and took all occasions to divert me when I was melancholy, asked me whether I understood how to handle a sail or an oar, and whether a little exercise of rowing might not be convenient for my health. I answered, that I understood both very well; for although my proper employment had been to be surgeon or doctor to the ship, yet often upon a pinch I was

forced to work like a common mariner. But I could not see how this could be done in their country, where the smallest wherry was equal to a first-rate man-of-war among us, and such a boat as I could manage would never live in any of their rivers. Her majesty said, if I would contrive a boat, her own joiner should make it, and she would provide a place for me to sail in. The fellow was an ingenious workman, and, by my instructions, in ten days finished a pleasure-boat, with all its tackling, able conveniently to hold eight Europeans. When it was finished, the queen was so delighted that she ran with it in her lap to the king, who ordered it to be put in a cistern full of water with me in it by way of trial; where I could not manage my two sculls, or little oars, for want of room. But the queen had before contrived another project. She ordered the joiner to make a wooden trough of three hundred feet long, fifty broad, and eight deep, which being well pitched, to prevent leaking, was placed on the floor along the wall in an outer room of the palace. It had a cock near the bottom to let out the water, when it began to grow stale; and two servants could easily fill it in half an hour. Here I often used to row for my own diversion, as well as that of the queen and her ladies, who thought themselves well entertained with my skill and agility. Sometimes I would put up my sail, and then my business was only to steer, while the ladies gave me a gale with their fans; and when they were weary, some of the pages would blow my sail forward with their breath, while I showed my art by steering starboard or larboard, as I pleased. When I had done, Glumdalclitch always carried back my boat into her closet, and hung it on a nail to dry.

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672–1718)

1. His Life. Educated at the Charterhouse, Addison went to Oxford, where he became a Fellow

of Magdalen College. He early made his mark as a serious and accomplished scholar, and seems to have attracted the notice of the Whig leaders, who marked him out as a future literary prop of their faction. He obtained a traveling scholarship of three hundred pounds a year, and saw much of Europe under favorable conditions. Then the misfortunes of the Whigs in 1703 reduced him to poverty. In 1704, it is said at the instigation of the leaders of the Whigs, he wrote the poem *The Campaign*, praising the war policy of the Whigs in general and the worthiness of Marlborough in particular. This poem brought him fame and fortune. He obtained many official appointments and pensions, married a dowager countess (1716), and became a Secretary of State (1717). Two years later he died, at the age of forty-seven.

2. His Poetry. In his Latin verses Addison attained early distinction. These verses were highly praised at a time when praise for proficiency in such a medium was of some significance. Then his *Campaign* in 1704 gave him a reputation as one of the major poets of the age. The poem is poor enough. It is written in the heroic couplet, and with some truth it has been called a “rhymed gazette.” The story is little more than a pompous catalogue of places and persons; the style is but mediocre, and warms only when it is feebly stirred by the ignorant enthusiasm that a sedentary civilian feels for the glory of war. The hero is Marlborough, who is drawn on a scale of epic grandeur. The most famous passage of the work is that comparing the general to the angel that rides the storm. The poem literally made Addison’s fortune; for after reading it the Whig Lord Treasurer Godolphin gave him the valuable appointment of Commissioner of Appeals.

> 'Twas then great Marlbro's mighty soul was prov'd,
> That, in the shock of charging hosts unmov'd,
> Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
> Examin'd all the dreadful scenes of war;
> In peaceful thought the field of death survey'd,
> To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid,
> Inspir'd repuls'd battalions to engage,
> And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.
> So when an angel by divine command
> With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
> Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
> Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
> And pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to perform,
> Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

His only other poetical works worthy of notice are his hymns, which are melodious, scholarly, and full of a cheerful piety. The one that begins "The spacious firmament on high" is among the best.

3. His Drama. Addison was lucky in his greatest dramatic effort, just as he was lucky in his longest poem. In 1713 he produced the tragedy of *Cato*, part of which had been in manuscript as early as 1703. It is of little merit, and shows that Addison, whatever his other qualities may be, is no dramatist. It is written in laborious blank verse, in which wooden characters declaim long, dull speeches. But it caught the ear of the political parties, both of which in the course of the play saw pithy references to the inflamed passions of the time. The play had the remarkable run of thirty-five nights, and was revived with much success. Addison also attempted an opera, *Rosamond* (1706), which was a failure; and the prose comedy of *The Drummer* (about 1715) is said, with some reason, to be his also. If it is, it adds nothing to his reputation.

4. His Prose. Several political pamphlets are ascribed to Addison, but as a pamphleteer he is not impressive. He lacked the brutal directness of Swift,

whose pen was a terror to his opponents. It is in fact almost entirely as an essayist that Addison is justly famed.

These essays began almost casually. On April 12, 1709, Steele published the first number of *The Tatler*, a periodical that was to appear thrice weekly. Addison, who was a school and college friend of Steele, saw and liked the new publication, and offered his services as a contributor. His offer was accepted, and his first contribution, a semi-political one, appeared in No. 18. Henceforward Addison wrote regularly for the paper, contributing 42 numbers, which may be compared with Steele's share of 188. *The Tatler* finished in January, 1711; then in March of the same year Steele began *The Spectator*, which was issued daily. The paper had some variations of fortune, price, and time of issue, but eventually it ran until December, 1712; obtained an unprecedented popularity (it was said that in its palmiest days it sold ten thousand copies of each issue), and exercised a great influence upon the reading public of the period. In *The Spectator* Addison rapidly became the dominating spirit, wrote 274 essays out of a complete total of 555, and wholly shaped its policy when Steele tired of the project. Steele wrote 236 essays. In March, 1713, Addison assisted Steele with *The Guardian*, which Steele began. It was only a moderate success, and terminated after 175 numbers, Addison contributing 53.

In all, we thus have from Addison's pen nearly four hundred essays, which are of nearly uniform length, of almost unvarying excellence of style, and of a wide diversity of subject. He set out to be a mild censor of the morals of the time, and most of his

compositions deal with topical subjects—fashions, headdresses, practical jokes, polite conversation. Deeper themes were handled in a popular and sketchy fashion—immorality, jealousy, prayer, death, and drunkenness. Politics were touched, but gingerly. Sometimes he adopted the allegory as a means of throwing his ideas vividly before his readers; and so we have the popular *Vision of Mirza* and the political allegory of *Public Credit*. Literary criticism, of a mild and cautious kind, found a prominent place in the essays, as well as many half-personal, half-jocular editorial communications to the readers. And, lastly, there was the famous series dealing with the Spectator Club.

It is certain that Steele first hit on the idea of Sir Roger de Coverley, an imaginary eccentric old country knight who frequented the Spectator Club in London. Around the knight were grouped a number of contrasted characters, also members of the mythical club. Such were Will Honeycomb, a middle-aged beau; Sir Andrew Freeport, a city merchant; Captain Sentry, a soldier; and Mr. Spectator, a shy, reticent person, who bears a resemblance to Addison himself. Addison seized upon the idea of the club; gave it life, interest, and adventure; cast over it the charm of his pleasantly sub-acid humor; and finished up by making the knight die with affecting deliberation and decorum. Sandwiched between essays on other topics, this series appeared at intervals in the pages of *The Spectator*, and added immensely to the popularity of the journal. In literature it has an added value. If Addison had pinned the Coverley papers together with a stronger plot; if, instead of only referring to the widow who had stolen the knight's affections, he had introduced a definite love-theme; if he had introduced some

important female characters, we should have had the first regular novel in our tongue. As it is, this essay-series brings us within measurable distance of the genuine eighteenth-century novel.

We give an extract to illustrate both his humor and his style. His humor is of a rare order. It is delicate, almost furtive; sometimes it nearly descends to a snigger, but it seldom reveals anything that is not gentlemanly, tolerant, and urbane. To Swift, with his virile mind, such a temper seemed effeminate and priggish. "I will not meddle with *The Spectator*," he wrote to Stella; "let him *fair sex* it to the world's end."

His style has often been deservedly praised. It is the pattern of the middle style, never slipshod, or obscure, or unmelodious. He has an infallible instinct for the proper word, and an infallible ear for a subdued and graceful rhythm. In this fashion his prose moves with a demure and pleasing grace, in harmony with his subject, with his object, and with himself.

> As I was yesterday morning walking with Sir Roger before his house, a country fellow brought him a huge fish, which, he told him, Mr William Wimble had caught that very morning; and that he presented it with his service to him, and intended to come and dine with him. At the same time he delivered a letter, which my friend read to me as soon as the messenger left him.
>
> "SIR ROGER,
>
> "I desire you to accept of a jack, which is the best I have caught this season. I intend to come and stay with you a week, and see how the perch bite in the Black river. I observed with some concern, the last time I saw you upon the

bowling-green, that your whip wanted a lash to it; I will bring half a dozen with me that I twisted last week, which I hope will serve you all the time you are in the country. I have not been out of the saddle for six days last past, having been at Eton with Sir John's eldest son. He takes to his learning hugely.

"I am, Sir, your humble servant,

"WILL WIMBLE"

This extraordinary letter, and message that accompanied it, made me very curious to know the character and quality of the gentleman who sent them; which I found to be as follow:—Will Wimble is younger brother to a baronet, and descended of the ancient family of the Wimbles. He is now between forty and fifty; but being bred to no business and born to no estate, he generally lives with his eldest brother as superintendent of his game. He hunts a pack of dogs better than any man in the country, and is very famous for finding out a hare. He is extremely well versed in all the little handicrafts of an idle man. He makes a May-fly to a miracle; and furnishes the whole country with angle-rods. As he is a good-natured, officious fellow, and very much esteemed on account of his family, he is a welcome guest at every house, and keeps up a good correspondence among all the gentlemen about him. He carries a tulip root in his pocket from one to another, or exchanges a puppy between a couple of friends, that live perhaps in the opposite sides of the country. He now and then presents a pair of garters of his own knitting to their mothers or sisters; and raises a great deal of mirth among them, by inquiring as often as he meets them, how they wear? These gentleman-like manufactures and obliging little humours make Will the darling of the country.

The Spectator

SIR RICHARD STEELE (1672–1729)

1. His Life. Steele had a varied and rather an unfortunate career, due largely to his own ardent disposition. Like Addison, he was educated at the Charterhouse, and then proceeded to Oxford, leaving without taking a degree. His next exploit was to enter the army as a cadet; then he took to politics, became a member of Parliament, and wrote for the Whigs. Steele, however, was too impetuous to be a successful politician, and he was expelled from the House of Commons. He became a Tory; quarreled with Addison on private and public grounds; issued a number of periodicals; and died ten years after his fellow-essayist.

2. His Drama. Steele wrote some prose comedies, the best of which are *The Funeral* (1701), *The Lying Lover* (1703), *The Tender Husband* (1705), and *The Conscious Lovers* (1722). They follow in general scheme the Restoration comedies, but are without the grossness and impudence of their models. They have, indeed, been criticized as being too moral; yet in places they are lively, and reflect much of Steele's amiability of temper.

3. His Essays. It is as a miscellaneous essayist that Steele finds his place in literature. He was a man fertile in ideas, but he lacked the application that is always so necessary to carry those ideas to fruition. Thus he often sowed in order that other men might reap. He started *The Tatler* in 1709, *The Spectator* in 1711, and several other short-lived periodicals, such as *The Guardian* (1713), *The Reader* (1714), *The Englishman* (1715), and *The Plebeian* (1718). After the rupture with Addison the loss of the latter's steadying influence was acutely felt, and nothing that Steele attempted had any stability.

Steele's working alliance with Addison was so close and so constant that the comparison between them is almost inevitable. Of the two writers, some critics assert that Steele is the worthier. In versatility and in originality he is at least Addison's equal. His humor has none of Addison's simpering prudishness; it is broader and less restrained, with a naïve, pathetic touch about it that is reminiscent of Goldsmith. His pathos is more attractive and more humane. But Steele's very virtues are only his weaknesses sublimed; they are emotional, not intellectual; of the heart, and not of the head. He is incapable of irony; he lacks penetration and power; and much of his moralizing is cheap and obvious. He lacks Addison's care and suave ironic insight; he is reckless in style and inconsequent in method. And so, in the final estimate, as the greater artist he fails.

The passage given illustrates Steele's easy style, the unconstrained sentences, the fresh and almost colloquial vocabulary, and the genial humor.

(*Mr Bickerstaff, the Mr Spectator of "The Tatler," visits an old friend.*)

> As soon as we were alone, he took me by the hand. "Well, my good friend," says he, "I am heartily glad to see thee; I was afraid you would never have seen all the company that dined with you to-day again. Do not you think the good woman of the house a little altered since you followed her from the playhouse, to find out who she was, for me?" I perceived a tear fall down his cheek as he spoke, which moved me not a little. But, to turn the discourse, said I, "She is not indeed quite that creature she was, when she returned me the letter I carried from you; and told me, she hoped as I was a gentleman I would be employed no more to trouble her, who had never offended me; but would be so much the

gentleman's friend as to dissuade him from a pursuit which he could never succeed in. You may remember I thought her in earnest; and you were compelled to employ your cousin Will, who made his sister get acquainted with her, for you. You cannot expect her to be for ever fifteen." "Fifteen!" replied my good friend: "Ah! you little understand, you that have lived a bachelor, how great, how exquisite a pleasure there is in being really beloved! It is impossible that the most beauteous face in nature should raise in me such pleasing ideas as when I look upon that excellent woman. That fading in her countenance is chiefly caused by her watching with me in my fever. This was followed by a fit of sickness, which had like to have carried her off last winter. I tell you sincerely, I have so many obligations to her that I cannot, with any sort of moderation, think of her present state of health. But as to what you say of fifteen, she gives me every day pleasures beyond what I ever knew in the possession of her beauty, when I was in the vigour of youth. Every moment of her life brings me fresh instances of her complacency to my inclinations, and her prudence in regard to my fortune. Her face is to me much more beautiful than when I first saw it; there is no decay in any feature which I cannot trace from the very instant it was occasioned by some anxious concern for my welfare and interests."

DANIEL DEFOE (1659–1731)

1. His Life. Much of Defoe's life is still undetermined, but it is certain that he was born, lived, and died in poor and somewhat disreputable circumstances. He was born in London, became a soldier, and then took to journalism. He is one of the earliest, and in some ways the greatest, of the Grub Street hacks. He entered the service of the Whigs, by whom he was frequently employed in obscure and

questionable work. He died in London, a fugitive from the law, and in great distress.

2. His Prose. This is of amazing bulk and variety, and for convenience can be divided into two groups.

(*a*) *Political Writings.* Like most of the other writers of his time, Defoe turned out a mass of political tracts and pamphlets. Many of them appeared in his own journal, *The Review*, which, issued in 1704, is in several ways the forerunner of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. His *Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702) brought upon him official wrath, and caused him to be fined and pilloried. He wrote one or two of his political tracts in rough verses which are more remarkable for their vigor than for their elegance. The best known of this class is *The True-born Englishman* (1701). In all his propaganda Defoe is vigorous and acute, and he has a fair command of irony and invective.

(*b*) *His Fiction.* His works in fiction were all produced in the latter part of his life, at almost incredible speed. First came *Robinson Crusoe* (1719); then *Duncan Campbell*, *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, and *Captain Singleton*, all three books in 1720; in 1722 appeared *Moll Flanders*, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, and *Colonel Jack*; then *Roxana* (1724) and *A New Voyage round the World* (1725).

This great body of fiction has grave defects, largely due to the immense speed with which it was produced. The general plan of the novel in each case is slatternly and unequal; as, for example, in *Robinson Crusoe*, where the incomparable effect of the story of the island is marred by long and sometimes tedious narratives of other lands. Then the style is unpolished to the verge of rudeness. In homely and direct narrative this may not be a grave

drawback, but it shuts Defoe out from a large province of fiction in which he might have done valuable work.

But at its best, as in the finest parts of *Robinson Crusoe*, his writing has a realism that is rarely approached by the most ardent of modern realists. This is achieved by Defoe's grasp of details and his unerring sense of their supreme literary value, a swift and resolute narrative method, and a plain and matter-of-fact style that inevitably lays incredulity asleep. To the development of the novel Defoe's contribution is priceless.

In the passage now given note Defoe's completely unadorned style, the loosely constructed sentences, and the almost laughable attention to the minutest detail:

> I went to work upon this boat the most like a fool that ever man did who had any of his senses awake. I pleased myself with the design, without determining whether I was able to undertake it; not but that the difficulty of launching my boat came often into my head; but I put a stop to my own inquiries into it, by this foolish answer: Let us first make it: I warrant I will find some way or other to get it along when it is done.
>
> This was a most preposterous method; but the eagerness of my fancy prevailed, and to work I went. I felled a cedar-tree, and I question much, whether Solomon ever had such a one for the building of the Temple at Jerusalem; it was five feet ten inches diameter at the lower part next the stump, and four feet eleven inches diameter at the end of twenty-two feet, where it lessened, and then parted into branches. It was not without infinite labour that I felled this tree; I was twenty days hacking and hewing at the bottom, and fourteen more getting the branches and limbs and

> the vast spreading head of it cut off; after this it cost me a month to shape it and dub it to a proportion, and to something like the bottom of a boat, that it might swim upright as it ought to do. It cost me near three months more to clear the inside, and work it out so as to make an exact boat of it: this I did indeed without fire, by mere mallet and chisel, and by the dint of hard labour, till I had brought it to be a very handsome periagua, and big enough to have carried six-and-twenty men, and consequently big enough to have carried me and all my cargo.
>
> *Robinson Crusoe*

OTHER PROSE-WRITERS

1. John Arbuthnot (1667–1735). Arbuthnot was born in Kincardineshire, Scotland, studied medicine at Oxford, and spent the latter part of his life in London, where he became acquainted with Pope and Swift. His writings are chiefly political, and include the *Memoirs of Scriblerus* (1709), which, though published in the works of Pope, is thought to be his; *The History of John Bull* (1712 or 1713), ridiculing the war-policy of the Whigs; and *The Art of Political Lying* (1712).

Arbuthnot writes with wit and vivacity, and with many pointed allusions. At his best he somewhat resembles Swift, though he lacks the great devouring flame of the latter's personality.

2. Lord Bolingbroke (1678–1751). Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, was one of the chief political figures of the period. At the age of twenty-six he was Secretary for War in the Tory Government; was thereafter implicated in Jacobite plots; was compelled to flee to France; was pardoned, and permitted to return to England in 1723; had

once more to return to France in 1735; then, after seven years' exile, was finally restored to his native land.

Bolingbroke prided himself on being both a patron of letters and a man of letters. He influenced Pope, not always to the latter's advantage. In 1753 appeared his *Letter to Windham* (written in 1717); then in 1749 he produced *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism* and *The Idea of a Patriot King*. These reflect the Tory sentiments of their author, are written with a vigor that is often near to coarseness, and have all the tricks and vices of the rhetorician.

3. George Berkeley (1685–1753). Born in Ireland, Berkeley was educated at Dublin, where he distinguished himself in mathematics. Taking holy orders, he went to London (1713), and became acquainted with Swift and other wits. He was a man of noble and charitable mind, and interested himself in many worthy schemes. He was appointed a dean, and then was made Bishop of Cloyne in 1734. He was a man of great and enterprising mind, and wrote with much charm on a diversity of scientific, philosophical, and metaphysical subjects.

Among his books are *The Principles of Human Knowledge*, a notable effort in the study of the human mind that appeared in 1710, *Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous* (1713), and *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher* (1733). He is among the first, both in time and in quality, of the English philosophers who have dressed their ideas in language of literary distinction. He writes with delightful ease, disdaining ornament or affectation, and his command of gentle irony is capable and sure.

4. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762). This lady, famous in her day for her masculine force

of character, was the eldest daughter of the Duke of Kingston. In 1712 she married Edward Wortley Montagu, and moved in the highest literary and social circles. In 1716 her husband was appointed ambassador at Constantinople, and while she was in the East she corresponded regularly with many friends, both literary and personal. She is the precursor of the great letter-writers of the later portion of the century. Her *Letters* are written shrewdly and sensibly, often with a frankness that is a little staggering. She had a vivid interest in her world, and to a certain extent she can communicate her interest to her reader.

5. Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713). Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, is another example of the aristocratic *dilettante* man of letters. He had little taste for the politics of the time, and aspired to be famous as a great writer. He traveled much, and died at Naples in 1713.

His books are written with great care and exactitude, and are pleasant and lucid without being particularly striking. His *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times* (1716), though it contains nothing very original or profound, suited the taste of the time and was widely popular. Pope drew upon it for much of his matter in his *Essay on Man*.

ALEXANDER POPE (1688–1744)

1. His Life. Pope was born in London, the only child of a considerable city tradesman. From his birth two conditions were to influence very deeply the career of the future poet: first, he was puny and delicate, and, secondly, he was baptized into the Roman Catholic faith. His bodily infirmity, which

amounted almost to deformity, caused him to be privately educated; and to the end of his life his knowledge had that extensive range, joined to the liability to make the grossest blunders, which is so often the mark of an eager and precocious intelligence imperfectly trained. Pope's religious faith, though he was never excessively devout as a Roman Catholic, closed to him all the careers, professional and political, in which a man of his keen intelligence might have been expected to succeed. He was thus forced into the pursuit of letters as his only road to fame. From his earliest youth we find him passionately desirous of making his name as an author.

His youth was passed at Binfield, his father's small estate near Windsor Forest. Before he was twenty years old he got into touch with Wycherley, now old and besotted. Through him Pope became acquainted with Addison, Swift, and Steele, whose friendship he eagerly cultivated. His early verses, admirably attuned to the ear of the age, brought him recognition and applause; his translation of Homer brought him wealth; and from that point he never looked back. He became the dominating poetical personality of the day. In 1718 he removed to his house at Twickenham, whose pinchbeck beauties became the wonder, envy, and derision of literary and social London. It remained his home till "that long disease, his life," was finished in 1744.

2. His Character. In this book it is fortunately seldom that we are called upon to analyze the character of an English writer in any detail, but in the case of Pope it is necessary. With no man more than Pope are such personal considerations relevant and cogent; for in no writings more than in Pope's do

we find the author's vices and his weaknesses—as well as his virtues—so fully portrayed.

By the time he was thirty Pope's hands were full of the gifts of fortune, but he was far from being happy. He was so easily stung that his numerous detractors were irresistibly impelled to sting him; and his agonies, his vicious petulance, and his wild retaliation were so pathetic and yet so ludicrous that his foes were incited to try his temper again. Hence much of Pope's life was a series of skirmishes with friends and foes alike. His disposition, too, had so many flaws that it trembled at the pressure of a finger. His stinginess, though he was rich beyond the dreams of a poet's avarice, was a byword. His snobbishness was extreme; he fawned before lords, and he assailed his less fortunate poetical brethren with a rancor whose very coarseness blunts its edge. His vanity was egregious, and shrank from criticism as a raw nerve shrinks from fire. His nature stooped to actions so tortuous and reprehensible that his biographers confess, with a sigh of relief, that they cannot get quite to the bottom of them. His procedure in the publication of some of his work almost stupefies the investigator with its combination of duplicity, bad faith, and sheer cross-grained perversion of the truth.

Yet he had his virtues, to which his friends testified with a curious half-laughing mixture of contempt and admiration. He could sometimes be generous in a crabbed, distorted fashion; and if only his friends allowed for his weaknesses, he repaid their consideration with a devoted cordiality that defied the shocks of fortune. At bottom his nature was not unkindly, but it was corroded and overlaid with the effects of his physical weakness, with his

natural vanity, and with a shrinking self-criticism. And, above all, he was an artist. He lived for his art; everything he wrote was stamped with the joy of creation and his desire for perfection and permanency; and it is as an artist that he will finally be judged.

3. His Poetry. "I lisped in numbers," he tells us. But his earliest work of any importance is his *Pastorals*. According to his own statement (which need not be believed) they were begun when he was sixteen years old. They appeared in 1709, when he was twenty-one. They contain the usual trumpery of "sylvan strains," "warbling Philomel," and other expressions that are the bane of the artificial pastoral. Yet though the work is immature in some respects, it shows that Pope has found his feet with regard to his metrical method. The poem is written in the heroic couplet, which is neat, effective, and melodious in a namby-pamby fashion. We give a specimen of his earliest numbers:

> And yet my numbers please the rural throng,
> Rough satyrs dance, and Pan applauds the song:
> The nymphs, forsaking ev'ry cave and spring,
> Their early fruit, and milk-white turtles bring;
> Each am'rous nymph prefers her gifts in vain,
> On you their gifts are all bestowed again.
> For you the swains the fairest flow'rs design,
> And in one garland all their beauties join;
> Accept the wreath which you deserve alone,
> In whom all beauties are compris'd in one.

In 1711 appeared the *Essay on Criticism*, also written in heroic couplets. The poem professes to set forth the gospel of "wit" and "nature" as it applies to the literature of the period. The work is clearly immature. There is nothing novel in its theories, which are conventionality itself; but it dresses the aged theories so neatly and freshly that the poem is a

lasting monument to the genius of the writer. It is full of apt, quotable lines that have become imbedded in the language:

> A little learning is a dangerous thing!...
> And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art....
> To err is human: to forgive, divine....
> True wit is nature to advantage dressed....

Windsor Forest (1713) is another pastoral in the familiar meter. Artificial still, it nevertheless shows a broader treatment, and a still stronger grip of the stopped couplet.

By this time Pope was well known, and he set about his ambitious scheme of translating the *Iliad*, which was eventually issued in 1720. For the book, as he was zealously assisted by his literary friends, he was successful in compiling a phenomenal subscription list, which (with the additional translation of the *Odyssey*) brought him more than ten thousand pounds. Such a triumph produced the inevitable reaction on the part of his critics, who maintained that Pope knew little Latin and less Greek, and that the translation was no translation at all. It certainly bears no close resemblance to the original Greek. Bentley, the famous classical scholar, remarked to the chagrined author, “A pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer.” The line of Pope has none of the great lift of the Homeric line, but it is often vigorous and picturesque, and answers with fair facility to the demands he makes upon it.

> The troops exulting sat in order round,
> And beaming fires illumined all the ground.
> As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
> O’er heaven’s pure azure spreads her sacred light,
> When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
> And not a cloud o’ercasts the solemn scene,
> Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
> And stars unnumber’d gild the glowing pole,

O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head:
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.

In 1712, in a volume of Lintot's *Miscellanies*, appeared *The Rape of the Lock*, one of the most brilliant poems in the language. The occasion of it was trivial enough. A Lord Petre had offended a Miss Fermor by cutting off a lock of her hair; dissensions between the families had followed, and Pope set about to laugh both parties back into good-humor. He makes of the incident a mock-heroic poem, and, rather unwisely, invents elaborate machinery of sylphs, gnomes, and other airy beings that take part in the mortals' misdemeanors. The length becomes disproportionate to the theme, but the effect is quite dazzling. The style is highly artificial and mannered; but we must remember that Pope is jocular all through, and that he is purposely pitching his style as high as the subject permits. It abounds in rhetorical devices, such as climax, antithesis, and apostrophe. The effect produced is like that of a crackle of colored fireworks; smart epigrams explode in almost every line, and conceits dazzle with their brilliance. Yet so great an artist is Pope that by sheer skill he prevents the work from being flashy or vulgar: the workmanship is too delicate and precise.

But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clarissa drew, with tempting grace,
A two-edged weapon from her shining case;
So ladies, in romance, assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with reverence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bent her head.

Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair,
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair!
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew
near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought:
As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched the ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.
Amazed, confused, he found his power expired,
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.
The peer now spreads the glittering forfex wide
To enclose the lock; now joins it, to divide.
E'en then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched sylph too fondly interposed;
Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain
(But airy substance soon unites again),
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!

The Dunciad appeared in 1728, with many subterfuges to conceal the authorship, and it reappeared in a larger, though not in an improved form, in 1742. In this poem he turns to rend the host of minor writers who had been making his life a misery with their pin-pricks. It shows his satirical powers at their best and at their worst. It is charged with a stinging wit, but is too spiteful and venomous, and confounds the good with the bad. Yet here as elsewhere Pope has many fine passages. The conclusion is probably the noblest that he ever composed:

In vain, in vain—the all-composing hour
Resistless falls: the Muse obeys the Power.
She comes! She comes! The sable throne behold
Of Night primeval and of Chaos old!
Before her, Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying rainbows die away.
Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires....
See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,

Mountains of casuistry heaped o'er her head!...
See Mystery to Mathematics fly!
In vain! They gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
And unawares Morality expires....
Lo! thy dread empire, CHAOS! is restored;
Light dies before thy uncreating word;
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,
And universal darkness buries all.

The last years of his life were occupied chiefly in the composition of poetical epistles and satires (1731–35). Some of these are of great power, and show Pope's art at its best. The *Epistle to Arbuthnot* contains the famous satirical portrait of Addison, with whom Pope had quarreled:

Peace to all such; but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading even fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging, that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise:—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

In this passage, though he does not perceive it, Pope is holding up a glass to his own method. Observe how he "damns with faint praise"; how he is "willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike." Nearly the whole extract might be applied to its author.

The last considerable poem is the *Essay on Man* (1734), which owes much to the suggestions of Bolingbroke. At the beginning of the poem he says "The proper study of mankind is man," and then proceeds with a long and confused treatment of man and his place in the universe. As a contribution to philosophy it is contemptible, but from it we can detach clusters of passages full of force and beauty. The verse has all its author's care and lucidity. In some places, indeed, the style is cut to the very bone, as it is in the well-known line, "Man never is but always to be blessed."

4. His Prose. As a writer of prose Pope is of secondary importance. His *Letters*, published under a cloud of devious tricks, clearly are written with an eye on the public. They are addressed chiefly to notable persons, such as Swift and Gay, and consist of pompous essays upon abstract subjects. Sometimes in other letters he forgets himself, and writes easily and brightly, especially when he is telling of his own experiences.

5. Summary. It is now useful to draw together the various features of the work of this important poet.

(*a*) Both in subject and in style his poems are *limited*. They take people of his own social class, and they deal with their common experiences and their common interests and aspirations. Pope rarely dips below the surface, and when he does so he is not at his best. With regard to his style, we have seen that it is almost wholly restricted to the heroic couplet, used in a narrative and didactic subject. He is almost devoid of the lyrical faculty, and the higher artistic emotions—"passion and apathy, and glory and shame"—are beyond his artistic grasp.

(*b*) Within these limits his work is *powerful* and *effective*. The wit is keen; the satire burns like acid; and his zeal is unshakable. In serious topics, as in the *Essay on Man*, he can give imperishable shape to popular opinions.

(*c*) His work is *careful* and almost *fastidious*, and thus confers an enormous benefit upon English poetry. He cured poetry of the haphazard methods of the earlier ages. With inspiration lacking, care was more than ever necessary, and in this Pope led the way. His verse reads so easily owing to the great care he took with it.

> True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
> As those move easiest who have learned to dance.
> *Essay on Criticism*

(*d*) His *meter* is among the most discussed in our literature. Its merits and demerits are quite clear to view. Against it we can urge its artificiality, its lack of originality, and the vile creeping paralysis that it communicated to the other metrical forms. Yet in its favor we must recognize its strength, unbreakable and pliable, like a strong bow, its clearness, point, and artistic brevity, and its incomparable excellence in some forms of satire and narrative. It is unprofitable to compare it with blank verse and other forms. We must recognize it as in a class apart.

OTHER POETS

1. Matthew Prior (1664–1721). Born in Dorsetshire, Prior studied at Cambridge, and was early engaged in writing on behalf of the Tories, from whom he received several valuable appointments. In 1701 he entered the House of Commons; and in 1715, becoming involved in Jacobite intrigues, he was imprisoned. He was

liberated in 1717, and died in 1721.

His first long work is *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* (1687), written in collaboration with Charles Montagu, and ridiculing *The Hind and the Panther*. Other longer works are *Alma* (1716) and *Solomon* (1718). The first imitates Butler in *Hudibras*, and with fair success; the second, written in the heroic couplet, aims at being a serious poem, but its seriousness is often marred with levity, and it shows no wisdom or insight.

Prior's chief distinction lies in his miscellaneous verse, which is varied, bulky, and of a high quality. In some respects it resembles the verses of Swift, for much of it is composed in the octosyllabic couplet, and it has a fair amount of Swift's force and dexterity. Prior lacks Swift's deadly power and passion, but he surpasses the Dean in versatility, in an easy wit and impudence, and in sentimentality. In this pleasant ease of verse and sentiment he is rarely approached. Some of the best of his shorter pieces are *The Chameleon*, *The Thief and the Cordelier*, and *To Chloe*.

2. John Gay (1685–1732). Gay was born in humble circumstances, and was apprenticed to a silk-mercer; but, being ambitious, he entered the service of the Duchess of Monmouth (1713). His poems having brought him some fame, he sought a public appointment. He was only moderately successful in this search, and his lazy and indifferent habits spoiled the chances that came in his way. He died in London, an amiable and shiftless idler.

His chief works are *Rural Sports* (1713), written in the heroic couplet, and resembling Pope's *Pastorals, The Shepherd's Week* (1714), and *What d'Ye Call it?* (1715), a pastoral farce. *Trivia, or The Art of Walking*

the Streets of London (1715) is a witty parody of the heroic style, and it contains bright descriptions of London streets; then came two plays, *Acis and Galatea* and *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). This last play had a great success, which has lasted to the present day. It became the rage, and ran for sixty-two performances. It deserved its success, for it contains some pretty songs and much genuine though boisterous humor. Gay had the real lyrical gift, which was all the more valuable considering the age he lived in. His ballad *Black-eyed Susan* is still popular.

3. Edward Young (1683–1765). Young had a long life, and produced a large amount of literary work of variable quality. He was born in Hampshire, went to Oxford, and late in life (about 1730) entered the Church. He lived much in retirement, though in his later years he received a public appointment.

His major works are *The Last Day* (1713) and *The Force of Religion* (1714), which are moralizings written in the heroic couplet; *The Love of Fame* (1724), which shows an advance in the use of the couplet; and a poem in blank verse, *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts* (1742). This last poem, which was inspired by the death of his wife, had a great and long-enduring popularity, which has now vanished. Like Young's other poems, it shows some power of expression and somber satisfaction at his own misery. In the history of literature it is of some consequence, for the blank verse is of considerable strength, and as a reaction against the dominance of the couplet its value is undeniable.

4. Sir Samuel Garth (1661–1719). Garth was an older man than most of the other poets mentioned in this chapter. He was a popular physician, assisted

Pope in the young man's first efforts, and was knighted when George I ascended the throne.

The Dispensary, published in 1699, is the one work which gives him his place. It deals with a long-defunct squabble between physicians and apothecaries, and its importance is due to its being written in a kind of heroic couplet that is a link in style between Dryden and Pope.

5. Richard Savage (1697–1743). Savage's melancholy fate, and his early friendship with Johnson, have given him a prominence that he scarcely deserves. He was born in London, and, according to his own story, was the child of Richard Savage, Earl Rivers. Savage passed his youth in miserable circumstances, took to hack-work with the publishers, besotted himself with drink and debauchery, and died in a debtor's prison in Bristol.

His two chief poems are *The Bastard* (1728) and *The Wanderer* (1729). Both are written in the heroic couplet, and consist of long frenzied moralizings of his own unhappy lot. These works have much energy and some power of expression, but they are diffuse and rhetorical in style. Savage cannot rid himself of his personal grievances, which, inflamed by his dissipations, produce a morbid extravagance that ruins his work as poetry.

6. Lady Winchilsea (1661–1720). Born in Hampshire, the daughter of Sir William Kingsmill, Anne, Countess of Winchilsea, passed most of her life in London, where she became acquainted with Pope and other literary notables. Some of her poems, which were of importance in their day, are *The Spleen* (1701), a Pindaric ode; *The Prodigy* (1706); and *Miscellany Poems* (1714), containing the

Nocturnal Reverie.

Wordsworth says, “It is remarkable that, excepting the *Nocturnal Reverie* and a passage or two in *Windsor Forest* of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of *Paradise Lost* and *The Seasons* does not contain a single new image of nature.” This statement is perhaps an exaggeration, but there is no doubt that Lady Winchilsea had the gift of producing smooth and melodious verse, and she had a discerning eye for the beauties of nature.

7. Ambrose Philips (1675–1749). Philips was a Shropshire man, was educated at Cambridge, and became a considerable figure in the literary world. He was a friend of Pope, and wrote *Pastorals* (1709), which Pope damned with faint praise. The two poets quarreled, and Pope gave the other immortality in *The Dunciad*. Philips obtained several posts under the Government, and passed a happy and prosperous life.

He wrote three tragedies, the best of which is *The Distressed Mother* (1712). He produced a fair amount of prose for the periodicals, and his miscellaneous verse, of a light and agreeable kind, was popular in its day. His poetry was called “namby-pamby,” from his Christian name; and the word has survived in its general application.

8. Sir Richard Blackmore (1650–1729). Blackmore was an industrious physician, and an industrious and unsuccessful poet. His name became a byword by reason of his huge, dreary epics, which he composed in his spare time. Some of them are *Prince Arthur* (1695), *Job* (1700), and *The Creation* (1712). They are written in tolerable heroic couplets.

9. Thomas Parnell (1679–1718). Parnell was born in Ireland, entered the Church, became an

archdeacon, and prospered in his post. His poems consist of miscellaneous work, and were extremely popular in their day. The best of his work is contained in *The Hermit* (1710), which is written in heroic couplets, and in places reminds the reader of *The Deserted Village*. He shows skill as a versifier, and he has a genuine regard for nature.

10. Allan Ramsay (1686–1758). Born in Lanarkshire, Ramsay came to Edinburgh at the age of fifteen, and became a wig-maker. He soon took to writing verses, which admitted him into the society of the Edinburgh wits. He started a bookseller's shop in the city, and became a kind of local unofficial Poet Laureate. His ballads became very popular, and he brought upon himself the notice of the leaders of the literary world in London.

Ramsay published much miscellaneous writing, of which a large amount was issued to satisfy a passing demand. The quality can be poor enough; but some of it is more meritorious. A piece like *Lochaber No More* is quite noteworthy, and others reveal his freakish and pleasing sense of humor. His *Gentle Shepherd* (1725), a pastoral drama, has many of the vices of its species; but on the other hand it contains pleasing natural descriptions, some delightful though sentimental characters, and a few charming lyrics. As a literary ancestor of Burns, Ramsay is important. He influenced the poetry of the Ayrshire man, who freely acknowledged the aid he obtained. Ramsay also shows how the natural genius of Scotland, while bowing to the supremacy of the school of Pope, nevertheless diverged on lines natural to itself.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

The period under review marks a hardening of the

process discernible in the last chapter. The secession from romanticism is complete; the ideals of classicism reign supreme. Yet so unsleeping is the sense of progress in our literature that, even at the lowest ebb of the romantic spirit, a return to nature is feebly beginning. In the next chapter we shall notice this new movement, for in the next period we shall see it becoming full and strong.

1. Poetry. In no department of literature is the triumph of classicism seen more fully than in poetry.

(*a*) The *lyric* almost disappears. What remains is of a light and artificial nature. The best lyrics are found in some of Prior's shorter pieces, in Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, and in Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*.

(*b*) The *ode* still feebly survives in the Pindaric form. Pope wrote a few with poor success, one of them being *On St. Cecilia's Day*, in imitation of Dryden's ode. Lady Winchilsea was another mediocre exponent of the same form.

(*c*) The *satiric* type is common, and of high quality. The best example is Pope's *Dunciad*, a personal satire. Of political satire in poetry we have nothing to compare with Dryden's. Satire tends to be lighter, brighter, and more cynical. It is spreading to other forms of verse besides the heroic couplet, and we can observe it in the octosyllabic couplet in the poems of Swift, Prior, and Gay. A slight development is the epistolary form of the satire, of which Pope became fond in his latter years. Such is his *Epistles of Horace Imitated*.

(*d*) *Narrative Poetry*. This is of considerable bulk, and contains some of the best productions of the period. Pope's translation of Homer is a good example, and of the poorer sort are Blackmore's

abundant epics. We have also to notice a slight revival of the ballad, which was imitated by Gay and Prior. Their imitations are bloodless things, but they are worth noticing because they show that the interest is there.

(*e*) *The Pastoral.* The artificial type of the pastoral was highly popular, for several reasons. It gave an air of rusticity to the most formal of compositions; it was thought to be elegant; it was easily written; and it had the approval of the ancients, who made free use of the type. Pope and Philips have been mentioned as examples of the pastoral poets.

2. Drama. Here there is almost a blank. The brilliant and exotic flower of Restoration comedy has withered, and nothing of any merit takes its place. In tragedy Addison's *Cato* is almost the only passable example. In comedy Steele's plays are an expurgated survival of the Restoration type. The only advance in the drama is shown in *The Beggar's Opera*, whose robust vitality, sprightly music, and charming songs make it stand alone in its generation.

3. Prose. In prose we have to chronicle a distinct advance. For the first time we have periodical literature occupying a prominent place in the writing of the time. At this point, therefore, it is convenient to summarize the rise of periodical literature.

(*a*) *The Rise of the Periodical Press.* The first periodical published in Europe was the *Gazetta* (1536), in Venice. This was a manuscript newspaper which was read publicly in order to give the Venetians information regarding their war with the Turks. In England news-sheets were published during the reign of Elizabeth, but they were irregular in their appearance, being issued only when some notable event, such as a great flood or fire, made

their sale secure. The first regular English paper was *The Weekly Newes* (1622), issued by Nathaniel Butter. The sheet contained some items of news from abroad, and was devoid of editorial comment or literary matter.

During the Civil War of the middle of the seventeenth century both Royalists and Roundheads issued their newspapers, which appeared spasmodically and seldom survived for any length of time. A Royalist journal was the *Mercurius Anglicus*, which was succeeded by several others of somewhat similar names. The Roundhead publications were the *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, the *Mercurius Politicus*, and others. After the Restoration newspaper-writing became so popular and so troublesome that the Government in 1662 suspended all private sheets and issued in their place the one official organ, *The Public Intelligencer*. This became *The Oxford Gazette* (1665), and finally *The London Gazette* (1666). The office of Gazetteer became an official appointment, and Steele held it for a time.

In 1682 the freedom of the Press was restored, and large numbers of *Mercuries* and other periodicals appeared and flourished in their different fashions. Advertisements began to be a feature of the papers. In *The Jockey's Intelligencer* (1683) the charge is "a shilling for a horse or coach, for notification, and sixpence for renewing." In 1702 *The Daily Courant*, the first daily newspaper, was published, and it survived until 1735. Then in the early years of the eighteenth century the fierce contests between the Whigs and the Tories brought a rapid expansion of the Press. The most famous of the issues were Defoe's *Review* (1704), a Whig organ whose writings brought its editor into disrepute; and its opponent *The*

Examiner, the Tory paper to which men like Swift and Prior contributed regularly. These newspapers are almost entirely political, but they contain satirical work of much merit.

Then in 1709 Steele published *The Tatler*. At first it was Steele's intention to make it entirely a *news*-paper; but under the pressure of his own genius and of that of Addison its literary features were accentuated till the daily essay became the feature of leading interest. *The Spectator*, begun in March, 1711, carried the tendency still farther. The literary journal has come to stay. Steele's *Plebeian* (1718) is an early example of the political periodical.

(*b*) *The Rise of the Essay*. Johnson defines an essay as "a loose sally of the mind, an irregular indigested piece, not a regular or orderly performance." This definition is not quite complete, for it does not cover such an elaborate work as Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. But for the miscellaneous prose essay, which it is our immediate business to consider here, the definition will do. An essay, therefore, must in other words be short, unmethodical, personal, and written in a style that is literary, easy, and elegant.

The English essay has its roots in the Elizabethan period, in the miscellaneous work of Lodge, Lyly, and Greene, and other literary free-lances (see p. 142). Sir Philip Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie*, published about 1580, is a pamphlet that attains a rudimentary essay-form. But the first real essayist in English is Francis Bacon (1561–1626), who published a short series of essays in 1597, enlarged in two later editions (1612 and 1625). His work follows that of the French writer Montaigne, whose essays appeared about 1580. In Bacon we have the

miscellany of theme and the brevity, but we lack the intimacy of treatment and of style. Bacon's essays are rather the disconnected musings of the philosopher than the personal opinions of the literary executant.

The defects of Bacon were remedied by Abraham Cowley (1618–67), who writes on such subjects as *Myself*, *The Garden*, and other familiar themes. His style is somewhat heavy, but he has a pleasant discursive manner, different from the dry and distant attitude of Bacon. He provides the link between Addison and Bacon. Another advance is marked by a group of character-writers who flourished in the first half of the seventeenth century. They gave short character-sketches, often very acute and humorous, of various types of people. The best known of such writers are Joseph Hall (1574–1656), John Earle (1601–65), and Sir Thomas Overbury (1581–1613). Overbury wrote short accounts of such types as the *Tinker*, the *Milkmaid*, and the *Franklin*. His sketches are short, are pithily expressed, and reveal considerable knowledge and insight.

During the Restoration period we have Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesie* (1666), Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690), and Temple's *Essay on Poetry* (1685). The two first works are too long to be called essays proper, and fall rather under the name of treatises. Temple's essay, one of many that he published, is rather long and formal, but it is nearer the type we are here considering.

With the development of the periodical press the short essay takes a great stride forward. It becomes varied, and acquires character, suppleness, and strength. The work of Addison and Steele has already been noticed at some length. In *The Tatler* (1709) and

The Spectator (1711) they laid down the lines along which the essay was to be developed by their great successors. Other essayists of the time were Swift and Pope, who contributed to the periodicals, and Defoe, whose miscellaneous work is of wide range and of considerable importance.

(*c*) *Prose Narrative.* Much of the narrative is still disguised as allegory, as in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Addison's *Vision of Mirza*. In his method Swift shows some advance, for he subordinates the allegory and adds to the interest in the satire and the narrative. The prominence given to fiction is still more noticeable in the novels of Defoe, such as *Robinson Crusoe*. We are now in touch with the novel proper, which will be treated in the next chapter.

(*d*) *Miscellaneous Prose.* There is a large body of religious, political and philosophical work. Much of it is satirical. In political prose Swift is the outstanding figure, with such books as the *Drapier's Letters*; and in religious writing his *Tale of a Tub* has a sinister importance. Other examples are Bolingbroke's *Spirit of Patriotism* (political), Berkeley's *Alciphron* (philosophical), and Steele's *The Christian Hero* (religious).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

1. Poetry. In poetry we have to chronicle the domination of the *heroic couplet*. This meter produced a close, clear, and almost prosaic style, as we have noticed in the work of Pope. Blank verse is still found in Young's *Night Thoughts*. Another example of blank verse is found in the mock epic of **John Philips (1676–1708)** called *The Splendid Shilling* (1703). The use of blank verse at this time is important, for it marks both a resistance to the use of the couplet and

a promise of the revival of the freer forms of verse. The following is a fair example of the blank verse of the period. In style it is quite uninspired, and is philosophically dull, but it is metrically accurate and has a certain dignity and force.

> Amidst my list of blessings infinite
> Stands this the foremost, "That my heart has bled."
> 'Tis Heaven's last effort of goodwill to man;
> When pain can't bless, Heaven quits us in despair.
> Who fails to grieve, when just occasion calls,
> Or grieves too much, deserves not to be blest;
> Inhuman, or effeminate, his heart:
> Reason absolves the grief, which reason ends.
> May Heaven ne'er trust my friend with happiness,
> Till it has taught him how to bear it well,
> By previous pain; and made it safe to smile!
>
> YOUNG, *Night Thoughts*

The *lyric* still survives as a pale reflection of the Caroline species. A short specimen will suffice to show the facile versification and the lack of real passion that marks the treatment of the almost universal love-theme:

> Blessed as the immortal gods is he,
> The youth who fondly sits by thee,
> And hears and sees thee all the while,
> Softly speak, and sweetly smile.
>
> 'Twas this deprived my soul of rest,
> And raised such tumults in my breast;
> For while I gazed, in transport tossed,
> My breath was gone, my voice was lost.
>
> AMBROSE PHILIPS, *Sappho*

The only other kind of meter of any consequence is the *octosyllabic couplet*, which is largely employed in occasional and satirical compositions. Its style is neat, sharp, and dexterous, as can be observed in Swift's and Prior's verses.

2. Prose. In prose the outstanding feature is the

emergence of the middle style. Of this the chief exponent is Addison, of whom Johnson says, “His prose is of the middle style, always equable, and always easy, without glowing words and pointed sentences.” We now find established a prose suitable for miscellaneous purposes—for newspaper and political work, for the essay, for history and biography. The step is of immense importance, for we can say that with Addison the modern era of prose is begun.

Along with this went the temporary disappearance of ornate prose. Prose of this style, though it had its beauties, was yet liable to be full of flaws, and was unacceptable to the taste of the age of Pope. It was therefore avoided. When ornate prose re-emerged later in the work of Johnson and Gibbon it was purged of its technical weaknesses, a development largely due to the period of maturing that it had undergone in the time we are now considering.

While the school of Addison represents the middle style, the plainer style is represented in the work of Swift and Defoe. Swift reveals the style at its best—sure, clean, and strong. Defoe’s writing is even plainer, and often descends to carelessness and inaccuracy. This is due almost entirely to the haste with which he wrote. We give an example of this colloquial style:

> “Well,” said I, “honest man, that is a great mercy, as things go now with the poor. But how do you live then, and how are you kept from the dreadful calamity that is now upon us all?” “Why, sir,” says he, “I am a waterman, and there is my boat,” says he, “and the boat serves me for a house; I work in it in the day, and I sleep in it in the night, and what I get I lay it down upon that stone,” says he, showing me a broad stone on the

other side of the street, a good way from his house; “and then,” says he, “I halloo and call to them till I make them hear, and they come and fetch it.”

DEFOE, *A Journal of the Plague Year*

TABLE TO ILLUSTRATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

DATE	POETRY			DRAMA	
	Lyric	Narrative	Didactic	Satirical and Tragedy	Comedy
1700		Blackmore	Garth		Steele[148]
		Addison[150]	Lady Winchilsea		
1710		Pope[152]			
			Pope[155]	A. Philips	
	Gay		Young	Addison[156]	
1720	Prior				
			Swift		A. Ramsay
	A. Ramsay				
			|Savage		Gay
1730			Pope[159]		

1740					

EXERCISES

1. Compare the two following passages as examples of satire. They represent the bitterest passages from Dryden and Pope respectively. Remark upon the two methods—whether they are personal or general, vindictive or magnanimous. Add a note on the style of Dryden contrasted with that of Pope, and compare their handling of the heroic couplet. Say which passage you prefer, and why you prefer it.

(1) Doeg,[160] though without knowing how or why,
Made still a blundering kind of melody;
Spurred boldly on, and dashed through thick and thin,
Through sense and nonsense, never out nor in;
Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,
And, in one word, heroically mad,
He was too warm on picking-work to dwell,
But faggoted his notions as they fell,
And, if they rhymed and rattled, all was well.
Spiteful he is not, though he wrote a satire,
For there still goes some thinking to ill-nature;
He needs no more than birds and beasts to think,
All his occasions are to eat and drink.
If he call rogue and rascal from a garret,
He means you no more mischief than a parrot;
The words for friend and foe alike were made,
To fetter them in verse is all his trade.
DRYDEN, *Absalom and Achitophel* (*Part II*)

(2) *Pope.* A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his stead.
Let Sporus[161] tremble—
Arbuthnot. What? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
Pope. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;

Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way:
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit, all see-saw between *that* and *this*,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that, acting either part,
The trifling head or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust;
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.

POPE, *Epistle to Arbuthnot*

2. The two following extracts are from love-lyrics of the period. Comment upon the treatment of the theme, paying attention to the strength of feeling expressed, and the naturalness of the expression. Is the English or the Scottish poem the more natural? Write a note on the style of each, and say if it suits the subject.

(1) All in the downs the fleet was moored,
The streamers waving in the wind,
When black-eyed Susan came aboard,
"Oh! where shall I my true-love find?
Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true,
If my sweet William sails among the crew?"

William, who high upon the yard
Rocked with the billow to and fro,
Soon as her well-known voice he heard,
He sighed, and cast his eyes below:
The cord slides swiftly through his glowing hands,
And, quick as lightning, on the deck he stands.

*****

"O Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My vows shall ever true remain;
Let me kiss off that falling tear;
We only part to meet again.
Change as ye list, ye winds! my heart shall be
The faithful compass that still points to thee."

*****

The boatswain gave the dreadful word,
The sails their swelling bosom spread;
No longer must she stay aboard;
They kissed, she sighed, he hung his head.
Her lessening boat unwilling rows to land,
"Adieu!" she cries, and waved her lily hand.

GAY, *Black-eyed Susan*

(2) Hear me, ye nymphs, and every swain,
I'll tell how Peggy grieves me;
Though thus I languish and complain,
Alas! she ne'er believes me.
My vows and sighs, like silent air,
Unheeded, never move her;
At the bonnie bush aboon Traquair,
'Twas there I first did love her.

*****

Yet now she scornful flies the plain,
The fields we then frequented;
If e'er we meet she shows disdain,
She looks as ne'er acquainted.
The bonnie bush bloomed fair in May,
Its sweets I'll aye remember;
But now her frowns make it decay—
It fades as in December.

Ye rural powers, who hear my strains,
Why thus should Peggy grieve me?
Oh, make her partner in my pains,
Then let her smiles relieve me!
If not, my love will turn despair,
My passion no more tender;
I'll leave the bush aboon Traquair—
To lonely wilds I'll wander.

ROBERT CRAWFORD (*died 1733*)

3. The following three extracts are from the works of Swift, Addison, and Defoe. Ascribe each piece to its author, in each case giving distinctly your reasons for the selection of the authorship.

(1) When we were arrived upon the verge of his estate, we stopped at a little inn to rest ourselves and our horses. The man of the house had it seems been formerly a servant in the knight's family; and to do honour to his old master, had some time since, unknown to Sir Roger, put him up in a sign-post before the door; so that the knight's head had hung out upon the road about a week before he himself knew anything of the matter. As soon as Sir Roger was acquainted with it, finding that his servant's indiscretion proceeded wholly from affection and goodwill, he only told him that he had made him too high a compliment; and when the fellow seemed to think that could hardly be, added with a more decisive look, That it was too great an honour for any man under a duke; but told him at the same time, that it might be altered with a very few touches, and that he himself would be at the charge of it.

(2) I turned away over the fields, from Bow to Bromley, and down to Blackwall, to the stairs that are there for landing or taking water.

Here I saw a poor man walking on the bank or sea-wall, as they call it, by himself. I walked awhile also about, seeing the houses all shut up; at last I fell into some talk, at a distance, with this poor man. First I asked him how people did thereabouts? "Alas! sir," says he, "almost desolate; all dead or sick: here are very few families in this part, or in that village," pointing at Poplar, "where half of them are not dead already, and the rest sick." Then pointing to one house, "There

they are all dead," said he, "and the house stands open; nobody dares go into it. A poor thief," says he, "ventured in to steal something, but he paid dear for his theft, for he was carried to the churchyard too, last night."

(3) I arrived at the fleet in less than half an hour. The enemy was so frightened when they saw me that they leapt out of their ships, and swam to shore, where there could not be fewer than thirty thousand souls. I then took my tackling, and fastening a hook to the hole at the prow of each, I tied all the cords together at the end. While I was thus employed, the enemy discharged several thousand arrows, many of which stuck in my hands and face; and besides the excessive smart, gave me much disturbance in my work. My greatest apprehension was for my eyes, which I should have infallibly lost, if I had not suddenly thought of an expedient.

4. We give two extracts, one dramatic and one non-dramatic, from the blank verse of the time. Does the verse strike you as being passionate, interesting, or profound? How would you describe it? Discuss the meter—its regularity, melody, and power.

(1) It must be so—Plato, thou reason'st well,
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself and startles at destruction?
—'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates Eternity to man.

ADDISON, *Cato*

(2) Be wise to-day: 'tis madness to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time;
Year after year it steals till all are fled,

And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.
If not so frequent, would not this be strange?
That 'tis so frequent, *this* is stranger still.
YOUNG, *Night Thoughts*

5. What is the object of Swift in the following satirical passage? How does he achieve it? How are the style, figures of speech, and meter suited to his purpose? Compare this extract with that from *Hudibras* given on pp. 208–9. Which is the wittier and more deadly? How is the superiority gained?

Hobbes clearly proves that every creature
Lives in a state of war by nature.
The greater for the smallest watch,
But meddle seldom with their match.
A whale of moderate size will draw
A shoal of herrings down his maw:
A fox with geese his belly crams;
A wolf destroys a thousand lambs:
But search among the rhyming race,
The brave are worried by the base.
If on Parnassus' top you sit,
You rarely bite, are always bit.
Each poet of inferior size
On you shall rail and criticise,
And strive to tear you limb from limb;
While others do as much for him.
The vermin only tease and pinch
Their foes superior by an inch.
So, naturalists observe, a flea
Hath smaller fleas that on him prey;
And these have smaller still to bite 'em,
And so proceed *ad infinitum*.
Thus every poet in his kind
Is bit by him that comes behind:
Who, though too little to be seen,
Can tease, and gall, and give the spleen.
Rhapsody on Poetry

6. We give an example of Swift's prose satire, a passage in which he describes the progress of a political lie. What is the figure of speech underlying the passage, and how does it assist his purpose?

Compare this passage with the poetical one given in the last exercise: do the two passages correspond in style, figurativeness, and force? Which strikes you as being the more effective?

> No wonder if an infant so miraculous in its birth should be destined for great adventures: and accordingly we see it hath been the guardian spirit of a prevailing party for almost twenty years. It can conquer kingdoms without fighting, and sometimes with the loss of a battle. It gives and resumes employments; can sink a mountain to a mole-hill, and raise a mole-hill to a mountain; hath presided for many years at committees of elections; can wash a blackmoor white; make a saint of an atheist, and a patriot of a profligate; can furnish foreign ministers with intelligence, and raise or let fall the credit of the nation. This goddess flies with a huge looking-glass in her hands, to dazzle the crowd, and make them see, according as she turns it, their ruin in their interest, and their interest in their ruin. In this glass you will behold your best friends, clad in coats powdered with *fleurs de lis*, and triple crowns; their girdles hung round with chains, and beads, and wooden shoes; and your worst enemies adorned with the ensigns of liberty, property, indulgence, moderation, and a cornucopia in their hands. Her large wings, like those of a flying-fish, are of no use but while they are moist; she therefore dips them in mud, and soaring aloft scatters it in the eyes of the multitude, flying with great swiftness; but at every turn is forced to stoop in dirty ways for new supplies.
>
> *The Examiner*

7. “The bulk of your natives appear to me to be the most pernicious race of odious little vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the face of the earth.” The King of Brobdingnag says this to

Gulliver. How far does this represent Swift's attitude in *Gulliver's Travels*, and how far does he succeed in conveying this impression?

8. "I fared like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid: I was undone by my auxiliary; when I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him." This is Steele's own estimate of Addison's contribution to *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. As far as you can, estimate the share of each writer in the production of the two periodicals, and apportion their relative importance.

9. How much of their personal peculiarities and weaknesses appears in the writings of Swift, Pope, and Steele? How far does the nature of their literary work drive them to this self-revelation?

10. Account for the decline of the drama during the first half of the eighteenth century.

11. From an examination of the table given on p. 273 answer the following questions: What branches of poetry are most weakly represented during the age of Pope? Why is that so? What branch of prose-writing is the strongest? Why is that so?

12. Why is the period of Pope called "the Age of Prose"? Does this description of the time need modification?

13. Give reasons for the rise of periodical literature during this period.

14. The humor of Addison "is that of a gentleman, in which the quickest sense of the ridiculous is constantly tempered by good nature and good breeding.... He preserves a look of demure serenity.... The mirth of Swift is the mirth of Mephistopheles.... Swift moves laughter, but never joins in it."

(Macaulay.) Compare the humor of Swift with that of Addison. Which of the two does Pope more closely resemble in humor?

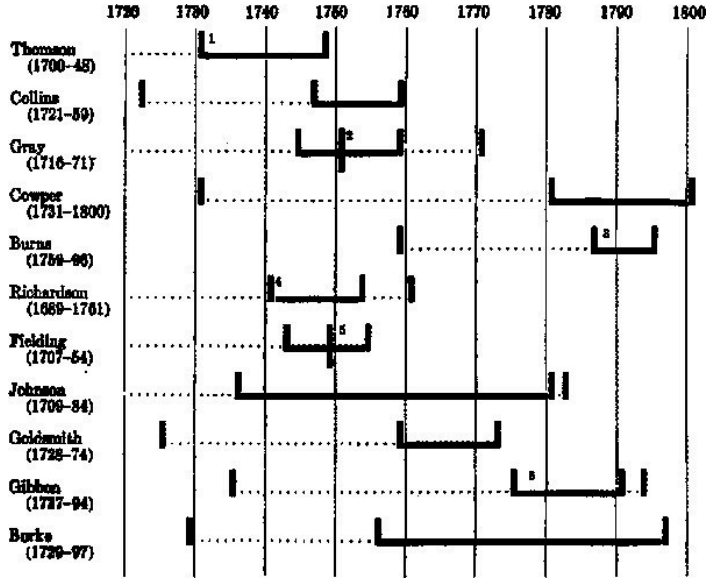
15. “Fancy, provided she knows her place, is tolerated; but Imagination is kept at a distance.” (Saintsbury.) Show how far this statement applies to the poetry of this time.

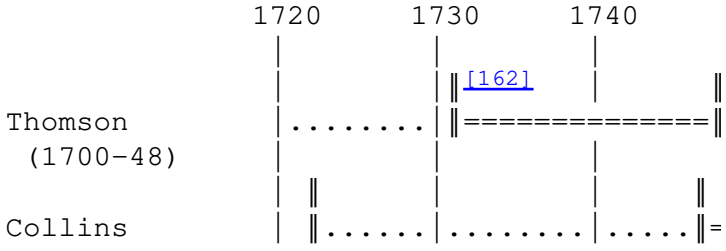
CHAPTER IX

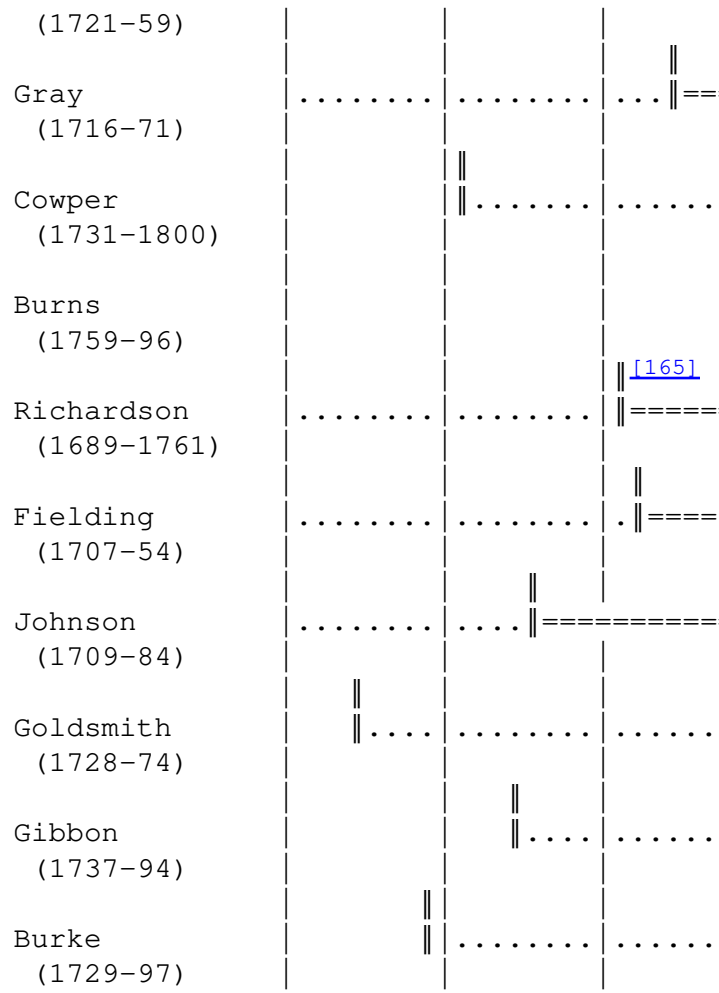
THE AGE OF TRANSITION

TIME-CHART OF THE CHIEF AUTHORS

The thick line shows the period of active literary work.







THE TRANSITION IN POETRY

The following table is meant to convey a rough idea of the drift of poetry toward Romanticism. In the table the lateral position of the title of a work gives an approximate estimate of its approach to the Romantic ideal. Such an estimate, especially in the case of the transitional poems, cannot be determined

absolutely, and need not be taken as final. The table, nevertheless, reveals not only the steady drift, but also the manner in which the different stages of development overlap.

DATE	CLASSICAL	TRANSITIONAL	ROMANTIC
1730	*The Dunciad*	*The Seasons*	
1740	*Epistle to Arbuthnot* *London*		
1750	*Vanity of Human Wishes*	*Night Thoughts* Collins's *Odes*	*The Castle of Indolence*
1760		Gray's *Elegy*	
1770		*The Traveller*	*Ossian* Chatterton's poems
1780		*The Deserted Village*	
1790		*The Village*	*The Task* Burns's poems Blake's poems

The period covered by the present chapter is that of the middle and later stages of the eighteenth century. During this time several relevant historical movements call for notice.

1. Decline of the Party Feud. The contest between the Whigs and the Tories still continues, but it is hardly of the previous bitterness. The chief reason for this change is found in the weakness of the Tory party, which by rash management and precipitate action made itself so unpopular that for nearly thirty years—those in the middle of the century—the Whigs had hardly any opposition. With the accession of George III in 1760 the Tories swiftly climbed into power, and, with the shadow of the French Revolution already looming up, party feeling soon acquired additional ferocity.

2. Commercial and Imperial Expansion. Under the pacific management of the great Whig minister Walpole, and owing to the successful wars of his successors, the eighteenth century saw an immense growth in the wealth and importance of the British Empire. On literature this material welfare had its effect by endowing and stimulating research and original work. The possession of India and America in itself was an inspiration, and when the new territories brought new burdens, like that of the American revolt, the clash of ideals led to fresh literary effort, as can easily be seen in the work of Burke.

3. The French Revolution. Long before it burst, the storm of the Revolution was, in the words of Burke, blackening the horizon. During the century new ideas were germinating; new forces were gathering strength; and the Revolution, when it did come in 1789, was only the climax to a long and

deeply diffused unrest. Revolutionary ideas stirred literature to the very depths; the present chapter, and the next as well, are a chronicle of their effects upon the literature of England.

THE AGE OF TRANSITION

Like all other periods of transition, the one under review is disturbed and confused. It is a matter of great difficulty to trace the different tendencies, but with care the task may be accomplished with some accuracy.

1. The Double Tendency. Two movements can be clearly observed in the writing of the time, namely:

(*a*) The allegiance to the old order of classicism. In this movement the chief and almost the only figure is that of Samuel Johnson. He is a host in himself, however.

(*b*) The search after the new order of Romanticism. In their different degrees, as can be seen from the second table at the beginning of this chapter, many writers were engaged in the search. It began as early as 1730, with the publication of Thomson's *Seasons*; and though it lapsed for a time, it was to continue with gathering force during the latter years of the century.

2. The New Romanticism. The general features of the Romantic movement were:

(*a*) A return to nature—to the real nature of earth and air, and not to the stuffy, bookish nature of the artificial pastoral.

(*b*) A fresh interest in man's position in the world of nature. This led to great activity in religious and political speculation, as will be seen further on.

(*c*) An enlightened sympathy for the poor and oppressed. In English literature during this time one has but to think of the work of Cowper, Burns, and Crabbe, and even of the classically minded Gray, to perceive the revolution that is taking place in the minds of men.

(*d*) A revolt against the conventional literary technique, such as that of the heroic couplet. On the other hand, we have a desire for strength, simplicity, and sincerity in the expression of the new literary ideals.

(*e*) Fresh treatment of Romantic themes in such poems as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *The Ancient Mariner*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*.

In the present chapter we shall perceive all the above features dimly taking shape. In the next chapter they will be the dominating features of the era.

3. The New Learning. The middle and later stages of the eighteenth century show a minor Renaissance that touched nearly all Europe. The increase in wealth and comfort coincided with a general uplifting of the standard of the human intellect. In France particularly it was well marked, and it took for its sign and seal the labors of the Encyclopædists and the social amenities of the older *salons*. Many of the leading English writers, including Gibbon, Hume, and Sterne, visited Paris, which was the hub of European culture.

In England the new learning took several channels. In literature we have the revival of the Romantic movement, leading to (*a*) research into archaic literary forms, such as the ballad, and (*b*) new editions of the older authors, such as

Shakespeare and Chaucer. The publication of Bishop Percy's *Reliques* (1765) which contained some of the oldest and most beautiful specimens of ballad-literature, is a landmark in the history of the Romantic movement. Even Pope and Johnson were moved to edit Shakespeare, though they did it badly. The editions of Theobald and Warburton were examples of scholarly and enlightened research.

4. The New Philosophy. The spirit of the new thinking, which received its consummate expression in the works of Voltaire, was marked by keen skepticism and the zest for eager inquiry. Scotland very early took to it, the leading Scottish philosopher being Hume. It would seem, perhaps, that this destructive spirit of disbelief would injure the Romantic ideal, which delights in illusion. But finally the new spirit actually assisted the Romantic ideal by demolishing and clearing away heaps of the ancient mental lumber, and so leaving the ground clear for new and fresher creations.

5. The Growth of Historical Research. History appears late in our literature, for it presupposes a long apprenticeship of research and meditation. The eighteenth century witnessed the swift rise of historical literature to a place of great importance. Like so many other things we have mentioned, it was fostered in France, and it touched Scotland first. The historical school had a glorious leader in Gibbon, who was nearly as much at home in the French language as he was in English.

6. The New Realism. At first, as might be expected, the spirit of inquiry led to the suppression of romance; but it drew within the circle of literary endeavor all the ranks of mankind. Thus we have the astonishing development of the novel, which at first

concerned itself with domestic incidents. Fielding and his kind dealt very faithfully with human life, and often were squalidly immersed in masses of sordid detail. In the widest sense of the word, however, the novelists were Romanticists, for in sympathy and freshness of treatment they were followers of the new ideal.

7. The Decline of Political Writing. With the partial decay of the party spirit the activity in pamphleteering was over; poets and satirists were no longer the favorites of Prime Ministers. Walpole, the greatest of contemporary ministers, openly despised the literary breed, for he did not need them. Hence writers had to depend on their public, which was not entirely an evil. This caused the rise of the man of letters, such as Johnson and Goldsmith, who wrote to satisfy a public demand. Later in the century, when the political temperature once again approached boiling-point, pamphlets began again to acquire an importance, which rose to a climax in the works of Junius and Burke.

SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709–84)

1. His Life. Johnson has a faithful chronicler in Boswell, whose *Life of Johnson* makes us intimate with its subject to a degree rare in literature. But even the prying zeal of Boswell could not extort many facts regarding the great man's early life. Johnson was born at Lichfield, the son of a bookseller, whose pronounced Tory views he inherited and steadfastly maintained. From his birth he was afflicted with a malignant skin-disease (for which he was unsuccessfully "touched" by Queen Anne) which all through his life affected his sight and hearing, and caused many of the physical peculiarities that astonished and amused the friends

of his later years. After being privately educated, he proceeded to Oxford, where he experienced the miseries and indignities that are the lot of a poor scholar cursed with a powerful and aspiring mind. Leaving the university, he tried school-teaching, with no success; married a woman twenty years older than himself; and then in 1737 went to London and threw himself into the squalors and allurements of Grub Street.

In his *Essay on Johnson* Macaulay has given an arresting description of the miseries endured by the denizens of Grub Street; and in this case even the natural exaggeration of Macaulay is not quite misplaced. We know next to nothing regarding the life of Johnson during this early period. It is certain that it was wretched enough to cause the sturdy old fellow, in after years, to glance at this period of his life with a shudder of loathing, and to quench the curiosity of Boswell with ultra-Johnsonian vehemence. Very slowly he won his way out of the gutter, fighting every step with bitter tenacity; for, as he puts it in his poem of *London*, with all the outstanding emphasis of capitals, SLOW RISES WORTH BY POVERTY OPPRESSED. From the obscure position of a publisher's hack he became a poet of some note by the publication of *London* (1738), which was noticed by Pope; his *Dictionary* (1747–55) advanced his fame; then somewhat incomprehensibly he appears in the limelight as one of the literary dictators of London, surrounded by a circle of brilliant men. In 1762 he received a pension from the State, and the last twenty years of his life were passed in the manner most acceptable to him: dawdling, visiting, conversing, yet *living* with a gigantic vitality that made his fellows wonder.

It is in these latter years that we find him imperishably figured in the pages of Boswell. All his tricks of humor—his bearishness, his gruff goodwill, his silent and secret benevolences; his physical aberrations—his guzzlings, his grunts, his grimaces, his puffings and wallowings; his puerile superstitions; his deep and beautiful piety; his Tory prejudices, so often enormously vocal; his masterful and unsleeping common sense; the devouring immensity of his conversational powers: we find all these set out in *The Life of Doctor Johnson*.

2. His Poetry. He wrote little poetry, and none of it, though it has much merit, can be called first-class. His first poem, *London* (1738), written in the heroic couplet, is of great and somber power. It depicts the vanities and the sins of city life viewed from the depressing standpoint of an embittered and penurious poet. His only other longish poem is *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749). The poem, in imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal, transfers to the activities of mankind in general the gloomy convictions raised ten years earlier by the spectacle of London. The meter is the same as in *London*, and there is the same bleak pessimism, but the weight and power of the emotion, the tremendous conviction and the stern immobility of the author, give the work a great value. There are many individual lines of solemn grandeur. The following passage shows all he has to offer to the young aspirant to literary fame:

> When first the college rolls receive his name,
> The young enthusiast quits his ease for fame;
> Resistless burns the fever of renown,
> Caught from the strong contagion of the gown.
> O'er Bodley's dome his future labours spread,
> And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head.
> Are these thy views? Proceed, illustrious youth,

And Virtue guard thee to the throne of Truth!
Yet, should thy soul indulge the generous heat
Till captive Science yields her last retreat;
Should Reason guide thee with her brightest ray,
And pour on misty Doubt resistless day;
Should no false kindness lure to loose delight,
Nor praise relax, nor difficulty fright;
Should tempting Novelty thy cell refrain,
And Sloth effuse her opiate fumes in vain;
Should Beauty blunt on fops her fatal dart,
Nor claim the triumph of a letter'd heart;
Should no disease thy torpid veins invade,
Nor Melancholy's phantoms haunt thy shade;
Yet hope not life from grief or danger free,
Nor think the doom of man revers'd for thee:
Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
And pause awhile from letters, to be wise;
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail.
See nations, slowly wise, and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
If dreams yet flatter, once again attend,
Hear Lydiat's life and Galileo's end.

3. His Drama. When he first came to London in 1737 he brought the manuscript, in part, of *Irene*, a solemn and ponderous tragedy. In 1749, through the heroic exertions of his old pupil David Garrick, who was then manager of Drury Lane Theatre, it was given a hearing, and had a run of nine nights. Even Johnson's best friends had to admit that it was no success, and it then utterly disappeared, taking with it Johnson's sole claim to dramatic merit.

4. His Prose. Any claim that Johnson has to be called a first-rate writer must be based on the merit of his prose; but even his prose is small in bulk and strangely unsatisfying in kind. His earliest effort was contributed to Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine*, and comprised Parliamentary reporting, in which he fabricated the speeches of the legislators, to the great benefit of the legislators. Various hack-work followed; and then in 1747 he planned, and in eight

years produced, his *Dictionary*. He also wrote *The Rambler* (1750–52) and *The Idler* (1758–60), which were periodicals in the manner of *The Spectator*, without the ease and variety of their original. To these he regularly contributed essays, which were quite popular in their day, though to modern notions they would be the reverse of acceptable. They treat mainly of abstract subjects, and are expressed in an extremely cumbrous style which soon came to be known as Johnsonese. This type of prose style is marked by a Latinized vocabulary, long and balanced sentences, and an abstract mode of expression. The passage given below illustrates these mannerisms, as well as a kind of elephantine skittishness with which Johnson was sometimes afflicted:

> Another cause of the gaiety and sprightliness of the dwellers in garrets is probably the increase of that vertiginous motion, with which we are carried round by the diurnal revolution of the earth. The power of agitation upon the spirits is well known; every man has felt his heart lightened in a rapid vehicle, or on a galloping horse; and nothing is plainer, than that he who towers to the fifth story is whirled through more space by every circumrotation than another that grovels upon the ground-floor. The nations between the tropics are known to be fiery, inconstant, inventive, and fanciful; because, living at the utmost length of the earth's diameter, they are carried about with more swiftness than those whom nature has placed nearer to the poles; and therefore, as it becomes a wise man to struggle with the inconveniences of his country, whenever celerity and acuteness are requisite, we must actuate our languor by taking a few turns round the centre in a garret.
>
> *The Rambler*

He wrote *Rasselas* (1759) in order to pay for his mother's funeral. It was meant to be a philosophical novel, but it is really a number of *Rambler* essays, written in Johnsonese, and strung together with the personality of an inquiring young prince called Rasselas. It is hardly a novel at all; the tale carries little interest, the characters are rudimentary, and there are many long, dull discussions. In the book, however, there are abundant shrewd comments and much of Johnson's somber clarity of vision.

His later years were almost unproductive of literary work. Yet he kept himself deeply interested in the events of the day. For instance, he started a violent quarrel with Macpherson, whose *Ossian* had startled the literary world. We give a letter that Johnson wrote to the Scotsman, which shows that he sometimes wrote as he spoke—crisply, clearly, and scathingly:

MR JAMES MACPHERSON,

I have received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian.

What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture: I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

SAM. JOHNSON

His *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1774), a travel book, shows the faculty of narrative, and contains passages of great skill. His last work of any consequence was *The Lives of the Poets* (1779–81), a series of prefaces to a collection of poetical works. They are the best specimens of Johnson's criticism, which is virile and sagacious, though it is influenced by the emotions of the classical school of Pope.

Thus when we come to estimate the value of his work we must arrive at the conclusion that the towering eminence which he held among really able men was due rather to the personality of the man than to the outstanding genius of the writer. Moreover, it is important to observe that he founded no school and left no literary following. He is the last of the old generation.

JAMES THOMSON (1700–48)

Thomson can hardly be called a great poet, yet in the history of literature he is unusual enough to be regarded (chronologically) as a freak. As such he is important, and it is necessary to give him some prominence.

1. His Life. Born near Kelso, close to some of the loveliest valleys on the Scottish side of the Border, Thomson early came to London (1725) to seek a patron and fame. His *Winter* (1726), though its novelty embarrassed the critics, brought him recognition and afterward praise; he obtained the patronage of the great, and assiduously cultivated it; traveled as a tutor to a noble family; obtained Government places and emoluments; and passed a happy and prosperous life at his cottage near Richmond.

2. His Poetry. His *Winter* was afterward quadrupled in size by including the other three seasons, and became *The Seasons* (1730). It is a blank-verse poem, and consists of a long series of descriptive passages dealing with natural scenes, mainly those with which he was familiar during his youth on the Scottish Border. There is a great deal of padding, and the style is often marked by clumsy expressions; yet on the whole the treatment is exhilarating, full of concentrated observation and joy in the face of nature. Above all, it is real nature, obtained from the living sky and air, and not from books; and, coming when it did, the poem exerted a strong counter-influence against the artificial school of poetry.

Thomson also wrote *Liberty* (1736), a gigantic poem in blank verse, intolerably dull. It had no success. As Johnson says, "The praises of Liberty were condemned to harbour spiders, and to gather dust."

In the last year of his life he published *The Castle of Indolence*, which is even more remarkable than *The Seasons*. The poem is written in Spenserian stanzas, and in the true Spenserian fashion it gives a description of a lotus-land into which world-weary souls are invited to withdraw. The work is imitative, and so cannot claim to be of the highest class, but it is an imitation of the rarest merit. For languid suggestiveness, in dulcet and harmonious versification, and for subtly woven vowel-music it need not shirk comparison with the best of Spenser himself. We give three verses of this remarkable poem. Coming at such a period, and expressing as they do the essence of romantic idealism, the verses are well worth quoting:

Full in the passage of the vale above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood,
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to move,
As Idlesse fancied in her dreaming mood;
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines, aye waving to and fro,
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard, to flow.

A pleasing land of drowsy-head 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:
There eke the soft delights, that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
And the calm pleasures, always hovered nigh;
But whate'er smacked of noyance or unrest,
Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest.

Joined to the prattle of the purling rills,
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale:
And now and then sweet Philomel would wail,
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep;
Yet all these sounds yblent inclined all to sleep.

The Castle of Indolence

Thomson also wrote some dramas, including one bad tragedy, *Sophanisba* (1729); and in collaboration with Mallet he produced the masque *Alfred* (1740), which happens to contain the song *Rule, Britannia*. The song is usually said to be Thomson's.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728–74)

As another typical example of the transition poet we take Goldsmith, whose work was produced a full generation after that of Thomson.

1. His Life. Much of Goldsmith's early life is

obscure, and our knowledge of it rests upon his own unsupported and hardly reliable evidence. He was born at Pallas, a small village in County Longford, in Ireland, and he was the son of the poor but admirable curate of the village. His father, the village, and various local features are duly registered, and unduly idealized, in the poem *The Deserted Village*. In 1745 Goldsmith proceeded to Trinity College, Dublin; graduated, after some misadventures; and then tried various careers in turn —law, medicine, and playing the flute—at various places, including Dublin, Edinburgh, Leyden, Venice, and Padua. At the last-mentioned place he graduated, according to his own account, as a doctor, and claimed title as such. In truth, a settled career was beyond Goldsmith's capacity. He had all the amiable vices of the stage Irishman: he was shiftless and improvident, but generous and humane; unstable and pitifully puerile in mind, but with bright, piercing flashes of humor and insight. During his years of wandering he roved over Europe, playing the flute for a living; then in 1756 he returned to England, poor, unknown, but undaunted.

Then followed desperate attempts at making a living. In succession he was chemist, printer's reader, usher in a school, and finally (the last refuge of the literary down-at-heels) publisher's hack and a denizen of Grub Street. In time, however, by their sheer merit, his writings drew upon him the regard of famous persons, including Dr. Johnson and Charles James Fox, the eminent politician. Once recognition came, it came with a rush; money and praise poured in; but his feckless habits kept him poor, and he drifted about in mean London lodgings till his death in 1774. It was said that he brought his doom upon himself by prescribing for his own

ailment. He left debts for two thousand pounds. During his latter years he was a member of Johnson's famous club, where his artless ways—his bickerings, witticisms, and infantile vanity—were the cause of the mingled amusement, admiration, and contempt of his fellow-members.

2. His Poetry. Though his poetical production is not large, it is notable. His first poem, *The Traveller* (1764), deals with his wanderings through Europe. The poem, about four hundred lines in length, is written in the heroic couplet, and is a series of descriptions and criticisms of the places and peoples of which he had experience. The descriptions, though often superficial and half-informed, are fired with the genius of the man, and are arresting and noteworthy. His critical comments, which require on his part clear thinking and some knowledge of social and economic facts, are of hardly any value. Similar drawbacks are seen in his only other poem of any length, *The Deserted Village* (1770). In this poem, as he deals with the memories of his youth, the pathetic note is more freely expressed. His natural descriptions have charm and genuine feeling; but his remedies for the agricultural depression of Ireland are innocently empty of the slightest practical value.

The peculiar humor and pathos of Goldsmith are hard to analyze. Both emotions arise for simple situations, and are natural and free from any deep guile, yet they have a certain agreeable tartness of flavor, and show that Goldsmith was no fool in his observation of mankind. Often the humor is so dashed with pathos that the combined effect is attractive to a very high degree. The passage given below illustrates his artless emotion naturally expressed:

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,
—
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last.

The Deserted Village

Goldsmith's miscellaneous poems are important, for they include some of his characteristic humorous and pathetic writing. The ballad called *The Hermit* is done in the sentimental fashion, the witty *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog* is suggestive of Swift without Swift's savage barb, and the fine lines beginning "When lovely woman stoops to folly" are among the best he ever wrote.

3. His Drama. Goldsmith wrote two prose comedies, both of which rank high among their class. The first, called *The Good-natured Man* (1768), is not so good as the second, *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773). Each, but especially the latter, is endowed with an ingenious and lively plot, a caste of excellent characters, and a vivacious and delightful style. Based on the Restoration comedy, they lack the Restoration grossness. The second play had an immense popularity, and even yet it is sometimes staged.

4. His Prose. The prose is of astonishing range and volume. Among his works of fiction we find *The Citizen of the World* (1759), a series of imaginary letters from a Chinaman, whose comments on

English society are both simple and shrewd. This series was contributed to *The Public Ledger*, a popular magazine. He wrote many other essays in the manner of Addison, almost as well done as those of Addison. His other important work of fiction is his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), which is in the first rank of the eighteenth-century novels. The plot of the novel is simple, but fairly well handled, the characters are human and attractive, and the book has all the Goldsmith qualities of humor and pathos.

We give an example of his style. The passage is taken from one of his essays, in which he sketches the character of a man who, while he pretends to be hard-hearted, is in reality of a generous disposition. The humor is typical; it is artless, but it is acute and pervading, and shows us quite plainly that the writer was by no means the zany that Boswell (who disliked Goldsmith) desired us to imagine in his *Life of Johnson*.

> He was proceeding in this strain, earnestly to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession, to support a dying wife, and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me; but it was quite otherwise with the man in black; I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized the opportunity of giving the

> poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.
>
> *The Bee*

In addition, Goldsmith produced a great mass of hack-work, most of which is worthless as historical and scientific fact, but all of which is enlightened with the grace of his style and personality. Some of these works are *An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759), his first published book; *The History of England* (1762); and *The History of Earth and Animated Nature*, a kind of text-book on natural history, which was unfinished when he died.

5. Summary. Goldsmith's work is so varied and important that it is necessary to summarize briefly. The following are its main features:

(*a*) *Variety*. In his projected Latin epitaph on Goldsmith, Johnson gives prominence to the statement that Goldsmith touched on nearly every type of writing and adorned them all:

> Qui nullum fere scribendi genus
> Non tetigit,
> Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit.

(*b*) Its *high quality* is also apparent. In matters of knowledge Goldsmith was deficient, but in grace, charm, and amiable good-humor he is in the first flight of our writers.

(*c*) As a *transitional poet* he is worthy of careful observation. In the mechanics of poetry—such as meter, rhyme, and rhetorical devices—he follows the older tradition; but in his broad humanity of outlook, in his sympathetic treatment of natural scenes, and

in the simplicity of his humor and pathos he is of the coming age.

OTHER TRANSITIONAL POETS

1. Thomas Gray (1716–71). Gray was born in London, the son of a money-scrivener, a kind of lawyer, who was in affluent circumstances. Gray, however, owed his education largely to the self-denial of his mother; he was educated at Eton and Cambridge, at the latter of which places he met Horace Walpole. With Walpole he toured Italy; then, returning to the university, he took his degree, finally settling down to a life that was little more than an elegant futility. He was offered the Laureateship, but refused it (1757); he obtained a professorship at Cambridge, but he never lectured. He wrote a little, traveled a little; but he was a man of shrinking and fastidious tastes, unapt for the rough shocks of the world, and, fortunately for himself, able to withdraw beyond them.

His first poem was the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (1747), which contained gloomy moralizings on the approaching fate of those "little victims," the schoolboys. Then, after years of revision and excision, appeared the famous *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard* (1751). This poem was smooth and graceful; it contained familiar sentiments turned into admirable, quotable phrases; and so, while it was agreeably familiar, it was fresh enough to be attractive. Its popularity has been maintained to the present day. His *Pindaric Odes* (1757) were unsuccessful, being criticized for their obscurity. *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poesy*, the two Pindaric Odes in the book, certainly require some elucidation, especially to readers not familiar with history and literature. At the first glance Gray's odes

are seen to have all the odic splendor of diction; in fact, the adornment is so thickly applied that it can almost stand alone, like a robe stiff with gems and gold lace. Yet the poems have energy and dignity. Johnson, who had a distaste for both the character and the work of Gray, cavils at the work, saying that it has a strutting dignity. “He is tall by walking on tiptoe. His art and his struggle are too visible.”

The prose work of Gray is notable. It consists partly of letters written during his travels, describing the scenes he visits. In them he shows vigor of style, a sharp eye and a generous admiration for the real beauties of nature. His descriptions, such as those of the Lake District, are quite admirable, and well in advance of the general taste of his age.

In spite of its slender bulk, Gray’s achievement both in prose and verse is of great importance. He explored the origins of romance in the early Norse and Celtic legends; his sympathies with the poor and oppressed were genuine and emphatically expressed; and his treatment of nature was a great improvement upon that of his predecessors.

Johnson’s final estimate of Gray is not unfair, and we can leave the poet with it: “His mind had a large grasp; his curiosity was unlimited, and his judgment cultivated; he was likely to love much where he loved at all, but he was fastidious and hard to please.”

2. William Collins (1721–59). Collins was born at Chichester, and was educated at Winchester and Oxford, but all his life he was weighted with the curse of insanity, and for this reason he had to take untimely leave of the university. He tried to follow a literary career in London, but with scant success,

being arrested for debt. He was released by the generosity of his publishers, and a fortunate legacy relieved him from the worst of his financial terrors. He lapsed into a mild species of melancholia, finally dying in his native city at the early age of thirty-eight.

The work of Collins is very small in bulk, and even of this scanty stock a fair proportion shows only mediocre ability. His *Persian Eclogues* (1742) are in the conventional style of Pope, and though they profess to deal with Persian scenes and characters, the Oriental setting shows no special information or inspiration. The book that gives him his place in literature is his *Odes* (1747), a small octavo volume of fifty-two pages. The work is a collection of odes to Pity, Fear, Simplicity, Patriotism, and kindred abstract subjects. Some of the odes are overweighted with the cumbrous creaking machinery of the Pindaric; but the best of them, especially the *Ode to Evening* (done in unrhymed verse), are instinct with a sweet tenderness, a subdued and shadowy pathos, and a magical enchantment of phrase. In the same book two short elegies, one beginning “How sleep the brave” and the other on James Thomson (“In yonder grave a Druid lies”), are as captivating, with their misty lights and murmuring echoes of melancholy, as the best of Keats. In the finest work of Collins, with his eager and wistful searching, with what Johnson morosely called his “flights of imagination that pass the bounds of nature,” we are ushered over the threshold of romance.

3. William Cowper (1731–1800). Cowper was born at Great Berkhampstead, in Hertfordshire, where his father was rector. He was to have been a barrister, and was actually called to the Bar (1754),

but a great and morbid timidity of disposition, which increased till it became religious and suicidal mania, hampered him cruelly through life. Family influence obtained for him a good post on the clerical staff of the House of Lords, but his extreme shyness made him quite unfit for this semi-public appointment. The consequent disappointment disordered his wits, and he attempted suicide, but was fortunately prevented. The latter part of his life was spent chiefly at Olney, in Buckinghamshire, where his good friends the Unwins treated him with great kindness and good sense. His feeling of gratitude for their care, expressed or implicit in many of his poems and letters, is one of the most touching features in the literature of the time. This comparatively happy state of affairs did not last till the end, for the years immediately preceding his death were much clouded with extreme mental and bodily affliction.

Cowper's poems were produced late in life, but in bulk the work is large. It is curiously mixed and attractive in its nature. His *Poems* (1782) is his first attempt at authorship. The book contains little that is noteworthy. The bulk of it is taken up with a collection of set pieces in heroic couplets, quite in the usual manner, on such subjects as *The Progress of Error, Truth, Hope, and Charity*. At the very end of the volume a few miscellaneous short pieces are more encouraging as novelties. One of them is the well-known poem containing the reflections of Alexander Selkirk ("I am monarch of all I survey"). His next work is *The Task* (1785), a long poem in blank verse, dealing with simple and familiar themes and containing many fine descriptions of country scenes. In places the style is marked by the prevailing artificial tricks, and as a whole the poem is seldom inspired with any deep or passionate feeling; but his

observation is acute and humane, it includes the homeliest detail within its kindly scope, and he gives us real nature, like Thomson in *The Seasons*. At the end of this volume the ballad of *John Gilpin* finds a place. It is an excellent example of Cowper's prim but sprightly humor, an extraordinary gift for a man of his morbid temperament. Other short poems were added to later editions of his first volume. These include the *Epitaph on a Hare*, curiously and touchingly pathetic; lines *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture*, which reveal only too painfully the suppressed convulsions of grief and longing that were stirred within him by memories of the past; and *The Castaway*, written in a lucid interval just before the end, and sounding like the wail of a damned spirit. The poem gives a tragic finality to his life. It describes the doom of a poor wretch swept overboard in a storm, and concludes:

No poet wept him; but the page
  Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
  Is wet with Anson's tear;
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalise the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
  Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
  A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
  No light propitious shone,
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
  We perished, each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

Cowper's letters, private epistles addressed to

various personal friends, are among the most delightful of their kind. They show the man at his best—almost jovial in a delicate fashion, keenly observant, and with a genuine gift for narrative. The style is so clear that the disposition of the writer shines through it with unruffled benignity.

Though Cowper comes late among the transition poets, he does not travel very far on the road to novelty. His mind is over-timorous, and he lacks robustness of temper. But in his feeling for nature, in the ease and versatility of his poetical work, in his undoubted lyrical gift (rarely expressed), his work marks an advance far beyond that of the classicists.

4. George Crabbe (1754–1832). Crabbe comes very late among the poets now under review, but in method he is largely of the eighteenth century. He was born in Suffolk, at Aldeburgh, where his father had been a schoolmaster and a collector of customs. He was apprenticed to a surgeon, but later left his native town to seek fame as an author in London (1780). He had little success at first, but gradually attracted attention. He fixed on a settled career by taking holy orders, and obtained the patronage of several influential men. Ultimately he obtained the valuable living of Trowbridge (1814), where he died as late as 1832, only a few months before Sir Walter Scott.

His chief poetical works are *The Library* (1781), *The Village* (1783), which made his name as a poet, *The Borough* (1810), and *Tales in Verse* (1812). The poems in their succession show little development, resembling each other closely both in subject and style. They are collections of tales, told in heroic couplets with much sympathy and a good deal of pathetic power, dealing with the lives of simple

countryfolk such as Crabbe encountered in his own parish. There is a large amount of strong natural description, though it is subsidiary to the human interest in the stories themselves. Crabbe has often been criticized for being too gloomy and pessimistic; he is pessimistic in the sense that he is stubbornly alive to the miseries of the poor, and he is at a loss how to relieve them. His work was warmly recognized by Wordsworth and other thinkers who had the welfare of the poor at heart. Crabbe, however, cannot be classed as a great poet; he lacks the supreme poetic gift of transforming even squalor and affliction into things of splendor and appeal; but he is sympathetic, sincere, and an acute observer of human nature.

5. Mark Akenside (1721–70). Akenside was born at Newcastle, studied medicine at Edinburgh, and graduated at Leyden in 1744. He started practice at Northampton, but did not succeed. Later he had more success in London. In the capital he took to political writing, in which he was moderately proficient, and he obtained a pension as a reward. He was a well-known character, and is said to have been caricatured by Smollett in *Peregrine Pickle*.

His best political poem is his *Epistle to Curio* (1744), which contains some brilliant invective against Pulteney. His best-known book is *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1744), a long and rambling blank-verse poem. The style is somewhat Miltonic in its energy and its turn of phrase, but it is deficient in the Miltonic genius. The poem has some loud but rather fine descriptive passages, especially those dealing with his native Tyne, for the beauties of which he shows a laudable enthusiasm.

6. Christopher Smart (1722–71). Smart was born

in Kent, and was educated at Cambridge, where he graduated. He was a man of unbalanced mind, which, leading him into many extravagances, brought him finally to a madhouse and a miserable death in a debtor's prison.

The poem connected with his name is *The Song to David* (1763), which is said to have been partly written on the walls of the madhouse in which he was confined. The poem, consisting of nearly a hundred six-line stanzas, is a wild, rhapsodical effusion, full of extravagance and incoherence, but in places containing bursts of tremendous poetic power. The following stanzas, the last in the poem, give an idea of these poetical bomb-shells:

Glorious the sun in mid career;
Glorious the assembled fires appear;
  Glorious the comet's train:
Glorious the trumpet and alarm;
Glorious the Almighty's stretched-out arm;
  Glorious the enraptured main:

Glorious the northern lights astream;
Glorious the song, when God's the theme;
  Glorious the thunder's roar:
Glorious hosanna from the den;
Glorious the catholic amen;
  Glorious the martyr's gore:

Glorious—more glorious is the crown
Of Him that brought salvation down,
  By meekness called thy Son;
Thou that stupendous truth believed,
And now the matchless deed's achieved,
  Determined, Dared, and Done.

7. William Shenstone (1714–63). Born at the Leasowes, in Worcestershire, Shenstone was educated at Oxford. After leaving the university he retired to his estate, which he beautified in the fashion of the time. He was a man of an agreeable

nature, but was shy and retiring, and spent nearly all his life in the country.

His published works consist chiefly of odes, elegies, and what he called *Levities, or Pieces of Humour* (often dreary enough), and *The Schoolmistress* (1742). His poems are largely pastoral, but they are by no means the artificial pastoral of Pope. He studies nature himself, and does not derive his notions from books. In this matter he resembles Cowper. *The Schoolmistress*, which by a notable advance is written in the Spenserian stanza, deals in rather a sentimental fashion with the teacher in his first school; it is sympathetic in treatment, and in style is an interesting example of the transition.

8. Charles Churchill (1731–64). Churchill was educated at Westminster School and at Cambridge, took orders (1756), and obtained a curacy. When he was about twenty-seven years old he suddenly started on a wild course of conduct, abandoned his curacy, took to politics and hack journalism, and to drinking and debauchery. He died at Boulogne at the age of thirty-three.

He lives in literature as a satirical poet, and the best of his work is in *The Rosciad* (1761), a bitter attack on the chief political and social figures of the time. The poem, which is written in the Dryden heroic couplet, was greeted as the work of a new Dryden, but it has little of that poet's superb elevation and contempt. It is vigorous and acute, but it is too often cheap and nasty. It had much popularity, but when the topical need for it was over it had no permanent value. Churchill continued to satirize the age in a wild indiscriminate fashion in poems called *Night* (1761), *The Ghost* (1763), and *The Prophecy of Famine* (1763).

9. Robert Blair (1699–1746). Blair was born at Edinburgh, and became a clergyman in East Lothian. The poem that brought him his transitory reputation was *The Grave* (1743). It is a long blank-verse poem of meditation on man's mortality. It does not make cheerful reading, and the sentiments are quite ordinary. It has, however, a certain strength and dignity, and the versification shows skill and some degree of freshness. The poem is reminiscent of Young's *Night Thoughts*.

ROBERT BURNS (1759–96)

In this section we shall deal with those poets who wrote in the middle and later years of the eighteenth century, and who abandoned the classical tradition. In their generation they came too early to be definitely included in the school of Wordsworth and Coleridge, but in their work they are often as romantically inclined as any of their great successors. We begin with Burns, one of the latest, and probably the greatest, of Wordsworth's poetical forbears. With the appearance of Burns we can say that the day of Romanticism is come. There had been false dawns and deceptive premonitions, but with him we have, in the words of Swinburne,

> A song too loud for the lark,
> A light too strong for a star.

1. His Life. He was born in a small clay-built cottage, the work of his father's hands, in the district of Kyle, in Ayrshire. His father, a small farmer, was a man of an unbending disposition, and the boy had to toil with the rest of the family to wring subsistence from the soil. He had not much formal education, and all his life he tried spasmodically to improve it; but it was mainly the force of his own natural ability

that permitted him to absorb the moderate amount of learning he did acquire. As he grew older he showed himself to be the possessor of a powerful and lively mind, which was often afflicted with spasms of acute mental depression. The audacity of his temper soon brought him into extravagances of conduct which were visited by the censure and punishment of the rigid Scottish Church. For Burns's own sake it is unfortunate that his memory has been pursued with an infatuation of hero-worship that seeks to extenuate and even to deny facts that are grave and indisputable. One can only say that his chief weaknesses—drink and dissipation—were largely the faults of his time. He was no worse than many other men of his age; but his poetic gifts proclaimed and perhaps exaggerated his vices, of which he repented when he was sober and unwisely boasted when he was otherwise.

His life was hard and bitter; his different attempts at farming and at other occupations met with no success, and he determined to seek his fortune in the West Indies (1786). In the nick of time he learned that the small volume of verse that he had recently issued at Kilmarnock was attracting much attention, and he was persuaded to remain in Scotland and discover what fame had in store for him. The reputation of his poems rose with prodigious rapidity, and within a year there was a demand for an Edinburgh edition. He was in Edinburgh in 1787, where he became a nine days' wonder to the lion-hunting society of the capital city. He then obtained a small post in the Excise, and, taking a farm near Dumfries, married and essayed to lead a regular life. He found this impossible, for fame brought added temptation. His farming was a failure, and the income from his poems and from his post in the

Excise was insufficient to keep him decently. At the age of thirty-seven he died at Dumfries, of premature old age.

2. His Poetry. His sole poetical work of any magnitude is his volume of *Poems* (1786), which he edited five times during his lifetime, with numerous additions and corrections on each occasion. At different times he contributed to *The Scots Musical Museum* and to Thomson's *Select Scottish Melodies*. After the poet's death his literary editor, Dr. Currie, published (1800) a large number of additional pieces, along with a considerable amount of correspondence.

We have thus one tale, *Tam o' Shanter*, which was included in the third edition of the poems, that of 1793; one longish descriptive piece, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*; more than two hundred songs, ranging in quality from very good to middling; and a great number of short epistles, epigrams, elegies, and other types of miscellaneous verse.

3. Features of his Poetry. The poetry is of such a miscellaneous character, and its composition was often so haphazard in the matter of time, that it is almost impossible to give a detailed chronology of it. We shall therefore take it in the mass, and attempt the difficult task of giving an analysis of its various features.

(*a*) The best work of Burns was almost entirely *lyrical* in motive. He is one of the rare examples, like Shelley, of the born singer who can give to human emotion a precious and imperishable utterance. He was essentially the inspired egoist: what interested him was vivid and quickening; what lay outside his knowledge and experience was without life or flavor. He thought of reviving the Scottish drama, but, even

if he had entered on the project, it is doubtful if he would have succeeded, for he lacked the faculty of putting himself completely in another man's place. His narrative gift, as it is revealed in *Tam o' Shanter*, becomes fused with the heat of some lyrical emotion (in this case that of drunken jollity), and then it shines with a clear flame. But with the departure of the lyrical emotion the narrative impulse ends as well.

(*b*) While keeping within the limits of the lyric he traverses an *immense range* of emotion and experience. The feelings he describes are those of the Scottish peasant, but the genius of the poet makes them germane to every member of the human race; he discovers the touch of nature that makes the whole world kin. Here we have the "passion and apathy, and glory and shame" that are the inspiration of the lyrical poet, and we have them in rich abundance.

(*c*) His *humor and pathos* are as copious and varied as his subject-matter. His wit can be rollicking to coarseness, as it is in *The Jolly Beggars*; and there are no poems richer in bacchanalian flavor than *Willie brewed a Peck o' Maut* and *Tam o' Shanter*. He can run to the other extreme of emotion, and be graceful and sentimental, as in *Afton Water* and *My Luve is like a Red, Red Rose*. We have beautiful homely songs in *John Anderson, my Jo* and *O' a' the Airts*; and he can be bitter and scornful in such poems as *The Unco Guid* and *The Holy Fair*. His pathos ranges from the piercing cry of *Ae Fond Kiss*, through the pensive pessimism of *Ye Banks and Braes*, to the tempered melancholy of *My Heart's in the Hielands*. The facility of this precious lyrical gift became a positive weakness, for he wrote too freely, and much of his

songwriting is of mediocre quality.

We give brief extracts to illustrate these features of his poetry. The first shows him in his mood of vinous elation; in the second he is acutely depressed and almost maudlin; the third for pure loveliness is almost unexcelled.

(1) O, Willie brewed a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam' to see;
Three blither hearts, that lee-lang night,
Ye wad na find in Christendie.

Chorus

We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our ee;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley bree.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
And mony a night we've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be.

It is the moon—I ken her horn,
That's blinkin' in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!

(2) Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seëst thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

*****

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but th' impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!

Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seëst thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?
To Mary in Heaven

(3) O, my luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
O, my luve is like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonny lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee well, my only luve!
And fare thee well a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile.

(*d*) The poet's *political and religious views* have been given prominence by his admirers, but they scarcely deserve it. His politics, as expressed in such poems as *A Man's a Man for a' That*, are merely the natural utterances of a strong and sensitive mind deeply alive to the degradation of his native people. His religious views, in so far as they are colored by his unhappy personal experiences with the Scottish Church, are of value solely as the inspiration of capital satirical verse, but in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* Burns pays a spontaneous and beautiful tribute to the piety of the Scottish peasant. The following extract from *Holy Willie's Prayer* sufficiently reveals his personal bias:

Lord, bless Thy chosen in this place,
For here Thou hast a chosen race:
But God confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,

Wha bring Thy elders to disgrace,
And public shame.

Lord, mind Gaw'n Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony takin' arts,
Wi' great and sma',
Frae God's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

But, Lord, remember me and mine,
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excelled by nane,
And a' the glory shall be Thine.
Amen, amen!

(*e*) His *style* is noteworthy for the curious double tendency that is typical of the transition. When he writes in the "correct" manner he has all the petty vices of the early school. The opening lines of his *Address to Edinburgh* are:

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat Legislation's sov'ran pow'rs!

Here we see a paltry classicism and a metrical scrupulousness (leadingto the mutilation of words like "pow'rs") that were far below Burns's notice. The latter vice will be seen even in such poems as *To Mary in Heaven*, quoted above. But when he shakes himself free from such trifling arts his style is full and strong, and as redolent of the soil as his own mountain daisy.

(*f*) As the *national poet* of Scotland his position is unique. He is first, and the rest nowhere. His rod, like Aaron's, has swallowed up the rods of the other Scottish poets; so that in the popular fancy he is the author of any striking Scottish song, such as *Annie Laurie* or *Auld Robin Gray*. His dominating position is

due to three factors:

(1) He has a matchless gift of catching traditional airs and wedding them to words of simple and searching beauty. It is almost impossible to think of *Auld Lang Syne* or *Scots wha hae* or *Green grow the Rashes, O!* without their respective melodies being inevitably associated with them. And these tunes were born in the blood of the Scottish peasant.

(2) He rejoices in descriptions of Scottish scenery and customs. *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is packed with such features, and all through his work are glimpses of typical Scottish scenes. The opening stanzas of *A Winter Night* are often quoted to show his descriptive power:

> When biting Boreas, fell and doure,
> Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
> When Phœbus gives a short-liv'd glow'r,
> Far south the lift,
> Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
> Or whirling drift:
>
> Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
> Poor Labour sweet in sleep was locked,
> While burns, wi' snawy wreeths up-choked,
> Wild-eddying swirl,
> Or thro' the mining outlet bocked,[168]
> Down headlong hurl.

(3) Lastly, he came just at the time when the Scottish tongue, as a separate literary medium, was fast vanishing. The Edinburgh society that prided itself on being the equal of the literary society of London was soon to pass away with the greatest of Edinburgh writers. Burns captured the dialect of his fellows, and gave it permanence.

OTHER POETS OF THE NEW SCHOOL

1. James Macpherson (1738–96). This writer

was born at Kingussie, in the county of Inverness, and was educated for the Church. He never became a regular minister, for at the age of twenty he was producing bad poetry, and soon after he definitely adopted a literary career. He traveled in the Highlands of Scotland and abroad, settled in London (1764), and meddled in the politics of the time. Then he entered Parliament, realized a handsome fortune, and died in his native parish.

After producing some worthless verse in the conventional fashion, in 1760 he issued something very different. It was called *Fragments of Ancient Poetry translated from the Gaelic*. The work received a large share of attention, and a subscription was raised to allow him to travel in the Highlands to glean further specimens of native poetry. The fruits of this were seen in *Fingal* (1762) and *Temora* (1763). Macpherson declared that the books were his translations of the poems of an ancient Celtic bard called Ossian. Immediately a violent dispute broke out, many people (including Johnson) alleging that the books were the original compositions of Macpherson himself. The truth is that he gave substance to a large mass of misty Gaelic tradition, and cast the stories into his peculiar prose style.

The controversy hardly matters to us here. What matters is that the tales deal largely with the romantic adventures of a mythical hero called Fingal. They include striking descriptions of wild nature, and they are cast in a rhythmic and melodious prose that is meant to reproduce the original Gaelic poetical measure. As an essay in the Romantic method these works are of very high value. (See p. 349.)

2. Thomas Chatterton (1752–70). Chatterton

was born at Bristol, and was apprenticed to an attorney. At the age of eighteen he went to London to seek his fortune as a poet. Almost at once he lapsed into penury, and, being too proud to beg, poisoned himself with arsenic. He was eighteen years old.

The brevity and pathos of Chatterton's career have invested it with a fame peculiar in our literature. He is held up as the martyr of genius, sacrificed by the callousness of the public. His fate, however, was largely due to his own vanity and recklessness, and his genius has perhaps been overrated. In 1768, while still at Bristol, he issued a collection of poems which seemed archaic in style and spelling. These, he said, he had found in an ancient chest lodged in a church in Bristol; and he further stated that most of them had been written by a monk of the fifteenth century, by name Thomas Rowley. The collection received the name of *The Rowley Poems*, and includes several ballads, one of which is *The Battle of Hastings*, and some descriptive and lyrical pieces, such as *Songs to Ælla*. A slight knowledge of Middle English reveals that they are forgeries thinly disguised with antique spelling and phraseology; but, especially after their author's death, they gained much currency, and had some influence on their time. There is much rubbish in the poems, but in detached passages there is real beauty, along with a marvelous precocity of thought.

3. William Blake (1757–1827). Blake was a Londoner, being born the son of a City hosier. At the age of ten he was an artist; at the age of twelve he was a poet; and thereafter his father apprenticed him to an engraver. All his life Blake saw visions and dreamed dreams, hovering on the brink of insanity;

and his mental peculiarities are abundantly revealed in the two arts that he made his own. His engravings and his poems, conceived on wild and fantastic lines, kept him fully occupied all his life, though they brought him neither money nor fame. But his desires were easily satisfied, and he died poor and unknown, but cheerful and serene, in the city of his birth.

His chief poetical works are *Poetical Sketches* (1783), *Songs of Innocence* (1789), and *Songs of Experience* (1794). They are extraordinary compositions, full of unearthly visions, charming simplicity, and baffling obscurity. His genius is undoubted, but it is wayward and fitful, the sport of his unbalanced mind. His astonishing lines on the tiger are well known, and are a good specimen of his poetical gifts:

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

*****

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet?

*****

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

4. Robert Fergusson (1750–74). Fergusson was born in Edinburgh, and received his education at the university of that city, but soon fell into loose and disreputable habits. He contributed much to the local press, and acquired some reputation as a poet of the

vernacular. His irregular habits led to the madhouse, in which he died at the early age of twenty-four.

Fergusson is chiefly notable as the forerunner of Burns, who was generous in his praise of the earlier poet. His best poems are short descriptive pieces dealing with Scottish life, such as *The King's Birthday*, *To the Tron Kirk*, and *The Farmer's Ingle*. This last poem perhaps suggested Burns's *Cotter's Saturday Night*. Fergusson gives clear and accurate descriptions, and his use of the vernacular Scots tongue is vigorous and natural, thus providing Burns with a model for his best style. (See p. 346.)

SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689–1761)

1. His Life. Richardson was born in Derbyshire, the son of a joiner, by whom he was apprenticed to a London printer. Richardson was an industrious youth, and in the course of time rose high in the pursuit of his occupation. He became a master-printer, produced the journals of the House of Commons, and became printer to the King. He was a man of retiring and almost effeminate habits, but was generous and well liked.

2. His Novels. Richardson's first attempts at writing fiction began at the age of thirteen, when he was the confidant of three illiterate young women, for whom he wrote love-letters. This practice afterward stood him in good stead. He was over fifty years old before he printed a novel of his own, called *Pamela* (1740). The book, which takes the form of a series of fictitious letters, deals with the fortunes of Pamela, a poor and virtuous maid of low degree, who marries and afterward reforms her wicked master. The work was instantly successful, exhausting five editions during the first year of its

issue. The characters, especially the chief female character, slowly but accurately fabricated during the gradual evolution of the simple plot, were new to the readers of the time, and mark a great step forward in the history of the English novel. Richardson's next novel, which was also constructed in the form of letters, was *Clarissa Harlowe* (1749). This treats of characters higher in the social scale, with indifferent success, and the end is made tragical. The heroine is a young lady of rank and fortune who is persecuted by a villain called Lovelace, and who dies finally of a broken heart. His third and last novel, also in letter-form, was *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), dealing chiefly with persons still higher in the social world. Richardson contemplated calling the book *A Good Man*, for he intended the hero to be the perfection of the manly virtues. But Sir Charles is too good, and succeeds only in being tedious and unreal. The character of the social *milieu* in which the action is cast also weighs heavily upon Richardson, with the result that this book, which he intended to be his masterpiece, is the hollowest of the three.

3. Features of his Novels. Richardson's works are largely the reflection of the man himself, and, in spite of their faults and limitations, are of immense importance in the development of the novel.

(*a*) Their most prominent feature is their *immense length*. In the last two works this is most noticeable.

(*b*) In spite of the great length of the books, the *plots* have little complexity; the length is due to an enormous accumulation of detail, both of character and incident, which is ingenious, but clogs the course of the story. He is really an adept in the minute analysis of motive and emotion, which gradually

evolves a character that is entire and convincing, and he fills in his sketch with a multitude of tiny strokes.

(*c*) His novels convey the general impression of a certain kind of bloodlessness—a literary anemia—that is due to several causes. His themes are those of love-making; they are handled with a great parade of morality, but have nevertheless a simpering prudishness that conveys a stealthy suggestion of immorality. Then his good people are laboriously virtuous; his villains are stuffily vile; he is devoid of humor; the action is too frequently indoors; the sentiment is protracted and sickly. After a spell of reading such work one is glad to escape into the open air.

(*d*) Yet his merits are very real, and the cumbrous machinery of the letter-series assists him. His character-drawing is among the best of his time, and is still among the most remarkable in English; he is specially happy in his treatment of feminine characters; his use of dialogue shows an advance, though it might be even more frequently employed. He gives a good start to the modern novel, though it is still a long distance from maturity.

HENRY FIELDING (1707–54)

1. His Life. A cadet of an ancient family, Fielding was born in Somersetshire, was educated at Eton, and studied law at Leyden. Lack of funds stopped his legal studies for a time; he took to writing plays for a living, but the plays were of little merit; then, having married, he resumed his studies and was called to the Bar. After some time in practice he was appointed (1749) Bow Street magistrate, a post which brought him a small income ("of the dirtiest money on earth," as he said) and much hard work.

His magisterial duties, however, had their compensations, for they gave him a close view of many types of human criminality which was of much use to him in his novels. Fielding himself was no Puritan, and his own excesses helped to undermine his constitution. In the hope that it would improve his health, he took a voyage to Portugal (1754); but he died some months after landing, and was buried at Lisbon.

2. His Novels. In 1742 appeared *Joseph Andrews*, which begins in a loud guffaw of laughter—not unkind, but not very delicate—at the namby-pamby Pamela of Richardson. In the story Joseph Andrews, the hero, is a footman, and the brother of Pamela. Along with a poor and simple curate called Abraham Adams he survives numerous ridiculous adventures. In a short time Fielding forgets about the burlesque, becomes interested in his own story, and we then see a novel of a new and powerful kind. From the very beginning we get the Fielding touch: the complete rejection of the letter-method; the bustle and sweep of the tale; the broad and vivacious humor; the genial and half-contemptuous insight into human nature; and the forcible and pithy prose style. His next works were *A Journey from this World to the Next* (1743) and *Jonathan Wild the Great* (1743). *Jonathan Wild* is the biography of the famous thief and highwayman who was hanged at Newgate. The story is one long ironical comment upon human action. In it Fielding deliberately turns morality inside out, calling good by the name of evil, and evil by the name of good. In the hands of a lesser writer such a method would at length become teasing and troublesome; but Fielding, through the intensity of his ironic insight, gives us new and piercing glimpses

of the ruffian's mentality. We give an extract to illustrate Fielding's ironic power, which in several respects resembles that of Swift:

> In Wild everything was truly great, almost without alloy, as his imperfections (for surely some small ones he had) were only such as served to denominate him a human creature, of which kind none ever arrived at consummate excellence. Indeed, while greatness consists in power, pride, insolence, and doing mischief to mankind—to speak out—while a great man and a great rogue are synonymous terms, so long shall Wild stand unrivalled on the pinnacle of GREATNESS. Nor must we omit here, as the finishing of his character, what indeed ought to be remembered on his tomb or his statue, the conformity above mentioned of his death to his life; and that Jonathan Wild the Great, after all his mighty exploits was, what so few GREAT men can accomplish—hanged by the neck till he was dead.
>
> *Jonathan Wild the Great*

His greatest novel, *Tom Jones* (1749), completes and perfects his achievement. In the book we have all his previous virtues (and some of his weaknesses), with the addition of greater symmetry of plot, clearer and steadier vision into human life and human frailty, and a broader and more thickly peopled stage. His last novel, *Amelia* (1751), had as the original of the heroine Fielding's first wife, and the character of the erring husband Booth is based upon that of Fielding himself. This novel, though possessing power and interest, lacks the spontaneity of its great predecessor. The last work he produced was his *Voyage to Lisbon*, a diary written during his last journey. It possesses a painful interest, for it reveals a strong and patient mind, heavy with bodily affliction, yet still lively in its perception of human

affairs.

3. Features of his Novels. (*a*) Like Richardson, Fielding had a genius for sounding the emotions of the human heart, but his methods are different. Richardson pores over human weaknesses with puckered brow and with many a sigh; Fielding looks, laughs, and passes on. He does not seek to analyze or over-refine; and so his characters possess a breadth, humanity, and attraction denied to Richardson's. Even a sneaking rogue like Blifil in *Tom Jones* has a Shakespearian roundness of contour that keeps him from being quite revolting.

(*b*) Fielding is breezy, bustling, and energetic in his *narrative*. He shows us life on the highway, in the cottage, and among the streets of London. Coleridge truly said that to take up Fielding after Richardson is like emerging from the sick-room on to the open lawn.

(*c*) Fielding's *humor* is boisterous and broad to the point of coarseness—a kind of over-fed jollity. But it is frank and open, with none of the stealthy suggestiveness of Richardson. In dealing with this aspect of Fielding's work (an aspect frequently repulsive to the more squeamish taste of the moderns) we must make allowance for the fashion of his time, which united a frankness of incident with a curious decorum of speech. He had also in him a freakishness of wit, the excess of his grosser mood, which led to fantastic interludes and digressions in his novels. For instance, in describing the numerous scuffles among his characters, he frequently adopts an elaborate mock-heroic style not quite in accordance with later taste. Fielding's comic characters, such as Partridge, the humble companion of Tom Jones, are numerous, diversified, and

exceedingly likeable and lively.

(*d*) A word must be given to his *style*. He breaks away from the mannered, artificial style of the earlier novelists, and gives us the good "hodden grey" of his own period. His style has a slight touch of archaism in the use of words like "hath," but otherwise it is fresh and clear. His use of dialogue and conversation is of a similar nature.

We add an extract to illustrate Fielding's easy style, his almost haphazard cast of sentence, and his use of natural dialogue:

> As soon as the play, which was *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, began, Partridge was all attention, nor did he break silence till the entrance of the ghost; upon which he asked Jones: "What man that was in the strange dress; something," said he, "like what I have seen in a picture. Sure it's not armour, is it?" Jones answered: "That is the ghost." To which Partridge replied, with a smile: "Persuade me to that, sir, if you can. Though I can't say I ever actually saw a ghost in my life, yet I am certain I should know one if I saw him better than that comes to. No, no, sir; ghosts don't appear in such dresses as that neither." In this mistake, which caused much laughter in the neighbourhood of Partridge, he was suffered to continue till the scene between the ghost and Hamlet, when Partridge gave that credit to Mr Garrick which he had denied to Jones, and fell into so violent a trembling that his knees knocked against each other. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage. "O la! sir," said he, "I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of anything, for I know it is but a play; and if it was really a ghost, it could do one no harm at such a distance, and in so much company; and yet if I was frightened, I am not the only person." "Why,

> who," cries Jones; "dost thou take me to be such a coward here besides thyself?" "Nay, you may call me coward if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life. Ay, ay; go along with you! Ay, to be sure! Who's fool, then? Will you? Who ever saw such foolhardiness? Whatever happens, it is good enough for you. Oh! here he is again! No further! No, you've gone far enough already; further than I'd have gone for all the king's dominions!" Jones offered to speak, but Partridge cried: "Hush, hush, dear sir; don't you hear him?" And during the whole speech of the ghost, he sat with his eyes fixed partly on the ghost, and partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open; the same passions, which succeeded each other in Hamlet, succeeding likewise in him.
>
> *Tom Jones*

OTHER NOVELISTS

1. Tobias Smollett (1721–71). Smollett was a Scotsman, being born in Dumbartonshire. Though he came of a good family, from an early age he had to work for a living. He was apprenticed to a surgeon, and, becoming a surgeon's mate on board a man-of-war, saw some fighting and much of the world. He thus stored up abundant raw material for the novels that were to follow. When he published *Roderick Random* (1748) the book was so successful that he settled in London; and the remainder of his life is mainly the chronicle of his works.

Roderick Random is an example of the "picaresque" novel: the hero is a roving dog, of little honesty and considerable roguery; he traverses many lands, undergoing many tricks of fortune, both good and bad. The story lacks symmetry, but it is nearly always lively, though frequently coarse, and the

minor characters, such as the seaman Tom Bowling, are of considerable interest. His other novels are *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), *Ferdinand, Count Fathom* (1753), *Sir Launcelot Greaves* (1762), and *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771).

The later books follow the plan of the first with some fidelity. Most of the characters are disreputable; the plots are as a rule formless narratives of travel and adventure; and a coarse and brutal humor is present all through. Smollett, however, brings variety into his novels by the endless shifting of the scenes, which cover nearly all the globe, by his wide knowledge and acute perception of local manners and customs, and by his use of a plain and vigorous narrative style. His characters, especially his female characters, are crudely managed, but his naval men—comprising Commodore Trunnion, Lieutenant Hatchway, and Boatswain Pipes—form quite a considerable gallery of figures. Smollett is the first of our novelists to introduce the naval type.

2. Laurence Sterne (1713–68). Sterne was born at Clonmel, was educated at Cambridge, took orders, and obtained a living in Yorkshire (1740). His habits were decidedly unclerical, even though we judge them by the easy standard of the time. He temporarily left his living for London to publish *Tristram Shandy* (1759). Then he toured abroad, returned to England to write his second novel, and died in London while visiting the city on business connected with the production of his book.

His two novels are *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67) and *A Sentimental Journey* (1768). The first made him famous, and rather turned his head, confirming him in some of his worst mannerisms. Both novels are

bundles of episodes and digressions, often irritatingly prolonged. The characters are elaborately handled, caressed, and bewept. Perhaps the most famous of them is "my uncle Toby," with his Corporal Trim. Both books are saturated with a sentiment that modern taste can only call sloppiness. This sentiment, however, does not prevent a sniggering indecency from appearing in the narrative. The style is distinguished by many antics, such as exclamation, inversion, and unfinished sentences. These mannerisms have long made Sterne distasteful to all but highly trained palates, but no one can deny him great ingenuity and industry, which can gradually unswathe characters and incidents from their trappings of talk and digression, an acute perception of character, and an immense opinion of his own importance.

The following is an exciting incident that occurred just after the birth of Tristram Shandy. Susannah, the serving-maid, rouses Mr. Shandy with the news that the child is in a fit. Observe the staccato dialogue and the ingenious variation of the paragraph. The humor is typical of Sterne.

> "Bless me, sir," said Susannah, "the child's in a fit"—"And where's Mr Yorick?"—"Never where he should be," said Susannah, "but his curate's in the dressing-room, with the child upon his arm, waiting for the name—and my mistress bid me run as fast as I could to know, as Captain Shandy is the godfather, whether it should not be called after him."
>
> "Were one sure," said my father to himself, scratching his eyebrow, "that the child was expiring, one might as well compliment my brother Toby as not—and 't would be a pity in such a case, to throw away so great a name as

Trismegistus upon him—But he may recover."

"No, no"—said my father to Susannah, "I'll get up"—"There's no time," cried Susannah, "the child's as black as my shoe." "Trismegistus," said my father—"But stay—thou art a leaky vessel, Susannah," added my father; "can'st thou carry Trismegistus in thy head the length of the gallery without scattering?"—"Can I?" cried Susannah, shutting the door in a huff—"If she can, I'll be shot," said my father, bouncing out of bed in the dark, and groping for his breeches.

Susannah ran with all speed along the gallery.

My father made all possible speed to find his breeches.

3. Horace Walpole (1717–97). Walpole was the son of Sir Robert Walpole, the famous Whig minister. He touched upon several kinds of literature, his letters being among the best of their kind. His one novel, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), is of importance, for it was the first of the productions of a large school (sometimes called the "terror school") of novelists who dealt with the grisly and supernatural as their subject. Walpole's novel, which he published almost furtively, saying, like Chatterton, that the work was of medieval origin, described a ghostly castle, in which we have walking skeletons, pictures that move out of their frames, and other blood-curdling incidents. The ghostly machinery is often cumbrous, but the work is creditably done, and as a return to the romantic elements of mystery and fear the book is noteworthy.

4. Other Terror Novelists. (*a*) **William Beckford (1759–1844).** The one novel now associated with Beckford's name is *Vathek* (1784). Beckford, who was a man of immense wealth and crazy habits, drew largely upon *The Arabian Nights* for material for the

book. The central figure of the novel is a colossal creature, something like a vampire in disposition, who preys upon mankind and finally meets his doom with suitable impressiveness. Beckford had a wild, almost staggering, magnificence of imagination, and his story, though crude and violent in places, does not lack a certain reality.

(*b*) **Mrs. Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823).** This lady was the most popular of the terror novelists, and published quite a large number of books that followed a fairly regular plan. Among such were her *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), and the most popular of them all, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). Her stories took on almost a uniform plot, involving mysterious manuscripts, haunted castles, clanking chains, and cloaked and saturnine strangers. At the end of all the horrors Mrs. Radcliffe rather spoils the effect by giving away the secrets of them, and revealing the fact that the terrors were only illusions after all. Nowadays the novels appear tame, but they showed the way to a large number of other writers, for they were fresh to the public of their time.

(*c*) **Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775–1818).** Lewis is perhaps the crudest of the terror school, and only one book of his, *The Monk* (1795), is worth recording. Lewis, who is lavish with his horrors, does not try to explain them. His imagination is grimmer and fiercer than that of any of the other writers of the same class, and his book is probably the "creepiest" of its kind.

5. Henry Mackenzie (1745–1831). This novelist is the most considerable of the sentimental school, who took Sterne for their master. His best-known work is *The Man of Feeling* (1771), in which maudlin

sentiment has free play. To his contemporaries Mackenzie was known as “the Man of Feeling.”

6. Frances Burney (1752–1840), whose married name was **Madame d’Arblay**, is rather an important figure, for she exercised a considerable influence on her age. Her diaries and letters are clever and informative, and her two best novels, *Evelina* (1778) and *Cecilia* (1782), are lively and acute representations of fashionable society. Johnson, with his heavy jocularity, called her a “character-monger,” meaning that her chief effects were obtained in the portraying of character. In the construction of *Evelina* she returns to the clumsy letter-method of Richardson, but she has a wit of an agreeably acid flavor. She is no mean predecessor of Jane Austen. (See p. 354.)

EDWARD GIBBON (1737–94)

1. His Life. Gibbon, who was born at Putney, was a sickly child, and, according to his own grateful acknowledgment, he owed his life to the exertions of his aunt, Catherine Porten. He had little regular schooling, but from his early years he was an eager reader of history. At the age of fifteen he entered Magdalen College, Oxford, an institution of which he always spoke afterward with aversion and contempt. “To the University of Oxford,” he writes, “I acknowledge no obligation, and she will as readily renounce me as a son, as I am willing to disclaim her as a mother.” His private historical studies led him to become a Roman Catholic when he was sixteen years old, to the great horror of his father, and resulted in his expulsion from the university. His father packed him off to Lausanne, in Switzerland, in the hope that the Protestant atmosphere of the place would wean him from his new faith.

From his stay in Lausanne began Gibbon's long and affectionate acquaintance with French language and learning, two sources from which he was to draw the chief inspiration for his masterpiece. He returned to England in 1758, and had a brief and mixed experience in the Militia; afterward he toured the Continent, visiting the famous *salons* of Paris and seeing Rome. Returning to England after some years, he entered Parliament (1774), hoping for political preferment. In this he was only moderately successful, for he was a lukewarm and rather cynical politician. He returned to Lausanne, where he completed his great work in June 1787. He finally came back to England, and died in lodgings in London.

2. His Works. His first projected book, *A History of Switzerland* (1770), was never finished. Then appeared the first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776). At nearly regular intervals of two years each of the other five volumes was produced, the last appearing in 1788. His *Autobiography*, which contains valuable material concerning his life, is his only other work of any importance, and it is written with all his usual elegance and suave, ironic humor.

To most judges *The Decline and Fall* ranks as one of the greatest of historical works, and is a worthy example of what a history ought to be. In time it covers more than a thousand years, and in scope it includes all the nations of Europe. It sketches the events leading up to the dissolution of the Roman Empire, and traces the rise of the states and nations that previously formed the component parts of the Roman world, concluding with the fall of Constantinople in the fifteenth century. For this great

task Gibbon's knowledge is adequate; recent specialized research has rarely been able to pick holes in his narrative. Moreover, he had also that infallible sense of proportion which is the mark of the born historian: he knows what and when to omit, to condense, or give in full. In consequence his gigantic narrative has the balance and the beauty that result from a single and indivisible *mind* directing it, and suggests in plan and workmanship a vast cathedral.

Exception has been taken to Gibbon's humor, and with some reason. His skeptical bias, the product of his studies in French, pervades the entire work. This mental attitude need be no disadvantage to the historian, for it leads him to scrutinize his evidence very severely. But in the case of Gibbon it is troublesome at times, especially when he deals with the rise of the Christian faith. In the chapters devoted to the early Christians he sets the facts down solemnly, but all the time he is subtly and sneeringly ironical, a characteristic that aroused the great indignation of Johnson. At many other points when recording disagreeable incidents Gibbon reveals a sniggering nastiness of humor unworthy of so great a writer.

His prose style, deliberately cultivated as being most suited to his subject, is peculiar to himself. It is lordly and commanding, with a full, free, and majestic rhythm. Admirably appropriate to its gigantic subject, the style has nevertheless some weaknesses. Though it never flags, and rarely stumbles, the very perfection of it tends to monotony, for it lacks ease and variety. The extract shows the elaborate construction of the sentences and the rolling character of the rhythm:

> Three days Mahomet and his companion were concealed in the cave of Thor, at the distance of a league from Mecca; and in the close of each evening, they received from the son and daughter of Abubeker a secret supply of intelligence and food. The diligence of the Koreish explored every haunt in the neighbourhood of the city; they arrived at the entrance of the cavern; but the providential deceit of a spider's web and a pigeon's nest is supposed to convince them that the place was solitary and inviolate. "We are only two," said the trembling Abubeker. "There is a third," replied the prophet; "it is God himself." No sooner was the pursuit abated, than the two fugitives issued from the rock, and mounted their camels; on the road to Medina they were overtaken by the emissaries of the Koreish; they redeemed themselves with prayers and promises from their hands. In this eventful moment the lance of an Arab might have changed the history of the world. The flight of the prophet from Mecca to Medina has fixed the memorable era of the Hegira, which, at the end of twelve centuries, still discriminates the lunar years of the Mahometan nations.

OTHER HISTORIANS

1. David Hume (1711–76). Born and educated at Edinburgh, Hume first distinguished himself as a philosopher, publishing the *Treatise on Human Nature* (1739–40) and *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* (1741). Later he turned to historical work, writing *The History of England*, in six volumes, which appeared between the years 1754 and 1762. At first the work was coldly received, for it traversed the popular Whig notions, but in time the book raised Hume to the position of the leading historian of the day. He died in the same year that witnessed the

issue of the first volume of *The Decline and Fall.*

As a historian Hume makes no pretense at profound research, so that his work has little permanent value as history. He possesses a clear and logical mind and a swift and brilliant narrative style. In the history of literature his work is of importance as being the first of the popular and literary histories of the country.

2. William Robertson (1721–93). Robertson also was a Scot, being born in the country of Midlothian. After leaving the university he entered the Scottish Church. He had an active and successful career as a historian, producing among other works *The History of Scotland* (1759), *The History of Charles V* (1769), and *The History of America* (1777).

The range of Robertson's subject-matter shows that he could have been no deep student of any particular epoch of history. He aimed at a plain and businesslike narrative of events, taking the average man's view of the facts he chronicled, and, with perhaps the exception of his pronounced bias in favor of Mary Queen of Scots, he is never conspicuously personal in his opinions.

3. James Boswell (1740–95) was born in Edinburgh of a good Scottish family. He studied law, but his chief delight was the pursuit of great men, whose acquaintance he greedily cultivated.

He lives in literature by his supreme effort, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), which ranks as one of the best biographies in existence. Boswell sought and obtained Johnson's friendship; endured any humiliation for the sake of improving it; and for twenty-one years, by means of an astonishing amount of patience, pertinacity, and sheer thick-

skinned imperviousness to slight and insult, obtained an intimate personal knowledge of Johnson's life and habits. Boswell has suffered at the hands of Macaulay, who has pictured him as being a knavish buffoon. No doubt he had glaring faults; but on the other hand he had great native shrewdness, a vigorous memory, a methodical and tireless industry which made him note down and preserve many details of priceless value, and a natural genius for seizing upon points of supreme literary importance. All these gifts combine to make his book a masterpiece.

The following extract illustrates Boswell's acute perception, his eye for detail, and his limpid and vivacious style:

> That the most minute singularities which belonged to him, and made very observable parts of his appearance and manner, may not be omitted, it is requisite to mention, that while talking or even musing as he sat in his chair, he commonly held his head to one side towards his right shoulder, and shook it in a tremulous manner, moving his body backwards and forwards, and rubbing his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his hand. In the intervals of articulating he made various sounds with his mouth, sometimes as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving half a whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen, and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front, as if pronouncing quickly under his breath, *too, too, too*: all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile. Generally when he had concluded a period, in the course of a dispute, by which time he was a good deal exhausted by violence and vociferation, he used

> to blow out his breath like a whale. This I suppose was a relief to his lungs; and seemed in him to be a contemptuous mode of expression, as if he had made the arguments of his opponent fly like chaff before the wind.
>
> *The Life of Samuel Johnson.*

EDMUND BURKE (1729–97)

Burke shares with Gibbon the place of the greatest prose stylist of the period now under review. He is, moreover, recognized as one of the masters of English prose.

1. His Life. Born in Dublin, Burke was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and then removed to London to study law in the Middle Temple. He soon showed that his real bent lay toward politics and literature, and it was not long before he published some books that attracted a good deal of attention and admitted him into the famous Johnson Club. In politics he attached himself to the Whig party, obtained some small appointments, and became member for Wendover (1765). Both as an orator and as a pamphleteer he was a powerful advocate for his party, and very soon his splendid gifts won for him a leading place in the House of Commons. His style of oratory, often labored, rhetorical, and theatrical, exposed him to much censure and ridicule, and his speeches were frequently prolonged to the point of dullness. But at its best his eloquence was powerful in attack and magnificent in appeal, rising to the very summit of the orator's art. When the Whigs attained to office in 1783 Burke was appointed Paymaster of the Forces. He was leader in the prosecution of Warren Hastings, making a speech of immense length and power (1788). On the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 he left his party

and attacked the revolutionaries with all his great energy. In 1794, broken in health, he retired from Parliament, but continued to publish pamphlets till his death in 1797.

2. His Works. The considerable sum of Burke's achievement can for the sake of convenience be divided into two groups: his purely philosophical writings, and his political pamphlets and speeches.

(*a*) His philosophical writings, which comprise the smaller division of his product, were composed in the earlier portion of his career. *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756) is a parody of the style and ideas of Bolingbroke, and, though it possesses much ingenuity, it has not much importance as an original work. *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756) is his most considerable attempt at philosophy. As philosophy the book is only middling, for its theory and many of its examples are questionable, but it has the sumptuous dressing of Burke's language and style.

(*b*) His political works are by far his most substantial claim to fame. In variety, breadth of view, and illuminating power of vision they are unsurpassed in the language. The chief of the many works are *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* (1770), a resounding attack on the Tory Government then in power; *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790), which marked his departure from his old party and his fierce challenge to the extreme revolutionary policy; *Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796); and *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (1797). In addition we have much purely oratorical work, such as the notable speeches on the American question and his great philippic against Warren Hastings.

3. Features of his Work. Though the occasion of

Burke's political writings has vanished, the books can still be read with profit and pleasure. Burke was the practical politician, applying to the problems of his day the light of a clear and forcible intelligence; yet, above this, he had an almost supreme faculty for discerning the eternal principles lying behind the shifting and troubled scenes of his time. He could distill from the muddy liquid of contemporary party strife the clear wine of wisdom, and so deduce ideas of unshakable permanence. Thus pages of his disquisition, scores of his dicta, can still be applied almost without qualification to the problems of any civilized state and time. A good deal of the writing is of an inferior quality; it can be flashy, labored, and dull; but as a whole it possesses the foundations of sanity and wisdom.

We have in addition the permanent attraction of Burke's style. His prose is marked by all the devices of the orator: much repetition, careful arrangement and balance of parts, copious use of the rhetorical figures (such as metaphor, simile, epigram, and exclamation), variation of the sentence, homely illustrations, and a swift but steady rhythm. When he overdoes these devices he is garish and vulgar, but for the most part his style impresses the reader with an effect of elevation, strength, and noble perspicuity.

In the extract now given, note that the actual vocabulary does not abound in long Latinized words as in the case of Johnsonese. The ornate effect is produced rather by the elevation of the sentiment and the sweeping cadence of the style.

> On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid

> wisdom as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of *their* Academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows! Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanic philosophy, our institutions can never be embodied, if I may use the expression, in persons, so as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable of filling their place. These public affections, combined with manners, are required sometimes as supplements, sometimes as correctives, always as aids, to law. The precept given by a wise man, as well as a great critic, for the construction of poems is equally true as to states: "Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunto." There ought to be a system of manners in every nation which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely.
>
> *Reflections on the French Revolution*

OTHER PROSE-WRITERS

1. Adam Smith (1723–90). This author was born at Kirkcaldy, in Fifeshire, and completed his education at Glasgow and Oxford. He was appointed professor at Glasgow University, whence he issued his famous book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776).

In the history of economics the work is epoch-making, for it lays the foundations of modern economic theory. In the history of literature it is noteworthy because it is another example of that spirit of research and inquiry that was abroad at this

time, playing havoc with literary convention as well as with many other ideas. The book is also a worthy example of the use of a plain businesslike style in the development of theories of far-reaching importance.

2. William Paley (1743–1805) may be taken as the typical theological writer of the age. He was a brilliant Cambridge scholar, and obtained high offices in the Church, finally becoming an archdeacon. His chief books are *Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785), *Horæ Paulinæ* (1790), and *A View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794). His style is lively and attractive, and he possessed much vigor of character and intellect.

3. The Earl of Chesterfield (1694–1773) was of the famous Stanhope family. In his day he was an illustrious wit and man of fashion, and held high political offices. He is an example of the aristocratic amateur in literature, and he wrote elegant articles for the fashionable journals, such as *The World*.

His *Letters to his Son*, which were published shortly after his death in 1773, caused a great flutter. They appeared diabolically cynical and immoral, and as such they were denounced by Johnson. No doubt they affect the tired cynicism of the man of the world, but that does not prevent them from being keen and clever, and underneath their bored indifference to morality they reveal a shrewd judgment of men and manners. (See p. 342.)

4. William Godwin (1756–1836) is a prominent example of the revolutionary man of letters of the time. He was the son of a dissenting minister, and intended to follow the same profession, but very soon drifted away from it. He then devoted himself to the pursuit of letters, in which he developed his extreme views on religion, politics, sociology, and

other important themes. His *Political Justice* (1793) was deeply tinged with revolutionary ideas, and had a great effect on many young and ardent spirits of the age, including Shelley. His novel *Caleb Williams* (1794) was a dressing of the same theories in the garb of fiction. Godwin is worth notice because he reveals the spread of the revolutionary doctrines that were so strongly opposed by Burke.

5. Gilbert White (1720–93) deserves mention as the first naturalist who cast his observations into genuine literary form. He was born at Selborne, Hampshire, studied at Oxford, and took holy orders. He settled at his native place, and published *The Natural History of Selborne* (1789). The book is a series of genuine letters written to correspondents who are interested in the natural history of the place. White reveals much closeness and sympathy of observation, and he can command a sweet and readable style. He shows the "return to nature" in a practical and praiseworthy form. (See p. 355.)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

This, being an age of transition, is an age of unrest, of advance and retreat, of half-lights and dubious victories. But if we bring together the different types of literature, and mark how they have developed during the period, we can see that the trend of the age is quite clear.

1. Poetry. In 1740 we have Pope still alive and powerful, and Johnson an aspiring junior; in 1800, with Burns and Blake, Romanticism has unquestionably arrived. This great change came gradually, but its stages can be observed with some precision.

(*a*) The first symptom of the coming change was

the *decline of the heroic couplet*, the dominance of which passed away with its greatest exponent, Pope. Toward the middle of the century a large number of other poetical forms can be observed creeping back into favor.

(*b*) The change was first seen in the free use of the *Pindaric ode* in the works of Gray and Collins, which appeared in the middle years of the century. The Pindaric ode is a useful medium for the transitional stage, for it has the double advantage of being "classical" and of being free from the more formal rules of couplet and stanza. Gray's *The Bard* (1757) and Collins's ode *The Passions* (1747) are among the best of the type.

(*c*) Another omen was the revival of the *ballad*, which was due to renewed interest in the older kinds of literature. The revived species, as seen in Goldsmith's *The Hermit* and Cowper's *John Gilpin*, has not the grimness and crude narrative force of the genuine ballad, but it is lively and often humorous. Another ballad-writer was **Thomas Percy (1729–1811)**, who, in addition to collecting the *Reliques* (1765), composed ballads of his own, such as *The Friar of Orders Grey*. Chatterton's *Bristowe Tragedy* has much of the fire and somberness of the old ballads.

(*d*) The *descriptive and narrative poems* begin with the old-fashioned *London* (1738) of Johnson; the development is seen in Goldsmith's *Traveller* (1764) and *Deserted Village* (1770), in which the heroic couplet is quickened and transformed by a real sympathy for nature and the poor; the advance is carried still further by the blank-verse poems of Cowper (*The Task*) and Crabbe (*The Village*) and the Spenserian stanzas of minor poets like Shenstone (*The Schoolmistress*).

(*e*) Finally there is the rise of the *lyric*. The Pindarics of Collins and Gray are lyrics in starch and buckram; the works of Chatterton, Smart, Macpherson, Cowper, and, lastly, of Burns and Blake show in order the lyrical spirit struggling with its bonds, shaking itself free, and finally soaring in triumph. Romanticism has arrived.

2. Drama. In this period nothing is more remarkable than the poverty of its dramatic literature. Of this no real explanation can be given. The age was simply not a dramatic one; for the plays that the age produced, with the exceptions of a few notable examples of comedy, are hardly worth noticing.

Tragedy comes off worst of all. The sole tragedy hitherto mentioned in this chapter is Johnson's *Irene* (1749), which only the reputation of its author has preserved from complete oblivion. A tragedy which had a great vogue was *Douglas* (1754), by **John Home (1722–1808)**. It is now almost forgotten. **Joanna Baillie (1762–1851)** produced some historical blank-verse tragedies, such as *Count Basil* (1798) and *De Montfort* (1798). Her plays make fairly interesting reading, and some of their admirers, including Scott, said that she was Shakespeare revived.

Among the comedies we have the sprightly plays of Goldsmith, already noticed, Fielding's *Tom Thumb*, and the work of **Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816)**.

Sheridan was an Irishman, and became a prominent wit and politician. His wit is admirably revealed in his three brilliant prose comedies. *The Rivals* (1775), *The School for Scandal* (1777), and *The Critic* (1779). The three all resemble the best of the

Restoration comedies, without the immorality that taints their models. The plots are ingenious and effective, though they depend largely on a stagy complexity of intrigue; the characters, among whom are the immortal figures of Mrs. Malaprop, Bob Acres, and Sir Fretful Plagiary, are stage types, but they are struck off with daring skill; and the dialogue is often a succession of brilliant repartees. The worst that can be said against the plays is that they are artificial, and that the very cleverness of them becomes fatiguing. With the work of Sheridan the artificial comedy reaches its climax.

3. Prose. The prose product of the period is bulky, varied, and of great importance. The importance of it is clear enough when we recollect that it includes, among many other things, possibly the best novel in the language (*Tom Jones*), the best history (*The Decline and Fall*), and the best biography (*The Life of Doctor Johnson*).

(*a*) *The Rise of the Novel.* There are two main classes of fictional prose narratives, namely, the tale or romance and the novel. The distinction between the two need not be drawn too fine, for there is a large amount of prose narrative that can fall into either group; but, broadly speaking, we may say that the tale or romance depends for its chief interest on incident and adventure, whereas the novel depends more on the display of character and motive. In addition, the story (or *plot*, or *fable*) of the novel tends to be more complicated than that of the tale, and it often leads to what were called by the older writers “revolutions and discoveries”—that is, unexpected developments in the narrative, finishing with an explanation that is called the *dénouement*. The tale, moreover, can be separated from the

romance: the plot of the tale is commonly matter-of-fact, while that of the romance is often wonderful and fantastic.

There is little doubt that the modern novel has its roots in the medieval romances, such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and those dealing with the legends of King Arthur. Another source of the novel were the collections of ballads telling of the adventures of popular heroes of the type of Robin Hood. These romances were written in verse; they were supplied with stock characters, like the wandering knight, the distressed damsel, and the wicked wizard; they had stock incidents, connected with enchanted castles, fiery dragons, and perilous ambushes; and their story rambled on almost interminably. They were necessary to satisfy the human craving for fiction, and they were often fiction of a picturesque and lively kind.

The age of Elizabeth saw the rise of the prose romance. We have examples in the *Euphues* (1579) of Lyly and the *Arcadia* of Sidney. As fiction these tales are weighed down with their fantastic prose styles, and with their common desire to expound a moral lesson. Their characters are rudimentary, and there is little attempt at a plot and love-theme. Yet they represent an advance, for they are fiction.

They are interesting from another viewpoint. They show us that curious diffidence that was to be a drag on the production of the novel even as late as the time of Scott. Authors were shy of being novelists for two main reasons: first, there was thought to be something almost immoral in the writing of fiction, as it was but the glorification of a pack of lies; and, secondly, the liking for fiction was considered to be the craving of diseased or immature intellects, and so

the production of it was unworthy of reasonable men. Thus if a man felt impelled to write fiction he had to conceal the narrative with some moral or allegorical dressing.

A new type of embryo novel began to appear at the end of the sixteenth century, and, becoming very popular during the seventeenth, retained its popularity till the days of Fielding and Smollett.

This class is known as the *picaresque* novel, a name derived from the Spanish word *picaron*, which means a wandering rogue. As the name implies, it is of Spanish origin. For hero it takes a rascal who leads a wandering life, and has many adventures, most of them of a scandalous kind. The hero is the sole link between the different incidents, and there is much digression and the interposing of other short narratives. In Spain the picaresque type originated in parodies of the old romances, and of such parodies the greatest is the *Don Quixote* (1604) of Cervantes. In France the type became common, the most famous example of it being the *Gil Blas* (1735) of Le Sage.

In England the picaresque novel had an early start in *Jack Wilton, or The Unfortunate Traveller*, by Nash, (1567–1601), whose work often suggests that of Defoe. Nash's work is crude, but it has vigor and some wit. A later effort in the same kind is *The English Rogue* (1665), by Richard Head. The book is gross and scandalous to an extreme degree, but it has energy, and, as it takes the hero to many places on the globe, the reader obtains interesting glimpses of life in foreign parts.

Another type that came into favor was the heroic romance. This was based on the similar French romances of Mademoiselle Scudéri (1607–1701) and others. This class of fiction was the elegant variety of

the grosser picaresque novel, and it was much duller. The hero of a heroic romance was usually of high degree, and he underwent a long series of romantic adventures, many of them supernatural. There was much love-making, involving long speeches containing "noble sentiments, elegantly expressed." The length of these romances was enormous; the *Grand Cyrus* of Mademoiselle Scudéri ran to ten large volumes. Popular English specimens were Ford's *Parismus, Prince of Bohemia* (1598) and *Parthenissa* (1654), by Roger Boyle. It is worth noting that the artificial heroic romance collapsed about the end of the seventeenth century, whereas the picaresque class, which in spite of its grave faults was a human and interesting type of fiction, survived and influenced the novel in later centuries.

By the end of the seventeenth century the novel is dimly taking shape. **Aphra Behn (1640–89)** wrote stories that had some claims to plot, character-drawing, and dialogue. Her *Orinooko, or The Royal Slave* shows some power in describing the persecution of a noble negro, a kind of Othello, at the hands of brutal white men. The work of Bunyan (1628–88) was forced to be allegorical, for the Puritans, of whom he was one, abhorred the idea of writing fiction, which they regarded as gilded lies. Yet *The Pilgrim's Progress* abounds in qualities that go to make a first-rate novel: a strong and smoothly working plot, troops of human and diverse characters, impressive descriptive passages, and simple dialogue dramatically sound. His other works, notably *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, are also very close to the novel proper.

In the eighteenth century we see another development in the Coverley papers (1711) of Steele

and Addison. There is little plot in this essay-series, and only a rudimentary love-theme; but the allegorical fabric is gone, there is much entertaining character-sketching, and the spice of delicate humor. We should note also that we have here the beginnings of the society and domestic novel, for the papers deal with ordinary people and incidents.

The genuine novel is very near indeed in the works of Defoe (1659–1731). His novels are of the picaresque type in the case of *Captain Singleton* (1720), *Moll Flanders* (1722), and *Colonel Jack* (1722). They have many of the faults of their kind: the characters are weakly drawn, the plots are shaky and sprawling, and much of the incident is indecorous; yet they have a virile and sustaining interest that is most apparent in the best parts of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

Then, toward the middle of the century, came the swift and abundant blossoming of the novel, raising the type to the rank of one of the major species of literature. The time was ripe for it. The drama, which had helped to satisfy the natural human desire for a story, was moribund, and something had to take its place. Here we can only summarize very shortly the work of the novelists already discussed in this chapter. Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) had the requisites of plot, characters, and dialogue, and these of high merit; but the diffidence of the early fiction-writer possessed him, and he had to conceal the novel-method under the clumsy disguise of a series of letters. Fielding's robust common sense had no such scruples, and his *Tom Jones* (1749) shows us the novel in its maturity. Later novelists could only modify and improve in detail; with Fielding the principles of the novel were established.

The modifications of Fielding's immediate successors can be briefly noticed. Smollett reverted to the picaresque manner, but he added the professional sailor to fiction, and gave it types of Scottish character that Scott was to improve upon; Sterne made the novel sentimental and fantastic, and founded a sentimental school; the Radcliffe novels, popular toward the end of the century, made fiction terrific; while in *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) Goldsmith showed us what the novel can do in respect of a simple yet effective plot, human and lovable personages, dialogue of a dramatic kind, and a tender and graceful humor. Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759), which reverted to the methods of *Euphues*, was pure reaction, but it possesses an interest as a reversion to a long-dead type.

(*b*) *The Rise of the Historical Work.* The development of history came late, but almost necessarily so. The two main requirements of the serious historian are knowledge of his subject and maturity of judgment. Before the year 1750 no great historical work had appeared in any modern language. Raleigh's *History of the World* (1614) is not a real history; it is only the fruit of the mental exertions of an imprisoned man who seeks relaxation. Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion*, which was not published till 1704, is largely the record of his own personal experiences and opinions. He makes little attempt at an impartial and considered judgment or at placing the rebellion in its proper perspective.

The general advance in knowledge and the research into national affairs which were the features of eighteenth-century culture quickly brought the study of history into prominence. France led the way,

and the Scots, traditionally allied to the French, were the first in Britain to feel the influence. Hence we have Hume's *History of England* (1754) and the works of Robertson. These books excelled in ease and sense, but the knowledge displayed in them was not yet sufficient to make them epoch-making. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* (1776) in knowledge, in method, and in literary style is as near perfection as human frailty can attain. Thus within twenty or thirty years the art of writing history in English advanced from a state of tutelage to complete development.

(*c*) *Letter-writing.* The habit of writing letters became very popular during the eighteenth century, and flourished till well into the nineteenth, when the institution of the penny post made letter-writing a convenience and not an art. It was this popularity of the letter that helped Richardson's *Pamela* into public favor.

A favorite form of the letter was a long communication, sometimes written from abroad, discussing some topic of general interest. Such a letter was semi-public in nature, and was meant to be handed round a circle of acquaintances. Frequently a series of letters was bound into book-form. Collections of this kind were the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762), written to Pope and others from Constantinople, and of Thomas Gray, from the Lake District and the Continent. Sometimes the letters contain comments on political and social matters, as in the famous compositions of Lord Chesterfield to his son, which we have already noticed. We give an extract from one of Chesterfield's letters, for it is valuable as an example of witty and polished prose. A letter of the type of Chesterfield's is really an essay which is given a

slightly epistolary form.

LONDON, *May 27, 1753*

... You are now but nineteen, an age at which most of your countrymen are illiberally getting drunk in Port at the University. You have greatly got the start of them in learning; and, if you can equally get the start of them in the knowledge and manners of the world, you may be very sure of outrunning them in Court and Parliament, as you set out so much earlier than they. They generally begin but to see the world at one-and-twenty; you will by that age have seen all Europe. They set out upon their travels unlicked cubs; and in their travels they only lick one another, for they seldom go into any other company. They know nothing but the English world, and the worst part of that too, and generally very little of any but the English language; and they come home, at three or four-and-twenty, refined and polished (as is said in one of Congreve's plays) like Dutch skippers from a whale-fishing. The care which has been taken of you, and (to do you justice) the care you have taken of yourself, has left you, at the age of nineteen only, nothing to acquire but the knowledge of the world, manners, address, and those exterior accomplishments. But they are great and necessary acquisitions, to those who have sense enough to know their true value; and your getting them before you are one-and-twenty, and before you enter upon the active and shining scene of life, will give you such an advantage over all your contemporaries, that they cannot overtake you: they must be distanced. You may probably be placed about a young prince, who will probably be a young king. There all the various arts of pleasing, the engaging address, the versatility of manners, the brilliant, the Graces, will outweigh and yet outrun all solid knowledge and unpolished merit. Oil yourself therefore, and be both supple and shining, for that race, if you

would be first, or early, at the goal.

A type of letter which is frankly a work written for publication is well represented by the famous *Letters of Junius*, which caused a great stir in their day. They are what are called "open letters"—that is, they are for general perusal, while they gain additional point by being addressed to some well-known personage. The public, as it were, has the satisfaction of looking over the shoulder of the man to whom they are addressed. "Junius" is now supposed to have been **Sir Philip Francis (1740–1818)**, though the identity of the writer was long concealed. They began to appear in *The Public Advertiser* in 1769, and by their immensely destructive power they shook the Government to its base. In force and fury they resemble Swift's *Drapier's Letters*, but they tend to become petty and spiteful.

The more intimate and private letters of this period, of which there is a large and interesting collection, are of a deeper significance to us now, for they contain a human interest by revealing the nature of the people who wrote them. In *The Life of Doctor Johnson* Boswell published many of Johnson's letters, the most famous of which is that containing the snub to Chesterfield. It is quoted in the exercises attached to this chapter. Horace Walpole, as we have already noted (p. 323), left a voluminous correspondence which for wit, vivacity, and urbane and shallow common sense is quite remarkable. The private letters of Cowper are attractive for their easy and unaffected grace and their gentle and pervasive humor. We add an extract from a letter by Cowper. The style of it should be compared with that of Chesterfield.

(*To William Hayley.*)

WESTON, *February 24, 1793*

... Oh! you rogue! what would you give to have such a dream about Milton, as I had about a week since? I dreamed that being in a house in the city, and with much company, looking toward the lower end of the room from the upper end of it, I descried a figure which I immediately knew to be Milton's. He was very gravely, but very neatly attired in the fashion of his day, and had a countenance which filled me with those feelings which an affectionate child has for a beloved father, such, for instance, as Tom has for you. My first thought was wonder, where he could have been concealed so many years; my second, a transport of joy to find him still alive; my third, another transport to find myself in his company; and my fourth, a resolution to accost him. I did so, and he received me with a complacence, in which I saw equal sweetness and dignity. I spoke of his *Paradise Lost*, as every man must, who is worthy to speak of it at all, and told him a long story of the manner in which it affected me, when I first discovered it, being at that time a schoolboy. He answered me by a smile and a gentle inclination of his head. He then grasped my hand affectionately, and with a smile that charmed me, said, "Well, you for your part will do well also"; at last recollecting his great age (for I understood him to be two hundred years old), I feared that I might fatigue him by much talking; I took my leave, and he took his, with an air of the most perfect good breeding. His person, his features, his manner, were all so perfectly characteristic, that I am persuaded an apparition of him could not present him more completely. This may be said to have been one of the dreams of Pindus,[169] may it not?... With Mary's kind love, I must now conclude myself, my dear brother, ever yours,

(*d*) *The Periodical Essay.* Compared with the abundance of the earlier portion of the century, the amount produced later seems of little importance. The number of periodicals, however, was as great as ever. Johnson wrote *The Rambler* and *The Idler*, and contributed also to *The Adventurer* and others; Goldsmith assisted *The Bee* during its brief career. *The Connoisseur*, to which Cowper contributed for a space, *The Mirror* and *The Lounger*, published in Edinburgh by Mackenzie, "the Man of Feeling," *The Observer* and *The Looker On* all imitated *The Spectator* with moderate success, but show no important development in manner or matter.

(*e*) *Miscellaneous Prose.* The amount of miscellaneous prose is very great indeed, and a fair proportion of it is of high merit. We have already given space to the political and philosophical writings of Burke, whose work is of the highest class, as represented in *The Sublime and Beautiful* and *Reflections on the French Revolution*. Political writing of a different aim is seen in Godwin's *Political Justice*; and the religious writings of Paley, the critical writings of Percy, and the natural history of Gilbert White are all to be included in this class.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

1. Poetry. In poetical style the transitional features are well marked. The earlier authors reveal many artificial mannerisms—for example, extreme regularity of meter and the frequent employment of the more formal figures of speech, such as personification and apostrophe. The Pindaric odes of Gray and Collins are examples of the transitional style:

Ye distant spires! ye antique towers!
That crown the watery glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her Henry's holy shade;
And ye that from the stately brow
Of Windsor's heights the expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way.
GRAY, *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*

In this verse there are the conventional personifications of Science and the Thames, and such stock phrases as "the watery glade." The whole poem, however, is infused with a new spirit of mingled energy and meditation.

As the century draws to a close we have many of the newer styles appearing: the more regular blank verse of Cowper; the lighter heroic couplet of Goldsmith; the archaic medley of Chatterton; and the intense simplicity of Burns and Blake. As a further example of the new manner we quote a few stanzas from a poem by Fergusson, who, dying in the year 1774 (ten years before the death of Johnson), wrote as naturally as Burns himself:

As simmer rains bring simmer flowers,
And leaves to cleed the birken bowers;
Sae beauty gets by caller showers
Sae rich a bloom,
As for estate, or heavy dowers
Aft stands in room.

What makes auld Reekie's dames so fair
It canna be the halesome air;
But caller burn, beyond compare,
The best o' ony,
That gars them a' sic graces skair[171]
An' blink sae bonny.

On Mayday, in a fairy ring,
We've seen them roun' Saint Anthon's spring,

Frae grass the caller dew-draps wring,
To weet their e'en,
An' water, clear as crystal spring,
To synd[172] them clean.

Caller Water

2. Prose. As in poetry, we have in prose many men and many manners. The simplest prose of the period is found chiefly in the works of the novelists, of whom Fielding and Smollett are good examples. Smollett's prose, as in the following example, is almost colloquial in its native directness.

> After we had been all entered upon the ship's books, I inquired of one of my shipmates where the surgeon was, that I might have my wounds dressed, and had actually got as far as the middle deck (for our ship carried eighty guns) in my way to the cockpit, when I was met by the same midshipman, who had used me so barbarously in the tender: he, seeing me free from my chains, asked, with an insolent air, who had released me? To this question, I foolishly answered with a countenance that too plainly declared the state of my thoughts; "Whoever did it, I am persuaded did not consult you in the affair." I had no sooner uttered these words, than he cried, "Damn you, I'll teach you to talk so to your officer." So saying, he bestowed on me several severe stripes, with a supple jack he had in his hand: and going to the commanding officer, made such a report of me, that I was immediately put in irons by the master-at-arms, and a sentinel placed over me.
>
> *Roderick Random*

The excellent middle style of Addison, the prose-of-all-work, survives, and will continue to survive, for it is indispensable to all manner of miscellaneous work. Goldsmith's prose is one of the best examples of the middle style, and so is the later work of

Johnson, as well as the writings of the authors of miscellaneous prose already mentioned in this chapter. The following passage from Goldsmith shows his graceful turn of sentence and his command of vocabulary. The style is clearness itself.

> The next that presented for a place, was a most whimsical figure indeed. He was hung round with papers of his own composing, not unlike those who sing ballads in the streets, and came dancing up to the door with all the confidence of instant admittance. The volubility of his motion and address prevented my being able to read more of his cargo than the word *Inspector*, which was written in great letters at the top of some of the papers. He opened the coach-door himself without any ceremony, and was just slipping in, when the coachman, with as little ceremony, pulled him back. Our figure seemed perfectly angry at this repulse, and demanded gentleman's satisfaction. "Lord, sir!" replied the coachman, "instead of proper luggage, by your bulk you seem loaded for a West India voyage. You are big enough, with all your papers, to crack twenty stage-coaches. Excuse me, indeed, sir, for you must not enter."
>
> *The Bee*

The more ornate class of prose is represented by the *Rambler* essays of Johnson and the writings of Gibbon and Burke. Of the three Johnsonese is the most cumbrous, being overloaded with long words and complicated sentences, though it has a massive strength of its own. Gibbon bears his mantle with ease and dignity, and Burke has so much natural vitality that his style hardly weighs upon him at all; he does stumble, but rarely, whereas it is sometimes urged as a fault of the prose of Gibbon that it is so uniformly good that the perfection of it becomes deadening.

TABLE TO ILLUSTRATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

DATE	POETRY			DRAMA	
	Lyrical	Narrative-Descriptive	Satirical and Didactic	Comedy	Trag
1750	Collins	Shenstone Thomson[176]	Johnson[173] Johnson[177]		Johnso
1760		Gray[180]			Hume
1770	Chatterton	Goldsmith[183] Chatterton	Churchill[182]	Goldsmith[185]	
1780		Ferguson		Sheridan	

		Crabbe			
	Blake				
		Cowper[187]			
1790	Burns				
		Radcliffe			
1800					Ba

A fresh and highly interesting style is the poetic prose of Macpherson's *Ossian*. Macpherson's style is not ornate, for it is drawn from the simplest elements; it possesses a solemnity of expression, and so decided a rhythm and cadence, that the effect is almost lyrical. In the passage now given the reader should note that the sentences are nearly of uniform length, and that they could easily be written as separate lines of irregular verse:

> Her voice came over the sea. Arindal my son descended from the hill; rough in spoils of the chase. His arrows rattled by his side; his bow was in his hand; five dark grey dogs attend his steps. He saw fierce Erath on the shore; he seized and bound him to an oak. Thick wind the thongs of the hide around his limbs; he loads the wind with his groans. Arindal ascends the deep in his boat, to bring Daura to land. Amar came in his wrath, and let fly the grey-feathered shaft. It sunk, it sunk in thy heart, O Arindal my son; for Erath the traitor thou diedst. The oar is stopped at once; he panted on the rock and expired. What is thy grief, O Daura, when round thy feet is poured thy brother's blood! The boat is broken in twain.

Amar plunges into the sea, to rescue his Daura, or die. Sudden a blast from the hill came over the waves. He sunk, and he rose no more.

EXERCISES

1. The first extract given below is in Johnsonese, the second is written in Johnson's later manner. Compare the two with regard to their vocabulary and sentence-construction, and say which is the more ornate and which is the clearer and more vigorous. Which of the two do you prefer?

(1) In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns, yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amid inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. If the lexicons of ancient tongues, now immutably fixed, and comprised in a few volumes, be yet, after the toil of successive ages, inadequate and delusive; if the aggregated knowledge and co-operating diligence of the Italian academicians did not secure them from the censure of Beni; if the embodied critics of France, when fifty years had been spent upon their work, were obliged to change its economy, and give their second edition another form, I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection.

JOHNSON, *Preface to "Dictionary,"* 1755

(2) It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that if he has brighter paragraphs he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

JOHNSON, *Lives of the Poets*, 1780

2. Compare the following passage with the example of Johnsonese given in the last question. Which is the more abstract, and which is the more ornate? Is there any resemblance between the two in sentence-construction and vocabulary?

There are few great personages in history who have been more exposed to the calumny of enemies, and the adulation of friends, than Queen Elizabeth, and yet there is scarce any whose reputation has been more certainly determined by the unanimous consent of posterity. The unusual length of her administration, and the strong features of her character, were able to overcome all prejudices; and obliging her detractors to abate

much of their invectives, and her admirers somewhat of their panegyrics, have at last, in spite of political factions, and, what is more, of religious animosities, produced an uniform judgment with regard to her conduct. Her vigour, her constancy, her magnanimity, her penetration, vigilance, address, are allowed to merit the highest praises, and appear not to have been surpassed by any person who ever filled a throne: a conduct less rigorous, less imperious, more sincere, more indulgent to her people, would have been requisite to form a perfect character. By the force of her mind, she controlled all her more active and stronger qualities, and prevented them from running into excess. Her heroism was exempt from all temerity, her frugality from avarice, her friendship from partiality, her active temper from turbulency and a vain ambition. She guarded not herself with equal care or equal success from lesser infirmities—the rivalship of beauty, the desire of admiration, the jealousy of love, and the sallies of anger.

HUME, *The History of England*

3. The following poetical extracts, which are arranged in chronological order, are meant to show the transition from the classical to Romantic methods. In each examine the subject, style, and the attitude of the author, and explain how the transition is revealed.

(1) For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crowned,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round:
On shining altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide;
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the fair her airy band:
Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor fanned;
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes displayed,

Trembling and conscious of the rich brocade.
POPE, *The Rape of the Lock*, 1712

(2) In elbow-chair, like that of Scottish stem,
By the sharp tooth of cank'ring eld defaced,
In which, when he receives his diadem,
Our sov'reign prince and liefest liege is placed,
The matron sate; and some with rank she grac'd,
(The source of children's and of courtier's pride!)
Redress'd affronts, for vile affronts there pass'd;
And warn'd them not the fretful to deride,
But love each other dear, whatever them betide.

Right well she knew each temper to decry;
To thwart the proud, and the submiss to raise;
Some with vile copper-prize exalt on high,
And some entice with pittance small of praise;
And other some with baleful sprig she frays;
Ev'n absent, she the reins of power doth hold,
While with quaint arts the giddy crowd she sways;
Forewarn'd, if little bird their pranks behold,
'Twill whisper in her ear, and all the scene unfold.
SHENSTONE, *The Schoolmistress*, 1742

(3) But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delighted measure?
Still it whisper'd promis'd pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail;
Still would her touch the strain prolong;
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She call'd on Echo still, through all the song:
And, where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,
And Hope enchanted smil'd, and wav'd her golden hair.
COLLINS, *The Passions*, 1747

(4) There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimmed
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.
A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
Her fancy followed him through foaming waves
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; fancy, too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.

She heard the doleful tidings of his death,
And never smiled again.

COWPER, *The Task*, 1785

(5) How sweet I roamed from field to field,
And tasted all the summer's pride;
Till I the Prince of Love beheld,
Who in the sunny beams did glide.

He showed me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow:
He led me through his gardens fair,
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May-dews my wings were wet,
And Phœbus fired my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silken net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then laughing, sports and plays with me;
Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty.

BLAKE, *Songs of Innocence*, 1789

4. (*a*) Classify the styles of the following extracts into plain, ornate, or middle, and give reasons for your classification in each case. (*b*) How far does the style of each suit the subject? (*c*) Give a short account of each of the authors represented. (*d*) How far does the style in each case reveal the character of the author?

(1) Sir, your throne cannot stand secure upon the principles of unconditional submission and passive obedience; on powers exercised without the concurrence of the people to be governed; on Acts made in defiance of their prejudices and habits; on acquiescence procured by foreign mercenary troops, and secured by standing armies. These may possibly be the foundation of other thrones; they must be the subversion of yours. It was not to passive principles in our ancestors, that we owe the honour of appearing

before a sovereign, who cannot feel that he is a prince without knowing that we ought to be free. The Revolution was a departure from the ancient course of the descent of this monarchy. The people, at that time, re-entered into their original rights; and it was not because a positive law authorised what was then done, but because the freedom and safety of the subject, the origin and cause of all laws, required a proceeding paramount and superior to them. At that ever-memorable and instructive period, the letter of the law was superseded in favour of the substance of liberty. To the free choice, therefore, of the people, without either king or parliament, we owe that happy establishment, out of which both King and Parliament were regenerated. From that great principle of liberty have originated the statutes, confirming and ratifying the establishment from which your majesty derives your right to rule over us. Those statutes have not given us our liberties; our liberties have produced them. Every hour of your majesty's reign your title stands upon the very same foundation, on which it was at first laid; and we do not know a better, on which it can possibly be placed.

BURKE, *Address to the King*

(2) (*Evelina, a demure young miss, is describing her experiences in a letter to her friend Miss Mirvan.*)

I burst into tears: with difficulty I had so long restrained them; for my heart, while it glowed with tenderness and gratitude, was oppressed with a sense of its own unworthiness. "You are all, all goodness!" cried I, in a voice scarce audible; "little as I deserve,—unable as I am to repay, such kindness,—yet my whole soul feels,—thanks you for it!"

"My dearest child," cried he, "I cannot bear to see thy tears;—for my sake dry them; such a sight

is too much for me; think of that, Evelina, and take comfort, I charge thee!"

"Say then," cried I, kneeling at his feet, "say then that you forgive me! that you pardon my reserve,—that you will again suffer me to tell you my most secret thoughts, and rely upon my promise never more to forfeit your confidence!—my father!—my protector!—my ever-honoured,—ever-loved—my best and only friend!—say you forgive your Evelina, and she will study better to deserve your goodness!"

He raised, he embraced me: he called me his sole joy, his only earthly hope, and the child of his bosom! He folded me to his heart: and while I wept from the fulness of mine, with words of sweetest kindness and consolation, he soothed and tranquillised me.

Dear to my remembrance will ever be that moment when, banishing the reserve I had so foolishly planned, and so painfully supported, I was restored to the confidence of the best of men!

BURNEY, *Evelina*

(3) (*The courtship of Tom Jones and Sophia Western is interrupted by the entrance of Sophia's father, a bluff old squire.*)

At this instant, Western, who had stood some time listening, burst into the room, and with his hunting voice and phrase, cried out, "To her, boy, to her, go to her.—— That's it, little honeys, O that's it! Well! what, is it all over? Hath she appointed the day, boy? What, shall it be to-morrow or next day? It shan't be put off a minute longer than next day, I am resolved." "Let me beseech you, sir," says Jones, "don't let me be the occasion"—— "Beseech—," cries Western. "I thought thou hadst been a lad of higher mettle than to give way to a parcel of maidenish tricks. —— I tell thee 'tis all flimflam. Zoodikers! she'd

have the wedding to-night with all her heart. Would'st not, Sophy? Come, confess, and be an honest girl for once. What, art dumb? Why dost not speak?" "Why should I confess, sir?" says Sophia, "since it seems you are so well acquainted with my thoughts?"—— "That's a good girl," cries he, "and dost consent then?" "No, indeed, sir," says Sophia, "I have given no such consent."—"And wunt not ha un then to-morrow, nor next day?" says Western.—— "Indeed, sir," says she, "I have no such intention." "But I can tell thee," replied he, "why hast nut; only because thou dost love to be disobedient, and to plague and vex thy father."—"Pray, sir," said Jones, interfering—— "I tell thee thou art a puppy," cries he. "When I forbid her, then it was all nothing but sighing and whining, and languishing and writing; now I am vor thee, she is against thee. All the spirit of contrary, that's all. She is above being guided and governed by her father, that is the whole truth on't. It is only to disoblige and contradict me." "What would my papa have me do?" cries Sophia. "What would I ha thee do?" says he, "why gi' un thy hand this moment."—— "Well, sir," says Sophia. "I will obey you.—There is my hand, Mr Jones."

FIELDING, *Tom Jones*

(4) Thus kites and buzzards sail round in circles with wings expanded and motionless; and it is from their gliding manner that the former are still called in the north of England gleads, from the Saxon verb *glidan* to glide. The kestrel, or windhover, has a peculiar mode of hanging in the air in one place, his wings all the while being briskly agitated. Hen-harriers fly low over heaths or fields of corn and beat the ground regularly like a pointer or setting-dog. Owls move in a buoyant manner, as if lighter than the air; they seem to want ballast. There is a peculiarity

belonging to ravens that must draw the attention even of the most incurious—they spend all their leisure time in striking and cuffing each other on the wing in a kind of playful skirmish; and, when they move from one place to another, frequently turn on their backs with a loud croak and seem to be falling to the ground. When this odd gesture betides them, they are scratching themselves with one foot, and thus lose the centre of gravity. Rooks sometimes dive and tumble in a frolicsome manner; crows and daws swagger in their walk; wood-peckers fly *volatu undoso*, opening and closing their wings at every stroke, and so are always rising or falling in curves.

WHITE, *The Natural History of Selborne*

5. The following are three examples of the heroic couplet, arranged in chronological order. Examine the meter, vocabulary, and subject of each, and state if any development is noticeable.

(1) Enlarge my life with multitude of days!
In health, in sickness, thus the suppliant prays;
Hides from himself his state, and shuns to know,
That life protracted is protracted woe.
Time hovers o'er, impatient to destroy,
And shuts up all the passages of joy:
In vain their gifts the bounteous seasons pour,
The fruit autumnal and the vernal flow'r;
With listless eyes the dotard views the store:
He views, and wonders that they please no more.
Now pall the tasteless meats and joyless wines,
And Luxury with sighs her slave resigns.
JOHNSON, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, 1749

(2) Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild:
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a-year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place;

Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
GOLDSMITH, *The Deserted Village*, 1770

(3) When Plenty smiles—alas! she smiles for few—
And those who taste not, yet behold her store,
Are as the slaves that dig the golden ore—
The wealth around them makes them doubly poor.
Or will you deem them amply paid in health,
Labour's fair child, that languishes with wealth?
Go, then! and see them rising with the sun,
Through a long course of daily toil to run;
See them beneath the Dog-star's raging heat,
When the knees tremble and the temples beat;
Behold them, leaning on their scythes, look o'er
The labour past, and toils to come explore;
See them alternate suns and showers engage,
And hoard up aches and anguish for their age;
Then own that labour may as fatal be
To these thy slaves, as thine excess to thee.
CRABBE, *The Village*, 1783

6. We give first Johnson's famous letter in which he refuses to accept the tardy patronage of Lord Chesterfield. Show how the style is appropriate to the subject, and how the letter reveals the life and character of Johnson. Compare the style and temper of this letter with those of the one that follows. In this extract Horace Walpole describes the burial of George II. From this brief extract, what can you tell of the character of Walpole?

(1)

February 7, 1755

MY LORD,

I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of *The World*, that two papers, in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour which, being very little accustomed

to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, with some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*,—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my Lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before. The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks. Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?

The notice you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations when no benefit has been received; or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has

enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble, most
obedient Servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

(2)

ARLINGTON STREET, *November 13, 1760*

... Do you know, I had the curiosity to go to the burying t'other night; I had never seen a royal funeral; nay, I walked as a rag of quality, which I found would be, and so it was, the easiest way of seeing it. It is absolutely a noble sight. The Prince's Chamber, hung with purple, and a quantity of silver lamps, the coffin under a canopy of purple velvet, and six vast chandeliers of silver on high stands, had a very good effect. The Ambassador from Tripoli and his son were carried to see that chamber. The procession through a line of foot-guards, every seventh man bearing a torch, the horse-guards lining the outside, their officers with drawn sabres and crape sashes on horseback, the drums muffled, the fifes, bells tolling, and minute guns, all this was very solemn. But the charm was the entrance of the Abbey, where we were received by the Dean and Chapter in rich copes, the choir and almsmen all bearing torches; the whole Abbey so illuminated, that one saw it to greater advantage than by day; the tombs, long aisles, and fretted roof, all appearing distinctly, and with the happiest chiaroscuro. There wanted nothing but incense, and little

chapels here and there, with priests saying mass for the repose of the defunct—yet one could not complain of its not being catholic enough. I had been in dread of being coupled with some boy of ten years old—but the heralds were not very accurate, and I walked with George Grenville, taller and older enough to keep me in countenance.

WALPOLE

7. From a scrutiny of the subject and style of the following extracts assign the authorship of each. State clearly the reasons that lead you to select the particular author. Write a brief appreciation of the style of each extract.

(1) Mr Davies mentioned my name; and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from."—"From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr Johnson," said I, "I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as a humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next.

(2) I have presumed to mark the moment of conception: I shall now commemorate the hour of

my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that, whatsoever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious.

(3) An' now, auld Cloots,[188] I ken ye're thinkin,
A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin,[189]
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
An' cheat you yet.

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins[190] might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
E'en for your sake!

(4) "I fought just as well," continued the Corporal, "when the regiment called me Trim, as when they called me James Butler." ... "And for my own part," said my uncle Toby, "though I should blush to boast of myself, Trim;—yet, had my name been Alexander, I could have done no more at Namur than my duty." ... "Bless your Honour!" cried Trim, advancing three steps as he

spoke, “does a man think of his Christian name when he goes upon the attack?” ... “Or when he stands in the trench, Trim?” cried my uncle Toby, looking firm.... “Or when he enters a breach?” said Trim, pushing in between two chairs.... “Or forces the lines?” cried my uncle, rising up, and pushing his crutch like a pike.... “Or facing a platoon?” cried Trim presenting his stick like a firelock.... “Or when he marches up the glacis?” cried my uncle Toby, looking warm and setting his foot upon his stool.

8. How far are the statements in the following passage correct? Give examples of what Macaulay refers to, and say if his remarks are exaggerated in any form.

Johnson came up to London precisely at the time when the condition of a man of letters was most miserable and degraded. It was a dark night between two sunny days.... A writer had little to hope from the patronage of powerful individuals. The patronage of the public did not yet furnish the means of comfortable subsistence.... If he had lived thirty years earlier he would have sat in parliament, and would have been entrusted with embassies to the High Allies.

MACAULAY

9. State how far the principles set out in the passage below are followed in the novel of the eighteenth century.

A novel is a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of an uniform plan. This plan cannot be executed with propriety, probability, or success, without a principal personage to attract the attention, unite the incidents, unwind the clue of the labyrinth, and at

last close the scene, by virtue of his own importance.

SMOLLETT, *Ferdinand, Count Fathom*

10. "The eighteenth century established a prose style." (Craik.) Discuss this statement on some such lines as the following: (*a*) Was there no "established" style in prose before the eighteenth century? (*b*) Who "established" it then? (*c*) What are the peculiarities of the new prose style? (*d*) What are the purposes for which it was used? (*e*) Has it been perpetuated? (*f*) Who has used it?

11. Matthew Arnold calls Burns "a beast with splendid gleams." Why a "beast"? And what does he mean by the "gleams"? Is the criticism fair to Burns?

12. Account for the great development of the novel during the eighteenth century.

13. Who are most obviously the "transitional" poets of the century? In what sense are they transitional?

14. Give a historical account of the rise of the lyric during the eighteenth century.

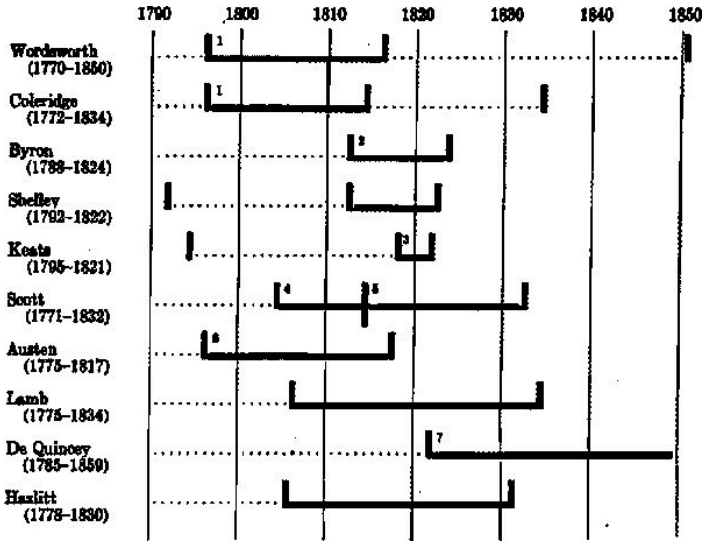
15. Estimate the influence of French learning and literature upon English literature during the eighteenth century.

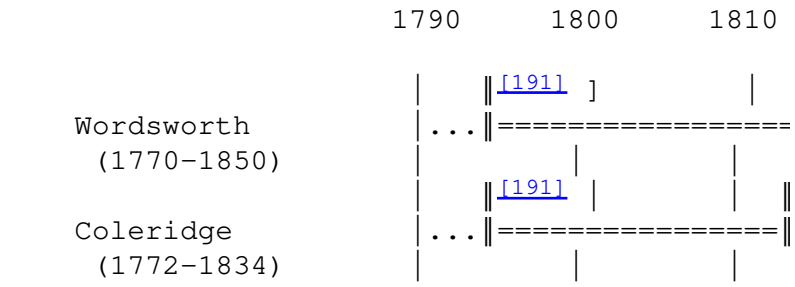
CHAPTER X

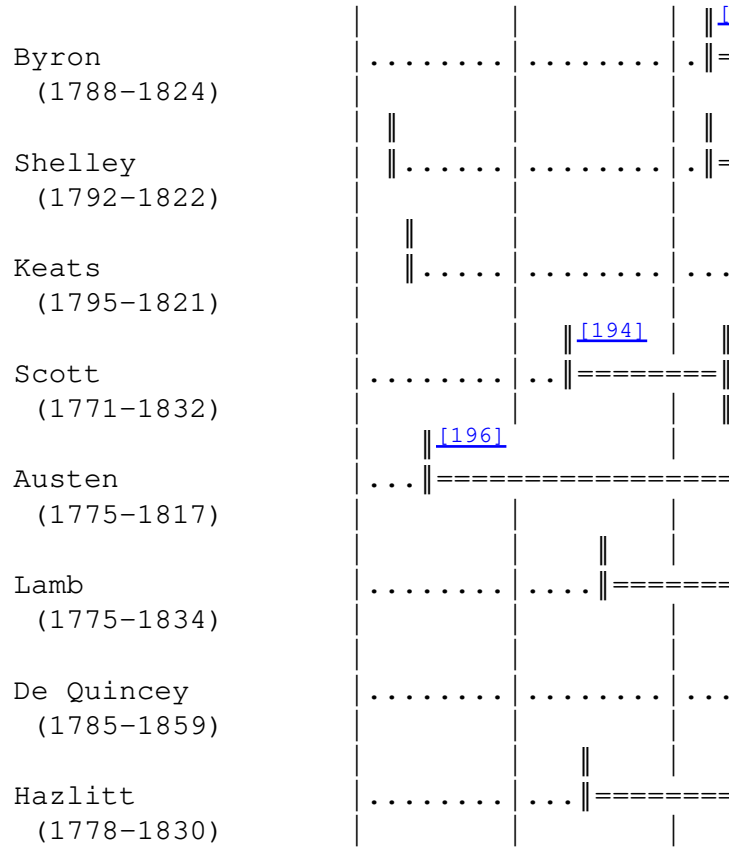
THE RETURN TO NATURE

TIME-CHART OF THE CHIEF AUTHORS

The thick line shows the period of important literary work.







THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1790–1830)

To an overwhelming extent the history of the time is the record of the effects of the French Revolution.

1. The European War. The close of the eighteenth century saw England and France engaged in open warfare (1793). Many causes contributed to set the war in motion, and many more kept it intractably in operation. Hostilities dragged on till 1815, in the end bringing about the extinction of the French Republic, the birth of which was greeted so joyfully by the English Liberals, the rise and

destruction of the power of Napoleon, and the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty. These events had their effects in every corner of Europe, and in none more strongly than in England.

2. The Reaction. It has been well said: "At the beginning of every revolution men hope, for they think of all that mankind may gain in a new world; in its next phase they fear, for they think of what mankind may lose." This was the case with the French Revolution. The elder writers of the period, with Wordsworth and Coleridge as conspicuous examples, hailed the new era with joy. Then, as the Revolution proceeded to unexpected developments, there came in turn disappointment, disillusion, dejection, and despair, and, notably in the case of Wordsworth, the rejection of youthful ideas and the soured adoption of the older reactionary faith. The younger writers, such as Leigh Hunt, Shelley, and Keats, still adhered to the Revolutionary doctrines, but the warmth of the early days had already passed away.

3. Social Conditions. The conclusion of the long war brought inevitable misery; low wages, unemployment, and heavy taxation gave rise to fiery resentment and fierce demands on the part of the people. Men like Shelley and Ebenezer Elliott called aloud for social justice; in gentler mood Mrs. Hemans and Tom Hood bewailed the social misery. We have the massacre of Peterloo and the wild rioting over the Reform Bill and the Corn Laws.

The Reform Bill (1832) was a grudging concession to the general discontent. To conservative minds, like those of Scott and the maturer Wordsworth, the Bill seemed to pronounce the dissolution of every social tie. But the Bill brought only disappointment to its

friends. In the next chapter we shall see how the demand for social amelioration deepened and broadened, and colored the literature of the time.

The interest in social conditions became intensified toward the end of the nineteenth century, until it has grown to be one of the chief features of modern literature.

THE RETURN TO NATURE

In the last chapter we noted the beginnings and development of the new feeling for nature. This chapter sees the full effects of the movement, and the subsequent reaction that followed.

1. Abundant Output. Even the lavishness of the Elizabethans cannot excel that of this age. The development of new ideas brings fresh inspiration for poetry, and the poetical sky is bright with luminaries of the first magnitude. In prose we may note especially the fruitful yield of the novel, the rejuvenation of the essay, and the unprecedented activity of critical and miscellaneous writers. This is the most fertile period of our literature.

2. Great Range of Subject. The new and buoyant race of writers, especially the poets, lays the knowledge and experience of all ages under a heavy toll. The classical writers are explored anew, and are drawn upon by the genius of Keats and Shelley; the Middle Ages inspire the novels of Scott and the poems of Coleridge, Southey, and many more; modern times are analyzed and dissected in the work of the novelists, the satires of Byron, and the productions of the miscellaneous writers. This is indeed the return to nature, for all nature is scrutinized and summed up afresh.

3. Treatment of Nature. If for the moment we take the restricted meaning of the word, and understand by "nature" the common phenomena of earth, air, and sea, we find the poetical attitude to nature altering profoundly. In the work of Cowper, Crabbe, and Gray the treatment is principally the simple chronicle and sympathetic observation of natural features. In the new race of poets the observation becomes more matured and intimate. Notably in the case of Wordsworth, the feeling for nature rises to a passionate veneration that is love and religion too. To Wordsworth nature is not only a procession of seasons and seasonal fruition: it is the eye of all things, natural and supernatural, into which the observant soul can peer and behold the spirit that inhabits all things. Nature is thus amplified and glorified; it is to be sought, not only in the flowers and the fields, but also in

> the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

4. Political and Periodical Writing. The age did not produce a pamphleteer of the first class like Swift or Burke, but the turbulence of the period was clearly marked in the immense productivity of its political writers. The number of periodicals was greatly augmented, and we notice the first of the great daily journals that are still a strong element in literature and politics. *The Morning Chronicle* (1769) and *The Morning Post* (1772) were started by Henry Bate, *The Times* (1785) by John Walter. Of a more irresponsible type were the Radical *Political Register* (1802) of Cobbett and *The Examiner* (1808) of Leigh Hunt. A race of powerful literary magazines sprang to life: *The Edinburgh Review* (1802), *The Quarterly*

Review (1809), *The London Magazine* (1817), *Blackwood's Magazine* (1817), and *The Westminster Review* (1827). Such excellent publications reacted strongly upon authorship, and were responsible for much of the best work of Hazlitt, Lamb, Southey, and a host of other miscellaneous writers.

5. The Influence of Germany. The increasing bitterness of the long war with France almost extinguished the literary influence of the French language, which, as was indicated in the last chapter, had been affecting English literature deeply. In the place of French, the study of German literature and learning came rapidly into favor. The first poetical work of Scott is based on the German, and the effects of the new influence can be further observed in the works of Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and many more. In the course of time German increased its hold upon English, until by the middle of the nineteenth century it was perhaps the dominating foreign tongue.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

1. His Life. Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, a town which is actually outside the Lake District, but well within hail of it. His father, who was a lawyer, died when William was thirteen years old. The elder Wordsworth left a modest sum of money, which was not available at the time of his death, so that William had to depend on the generosity of two uncles, who paid for his schooling at Hawkshead, near Lake Windermere. Subsequently Wordsworth went to Cambridge, entering St. John's College in 1787. His work at the university was quite undistinguished, and having graduated in 1791 he left with no fixed career in view. After spending a few months in London he crossed over to France

(1791), and stayed at Orléans and Blois for nearly a year. An enthusiasm for the Revolution was aroused in him; he himself has chronicled the mood in one of his happiest passages:

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven.

He returned to Paris in 1792 just after the September massacres, and the sights and stories that greeted him there shook his faith in the dominant political doctrine. Even yet, however, he thought of becoming a Girondin, or moderate Republican, but his allowance from home was stopped, and he returned to England. With his sister Dorothy (henceforward his lifelong companion) he settled in a little cottage in Dorset; then, having met Coleridge, they moved to Alfoxden, a house in Somersetshire, in order to live near him. It was there that the two poets took the series of walks the fruit of which was to be the *Lyrical Ballads*.

After a visit to Germany in 1798 the Wordsworths settled in the Lake District, which was to be their home for the future. In turn they occupied Dove Cottage, at Town-End, Grasmere (1802), Allan Bank (1808), Grasmere Parsonage (1811), and lastly the well-known residence of Rydal Mount, which was Wordsworth's home from 1813 till his death. Shortly after he had moved to Rydal Mount he received the sinecure of Distributor of Stamps for Westmorland, and was put out of reach of poverty.

The remainder of his life was a model of domesticity. He was carefully tended by his wife and sister, who, with a zeal that was noteworthy, though it was injudicious, treasured every scrap of his poetry that they could lay their hands on. His great passion

was for traveling. He explored most of the accessible parts of the Continent, and visited Scotland several times. On the last occasion (1831) he and his daughter renewed their acquaintance with Scott at Abbotsford, and saw the great novelist when he was fast crumbling into mental ruin. Wordsworth's poetry, which at first had been received with derision or indifference, was now winning its way, and recognition was general. In 1839 Oxford conferred upon him the degree of D.C.L.; in 1842 the Crown awarded him a pension of £300 a year; and on the death of Southey in 1843 he became Poet Laureate.

Long before this time he had discarded his early ideals and become the upholder of conservatism. Perhaps he is not "the lost leader" whose recantation Browning bewails with rather theatrical woe; but he lived to deplore the Reform Bill and to oppose the causes to which his early genius had been dedicated. Throughout his life, however, he never wavered in his faith in himself and his immortality as a poet. He lived to see his own belief in his powers triumphantly justified. It is seldom indeed that such gigantic egoism is so amply and so justly repaid.

2. His Poetry. He records that his earliest verses were written at school, and that they were "a tame imitation of Pope's versification." This is an interesting admission of the still surviving domination of the earlier poet. At the university he composed some poetry, which appeared as *The Evening Walk* (1793) and *Descriptive Sketches* (1793). In style these poems have little originality, but they already show the Wordsworthian eye for nature. The firstfruits of his genius were seen in the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), a joint production by Coleridge and

himself, which was published at Bristol.

Regarding the inception of this remarkable book both Wordsworth and Coleridge have left accounts, which vary to some extent, though not materially. Coleridge's may be taken as the more plausible. He says in his *Biographia Literaria*:

> It was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of the imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith. Mr Wordsworth was to give the charm of novelty to things of everyday life by awakening the mind's attention to the loveliness and wonders of the world before us.

This volume is epoch-making, for it is the prelude to the Romantic movement proper. Wordsworth had the larger share in the book. Some of his poems in it, such as *The Thorn* and *The Idiot Boy*, are condemned as being trivial and childish in style; a few, such as *Simon Lee* and *Expostulation and Reply*, are more adequate in their expression; and the concluding piece, *Tintern Abbey*, is one of the triumphs of his genius.

During his visit to Germany in 1798–99 Wordsworth composed such typical poems as *Lucy Gray*, *Ruth*, and *Nutting*, which along with a large number of the same kind were issued in two volumes in 1807. This work, which comprises the flower of his poetry, was sharply assailed by the critics; but on the whole it amended the puerilities of the earlier volume, and set in motion the steady undercurrent of appreciation that was finally to overwhelm his detractors. While he was in Germany he planned *The*

Prelude, which was not concluded till 1805, and remained unpublished during his lifetime. *The Prelude*, which dealt with his education and early ideals, was meant to be the introduction to an enormous blank-verse poem, chiefly on himself. The entire work was to be called *The Recluse*, and *The Excursion* (1814) was the second and only other completed part of it. It is on the whole fortunate that the entire poem was never finished. *The Excursion* is in itself a huge poem of nine books, and long stretches of it are dull and prosaic. It is inferior to *The Prelude*, which, though it is unequal in style, has some of the very best Wordsworthian blank verse; and it is only reasonable to imagine that further instalments of *The Recluse* would mark an increasing decline in poetic merit.

After the publication of *The Excursion* Wordsworth's poetical power was clearly on the wane, but his productivity was unimpaired. His later volumes include *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815), *The Waggoner* (1819), *Peter Bell* (1819), *Yarrow Revisited* (1835), and *The Borderers* (1842), a drama. The progress of the works marks the decline in an increasing degree. There are flashes of the old spirit, such as we see in his lines upon the death of "the Ettrick Shepherd"; but the fire and stately intonation become rarer, and mere garrulity becomes more and more apparent.

3. His Theory of Poetry. In the preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth set out his theory of poetry, and to this theory he continued to do lip-service, while in practice he constantly violated it. The Wordsworthian dogma can be divided into two portions, concerning (*a*) the subject and (*b*) the style of poetry.

(*a*) Regarding subject, Wordsworth declares his preference for "incidents and situations from common life"; to obtain such situations "humble and rustic life is generally chosen, because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil." In this respect Wordsworth was staunch to his declared opinions, because the majority of his poems deal with humble and rustic. life, including his own.

(*b*) With regard to style, Wordsworth declares that the language of poetry ought to be "the language really used by men," especially by rustics, because the latter "speak a plainer and more emphatic language." A little reflection will show that this contention is at best only half true, and Wordsworth laid himself open to deadly criticism. It was this part of his theory, moreover, that he himself constantly violated. Coleridge, who was Wordsworth's great friend, but who held his critical faith higher than personal predilection, had but to quote Wordsworth's own poems to condemn him. No doubt Wordsworth in such pieces as *Lucy Gray* and *We are Seven* does use the language of ordinary men; but in his greatest poems he prefers a language of a certain stiff ornateness, fired and fused by the passion of his imaginative insight. As Coleridge pointed out, it is not likely that a rustic would say

> The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion.

Yet this expression is typical of Wordsworth's style at its best.

4. Features of his Poetry. (*a*) *Its Inequality and its Limitations.* All the critics of Wordsworth are at pains to point out the mass of inferior work that came from

his pen. Matthew Arnold, one of the acutest of the poet's admirers, closes the record of Wordsworth's best work with the year 1808, even before the composition of *The Excursion*. This poem is long, meditative, and often prosaic, and these tendencies become more marked as the years pass. Before the year 1808 he had produced poems as intensely and artistically beautiful as any in the language. It was hard, however, for Wordsworth to appreciate his limitations, which were many and serious. He had little sense of humor, a scanty dramatic power, and only a meager narrative gift, but he strove to exploit all these qualities in his work. His one drama, *The Borderers*, was only a partial success, and his narrative poems, like *Ruth* and *The White Doe of Rylstone*, are not among the best of his work.

(*b*) *Its Egoism.* In a person of lesser caliber such a degree of self-esteem as Wordsworth's would have been ridiculous; in his case, with the undoubted genius that was in the man, it was something almost heroic. Domestic circumstances—the adoration of a couple of women and the cloistral seclusion of the life he led—confirmed him in the habit of taking himself too seriously. The best of his shorter poems deal with his own experiences; and his longest works, *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*, describe his career, both inward and outward, with a fullness, closeness, and laborious anxiety that are unique in our literature.

(*c*) In spite of this self-obsession he is curiously deficient in the purely *lyrical* gift. He cannot bare his bosom, as Burns does; he cannot leap into the ether like Shelley. Yet he excels, especially in the face of nature, in the expression of a reflective and analytic mood which is both personal and general. The

following lyric illustrates this mood to perfection:

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

Sometimes he does touch on intimate emotions, but then he tends to be diffident and decorous, hinting at rather than proclaiming the passions that he feels. The series of *Lucy* poems are typical of their kind:

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

*****

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

Such a lyrical gift, reflective rather than passionate, finds a congenial mode of expression in the sonnet, the most complicated and expository of the lyrical forms. In his sonnets his lyrical mood burns clear and strong, and as a result they rank among the best in English poetry.

(*d*) *His Treatment of Nature.* His dealings with nature are his chief glory as a poet.

(1) His treatment is accurate and first-hand. As he explained, he wrote with his eye "steadily fixed on the object." Even the slightest of his poems have

evidence of close observation:

> The cattle are grazing,
> Their heads never raising;
> There are forty feeding like one.

The most polished of his poems have the same stamp, as can be seen in *Resolution and Independence*. "The image of the hare," he says with reference to this poem, quoted below, "I then observed on the ridge of the Fell."

> There was a roaring in the wind all night;
> The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
> But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
> The birds are singing in the distant woods;
> Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
> The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
> And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.
>
> All things that love the sun are out of doors;
> The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
> The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors
> The hare is running races in her mirth;
> And with her feet she from the plashy earth
> Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
> Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

(2) This personal dealing with Nature in all her moods produces a joy, a plenteousness of delight, that to most readers is Wordsworth's most appealing charm. Before the beauty of nature he is never paltry; he is nearly always adequate; and that is perhaps the highest achievement that he ever desired. The extracts just quoted are outstanding examples of this aspect of his poetry.

(3) In his treatment of nature, however, he is not content merely to rejoice: he tries to see more deeply and to find the secret springs of this joy and thanksgiving. He says:

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

He strives to capture and embody in words such deep-seated emotions, but, almost of necessity, from the very nature of the case, with little success. He gropes in the shadows, and comes away with empty hands. He cannot solve the riddle of

those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings.

Yet, with a remarkable fusion of sustained thought and of poetic imagination, he does convey the idea of "the Being that is in the clouds and air," the soul that penetrates all things, the spirit, the mystical essence, the divine knowledge that, as far as he was concerned, lies behind all nature. Lastly, in one of the most exalted poetical efforts in any language, he puts into words the idea of the continuity of life that runs through all existence:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.
Ode: Intimations of Immortality

(*e*) In *style* Wordsworth presents a remarkable contrast, for he ranges from the sublime (as in the extract last quoted) to the ridiculous:

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old Man dwells, a little man,—
'Tis said he once was tall.
Full five-and-thirty years he lived

A running huntsman merry;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

Simon Lee

This verse illustrates the lower ranges of his style, when he is hag-ridden with his theories of poetic diction. The first two lines are mediocre; the second pair are absurd; and the rest of the verse is middling. This is simplicity overdone; yet it is always to be remembered that at his best Wordsworth can unite simplicity with sublimity, as he does in the lyrics we have already quoted. He has a kind of middle style; at its best it has grace and dignity, a heart-searching simplicity, and a certain magical enlightenment of phrase that is all his own. Not Shakespeare himself can better Wordsworth when the latter is in a mood that produces a poem like the following:

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm,
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face."

The Education of Nature

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772–1834)

1. His Life. Coleridge was born in Devonshire,

and was the youngest of the thirteen children of the vicar of Ottery St. Mary. As a child he was unusually precocious: “I never thought as a child,” he says, “never had the language of a child.” When he was nine years old his father died, and then at the age of ten he obtained a place in Christ’s Hospital, where he astonished his schoolmates, one of whom was Charles Lamb, with his queer tastes in reading and speculation. He went to Cambridge (1791), where he was fired with the revolutionary doctrines. He abandoned the university and enlisted in the Light Dragoons, but a few months as a soldier ended his military career. In 1794 he returned to Cambridge, and later in the year became acquainted at Oxford with Southey, with whom he planned the founding of an ideal republic in America. With Southey he lived for a space at Bristol, and there he met Southey’s wife’s sister, whom he eventually married. At Bristol Coleridge lectured, wrote poetry, and issued a newspaper called *The Watchman*, all with the idea of converting humanity; yet in spite of it all humanity remained unperturbed in its original sin. At this time (1797) he met Wordsworth, and, as has already been noticed, planned their joint production of the *Lyrical Ballads*, which was published at Bristol.

After a brief spell as a Unitarian minister, Coleridge, who was now dependent on a small annuity from two rich friends, studied German philosophy on the Continent; returned to England (1799), and for a time lived in the Lake District; tried journalism and lecturing; and in general pursued a restless and unhappy existence. As a writer and lecturer he was already failing, and failing fast. His work languished, and his ability and energy were relaxed. The cause of this early decline lay in his habit of opium-taking, which was now apparently

past mending. He parted from his wife and children, leaving them to the charity of his friends. Till 1816 he drifted about in London, a moral and physical wreck, his rare genius revealing itself only in fitful gleams. In 1816, after repeated efforts to rid himself of the foul fiend that would not let him be, he entered the house of a Mr. Gillman, in Highgate. This provided for him a kind of refined and sympathetic inebriates' home. Here he gradually shook himself free from opium-taking, and he spent the last years of his life in an atmosphere of subdued content, visited by his friends, and conversing interminably in that manner of wandering but luminous intelligence that marked his later years. From the house in Highgate he issued a few books that, with all their faults, are among the best of their class.

2. His Poetry. The real blossoming of Coleridge's poetical genius was brief indeed, but the fruit of it was rich and wonderful. With the exception of a very few pieces, the best of his poems were composed within two years, 1797–98.

His first book was *Poems on Various Subjects* (1797), issued at Bristol. The miscellaneous poems that the volume contains have only a very moderate merit. Then, in collaboration with Wordsworth, he produced the *Lyrical Ballads*. This remarkable volume contains nineteen poems by Wordsworth and four by Coleridge; and of these four by far the most noteworthy is *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Wordsworth has set on record the origin of the *Ancient Mariner*. He and Coleridge discussed the poem during their walks on the Quantock Hills. The main idea of the voyage, founded on a dream of his own, was Coleridge's; Wordsworth suggested details, and they thought of working on it together. Very

soon, however, Coleridge's imagination was fired with the story, and his friend very sensibly left him to write it all. Hence we have that marvelous series of dissolving pictures, so curiously distinct and yet so strangely fused into one: the voyage through the polar ice; the death of the albatross; the amazing scenes during the calm and the storm; and the return home. In style, in swift stealthiness of narrative speed, and in its weird and compelling strength of imagination the poem is without a parallel.

In 1797 Coleridge also wrote *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*. Both of these poems remained unfinished, and lay unpublished till 1816. *Christabel* is the tale of a kind of vampire which, by taking the shape of a lovely lady, wins the confidence of the heroine Christabel. The tale is barely begun when it collapses. Already Coleridge's fatal indecision is declaring itself. The poem is long enough, however, to show us Coleridge's superlative power as a poet. There are passages of wonderful beauty and of charming natural description, though they scarcely reach the heights of the *Ancient Mariner*. The meter, now known as the *Christabel* meter, is a loose but exceedingly melodious form of the octosyllabic couplet. It became exceedingly popular, and its influence is still unimpaired. We give a brief extract to show the meter, and also to give a slight idea of the poet's descriptive power:

> There is not wind enough to twirl
> The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can,
> Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
> On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Kubla Khan is the echo of a dream—the shadow of a shadow. Coleridge avers that he dreamt the lines, awoke in a fever of inspiration, threw the words on

paper, but before the fit was over was distracted from the composition, so that the glory of the dream never returned and *Kubla Khan* remained unfinished. The poem, beginning with a description of the stately pleasure-dome built by Kubla Khan in Xanadu, soon becomes a dreamlike series of dissolving views, grows wilder and wilder into a dervish-dance of the imagination, and collapses in mid-career.

In the same year Coleridge composed several other poems, including the fine *Frost at Midnight*, *Love*, and the *Ode to France*. In 1802 he wrote the great ode *Dejection*, in which he already bewails the suspension of his "shaping spirit of Imagination." Save for a few fragments, such as the beautiful epitaph *The Knight's Tomb*, the remainder of his poems are of poorer quality and slight in bulk. His play *Remorse* was, on the recommendation of Byron, accepted by the management of the Drury Lane Theatre and produced in 1813. It succeeded on the stage, but as literature it is of little importance.

3. Features of his Poetry. Within its peculiar limits his poetical work, slight though it is, is of the highest.

(*a*) The most conspicuous feature of the poems is their intense *imaginative power*. Sometimes this riots into excess. It exploits the weird, the supernatural, and the obscure. Yet, such is the power of true imagination, it can produce what Coleridge calls "that willing suspension of disbelief," and for the moment he can compel us to believe it all. He sees nature with a penetrating and revealing glance, drawing from it inspiration for the stuff of his poetry. He is particularly fine in his descriptions of the sky and the sea and the wider and more remote aspects of things.

(*b*) No poet has ever excelled Coleridge in *witchery of language*. His is the song the sirens sang. The *Ancient Mariner* has more than one passage like the following:

> And now 'twas like all instruments,
> Now like a lonely flute;
> And now it is an angel's song,
> That makes the heavens be mute.
> It ceased; yet still the sails made on
> A pleasant noise till noon,
> A noise like of a hidden brook
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods all night
> Singeth a quiet tune.

The epitaph we have mentioned is another fine example:

> Where is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn?
> Where may the grave of that good man be?
> By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,
> Under the twigs of a young birch tree.
> The oak that in summer was sweet to hear,
> And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,
> And whistled and roared in the winter alone,
> Is gone,—and the birch in its stead is grown.—
> The knight's bones are dust,
> And his good sword rust:—
> His soul is with the saints, I trust.

The reader of such passages can discover something of the secret of their charm by observing the dexterous handling of the meter, the vowel-music, and other technical features, but in the last analysis their beauty defies explanation: it is there that genius lies.

(*c*) Along with his explosive fervor Coleridge preserves a fine *simplicity of diction*. He appeals directly to the reader's imagination by writing with great clearness. In this respect he often closely resembles Wordsworth. His meditative poem *Frost at*

Midnight strongly shows this resemblance:

> Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
> Whether the summer clothe the general earth
> With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
> Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
> Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
> Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
> Heard only in the trances of the blast,
> Or if the secret ministry of frost
> Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
> Quietly shining to the quiet moon.

4. His Prose. The same blight that afflicted Coleridge's poetry lies upon his prose. It is scrappy, chaotic, and tentative. In bulk it is large and sprawling; in manner it is diffuse and involved; but in its happier moments it possesses a breadth, a depth, and a searching wisdom that are as rare as they are admirable.

Most of his prose was of journalistic origin. In theme it is chiefly philosophical or literary. In 1796 he started *The Watchman*, a periodical, ambitious in scope, which ran to ten numbers only. To this journal Coleridge contributed some typical essays, which, among much that is both obscure and formless, show considerable weight and acuteness of thought. He followed with much more miscellaneous prose, some of it being written for *The Morning Post*, to which he was for a time a contributor. In 1808 he began a series of lectures on poetry and allied subjects, but already the curse of opium was upon him, and the lectures were failures. While he resided in the Lake District he started *The Friend* (1809), which was published at Penrith, but like *The Watchman* it had a brief career. Then in 1817, when he had shaken himself free from opium, he published *Biographia Literaria* and *Sibylline Leaves*.

Biographia Literaria is his most valuable prose work. It pretends to record his literary upbringing, but as a consecutive narrative it is quite worthless. After sixteen chapters of philosophizing, almost entirely irrelevant, he discusses the poetical theory of his friend Wordsworth, and then in the last seven chapters of the book he gives a remarkable demonstration of his critical powers. He analyzes the Wordsworthian theory in masterly fashion, and, separating the good from the bad, upon the sounder elements bases a critical dogma of great and permanent value. These last chapters of the book, which are the most enduring exposition of the Romantic theory as it exists in English, place Coleridge in the first flight of critics.

In addition, he gave another series of lectures (1818), and wrote (1825) *Aids to Reflection*. But he seemed to be incapable of writing a work of any size. After his death his *Table Talk* was published, giving fleeting glimpses of a brilliant and erratic mind.

We give a short extract from his prose. This shows not only his sincere and temperate admiration for the poems of Wordsworth, but also the nature of his prose style. As a style it is not wholly commendable. It is too involved, and clogged with qualifications and digressions; but, though he develops his ideas in a curious indirect fashion, he makes rapid progress.

> Had Mr Wordsworth's poems been the silly, the childish things, which they were for a long time described as being; had they been really distinguished from the compositions of other poets merely by meanness of language and inanity of thought; had they indeed contained nothing more than what is found in the parodies and pretended imitations of them; they must have sunk at once, a dead weight, into the slough of

> oblivion, and have dragged the preface along with them. But year after year increased the number of Mr Wordsworth's admirers. They were found, too, not in the lower classes of the reading public, but chiefly among young men of strong sensibility and meditative minds; and their admiration (inflamed perhaps in some degree by opposition) was distinguished by its intensity, I might almost say, by its *religious* fervour. These facts, and the intellectual energy of the author, which was more or less consciously felt, where it was outwardly and even boisterously denied, meeting with sentiments of aversion to his opinions, and of alarm at their consequences, produced an eddy of criticism, which would of itself have borne up the poems by the violence with which it whirled them round and round. With many parts of this preface, in the sense attributed to them, and which the words undoubtedly seem to authorise, I never concurred; but on the contrary objected to them as erroneous in principle, and as contradictory (in appearance at least) both to other parts of the same preface, and to the author's own practice in the greater number of the poems themselves. Mr Wordsworth in his recent collection has, I find, degraded this prefatory disquisition to the end of his second volume, to be read or not at the reader's choice. But he has not, as far as I can discover, announced any change in his poetic creed.
>
> *Biographia Literaria*

LORD BYRON (1788–1824)

1. His Life. George Gordon Byron, sixth Lord Byron, was as proud of his ancestry as he was of his poetry, and his ancestors were as extraordinary as was his poetry. They stretched back to the Norman Conquest, and included among them a notorious

admiral, Byron's grandfather. The poet's father was a rake and a scoundrel. He married a Scottish heiress, Miss Gordon of Gight, whose money he was not long in squandering. Though the poet was born in London, his early years were passed in Aberdeen, his mother's native place. At the age of ten he succeeded his grand-uncle in the title and in the possession of the ruinous Abbey of Newstead, and Scotland was left behind for ever. He was educated at Harrow and Cambridge, where he showed himself to be heir to the ancestral nature, dark and passionate, but relieved by humor and affection. All his life through Byron cultivated the somber and theatrical side of his disposition, which latterly became a byword; but there can be little doubt that his "Byronic" temperament was not entirely affected. His mother, a foolish, unbalanced woman, warped the boy's temper still more by her frequent follies and frenzies. The recollection of the tortures he underwent in the fruitless effort to cure him of a malformity of his foot remained with him till his death.

Leaving the university (1807), he remained for a while at Newstead, where with a few congenial youths he plunged into orgies of puerile dissipation. In the fashion of the time, he gloried in the reputation he was acquiring for being a dare-devil, but he lived to pay for it. Wearying of loose delights, he traveled for a couple of years upon the Continent. He had previously taken his seat in the House of Lords, but made no mark in political affairs.

Then with a sudden bound he leaped into the limelight. His poem on his travels became all the rage. He found himself the darling of society, in which his youth, his title, his physical beauty, his wit, and his picturesque and romantic melancholy

made him a marvel and a delight. He married a great heiress (1814), but after a year his wife left him, for reasons that were not publicly divulged. Regarding his conduct dark rumors grew apace; his popularity waned, and in the face of a storm of abuse he left England for good (1816). For the last eight years of his life he wandered about the Continent, visiting Italy, and there meeting Shelley. Finally the cause of Greek independence caught his fancy. He devoted his money, which was inconsiderable, and the weight of his name, which was gigantic, to the Greeks, who proved to be very ungrateful allies. He died of fever at Missolonghi, and his body was given a grand funeral in the England that had cast him out.

2. His Poetry. Byron's first volume was a juvenile effort, *Hours of Idleness* (1807), which was little more than the elegant trifling of a lord who condescends to be a minor poet. This frail production was roughly handled by *The Edinburgh Review*, and Byron, who never lacked spirit, retorted with some effect. He composed a satire in the style of Pope, calling it *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). The poem is immature, being often crudely expressed, and it throws abuse recklessly upon good writers and bad; but in the handling of the couplet it already shows some of the Byronic force and pungency. The poem is also of interest in that it lets us see how much he is influenced by the preceding age.

> Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
> The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
> Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
> Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
> The gibbet or the field prepared to grace;
> A mighty mixture of the great and base.
> And think'st thou, Scott! by vain conceit perchance,
> On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
> Though Murray with his Miller may combine

To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?

Then followed the two years of travel, which had their fruit in the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812). The hero of the poem is a romantic youth, and is very clearly Byron himself. He is very grand and terrible, and sinister with the stain of a dark and awful past. He visits some of the popular beauty-spots of the Continent, which he describes in Spenserian stanzas of moderate skill and attractiveness. The poem is diffuse, but sometimes it can be terse and energetic; the style is halfheartedly old-fashioned, in deference to the stanza. Byron is to do much better things, but already he shows a real appreciation of nature, and considerable dexterity in the handling of his meter.

> On, on the vessel flies, the land is gone,
> And winds are rude in Biscay's sleepless bay.
> Four days are sped, but with the fifth, anon,
> New shores descried make every bosom gay;
> And Cintra's mountain greets them on their way,
> And Tagus dashing onward to the deep,
> His fabled golden tribute bent to pay;
> And soon on board the Lusian pilots leap.
> And steer 'twixt fertile shores where yet few rustics reap.

Childe Harold brought its author a dower of fame, which in the next few years he was to squander to the uttermost. In the intervals of society functions he produced poetic tales in astonishing profusion: *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* in 1813, *The Corsair* and *Lara* in 1814, *The Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina* in 1815. These tales deal with the romantic scenes of the East; they almost uniformly reproduce the young Byronic hero of *Childe Harold*; and to a great extent they are mannered and stagy. Written in the couplet form, the verse is founded on that of the metrical tales of Scott, whom Byron was not long in

supplanting in popular favor, although the masculine fervor of Scott's poems is lacking from his work. In sentiment his lines are often sickly enough, yet they sometimes have a vehemence that might be mistaken for passion, and a tawdriness that imitates real beauty.

In 1816 Byron was hounded out of England, and his wanderings are chronicled in the third (1816) and fourth (1817) cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. In meter and general scheme the poem is unaltered, but in spirit and style the new parts are very different from the first two cantos. The descriptions are firmer and terser, and are often graced with a fine simplicity; the old-fashioned mannerisms are entirely discarded; and the tone all through is deeper and more sincere. There is apparent an undercurrent of bitter pessimism that is only natural under the circumstances, though he dwells too lengthily upon his misfortunes. The following stanza is a fair specimen of this later and simpler style:

> They keep his dust in Arqua, where he died;
> The mountain village where his latter days
> Went down the vale of years, and 'tis their pride—
> An honest pride—and let it be their praise,
> To offer to the passing stranger's gaze
> His mansion and his sepulchre; both plain
> And venerably simple, such as raise
> A feeling more accordant with his strain
> Than if a pyramid formed his monumental fane.

During these years on the Continent he was not idle. Some of his longer poems are *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816) and *Mazeppa* (1819), the last of his metrical tales. He also composed a large number of lyrics, most of them only mediocre in quality; and he added several great satirical poems, the most notable of which are *Beppo* (1818), *The Vision of Judgment*

(1822), directed mainly against Southey, and, the longest of all, *Don Juan*.

In range, in vigor, and in effectiveness *Don Juan* ranks as one of the greatest of satirical poems. It was issued in portions during the years 1819–24, just as Byron composed it. It is a kind of picaresque novel cast into verse. The hero, like that of the picaresque novel, has many wanderings and adventures, the narration of which might go on interminably. At the time of its publication it was denounced by a shocked world as vile and immoral, and to a great extent it deserves the censure. In it Byron expresses the wrath that consumes him, and all the human race comes under the lash. The strength and flexibility of the satire are beyond question, and are freely revealed in bitter mockery, in caustic comment, and in burning rage. The stanzas, written in *ottava rima*, are as keen and supple as a tempered steel blade. The style is a kind of sublimated, half-colloquial prose, showing a disdainful abrogation of the finer poetical trappings; but in places it rises into passages of rare and lovely tenderness. When affliction came upon him, in the words of Lear he had vowed a vow:

> No, I'll not weep;
> I have full cause of weeping, but this heart
> Will break into a hundred thousand flaws
> Or ere I'll weep.

But sometimes the poet prevails over the satirist, and the mocking laughter is stifled with the sound of bitter weeping.

The first extract given below shows Byron in his bitter and cynical mood; the tone of the second and third is far removed from such asperity:

> (1) Ovid's a rake, as half his verses show him,
> Anacreon's morals are a still worse sample,

Catullus scarcely has a decent poem,
I don't think Sappho's Ode a good example,
Although Longinus tells us there is no hymn
Where the sublime soars forth on wings more ample;
But Virgil's songs are pure, except that horrid one
Beginning with "Formosum Pastor Corydon."

Lucretius' irreligion is too strong
For early stomachs to prove wholesome food;
I can't help thinking Juvenal was wrong,
Although no doubt his real intent was good,
For speaking out so plainly in his song,
So much indeed as to be downright rude;
And then what proper person can be partial
To all those nauseous epigrams of Martial?

(2) Round her she made an atmosphere of life;
The very air seemed lighter from her eyes,
They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies,
As pure as Psyche ere she grew a wife—
Too pure even for the purest human ties;
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.

Her eyelashes, though dark as night, were tinged—
It is the country's custom—but in vain;
For those large black eyes were so blackly fringed,
The glossy rebels mocked the jetty stain,
And in her native beauty stood avenged:
Her nails were touched with henna; but again
The power of art was turned to nothing, for
They could not look more rosy than before.

(3) Thus lived—thus died she; never more on her
Shall sorrow light or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth: her days and pleasures were
Brief, but delightful—such as had not stayed
Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore whereon she loved to dwell.

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
Its dwelling down, its tenants passed away;
None but her own and father's grave is there
And nothing outward tells of human clay;

Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair;
No one is there to show, no tongue to say
What was; no dirge except the hollow seas
Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

3. His Drama. Byron's dramas are all blank-verse tragedies that were composed during the later stages of his career, when he was in Italy. The chief are *Manfred* (1817), *Marino Faliero* (1820), *The Two Foscari* and *Cain* (1821), and *The Deformed Transformed* (1824). In nearly all we have a hero of the Byronic type. In *Cain*, for example, we have the outcast who defies the censure of the world; in *The Deformed Transformed* there are thinly screened references to Byron's own deformity. In this fashion he showed that he had little of the real dramatic faculty, for he could portray no character with any zeal unless it resembled himself. The blank verse has power and dignity, but it lacks the higher poetic inspiration.

4. Features of his Poetry. (*a*) For a man of his egotistical temper Byron's *lyrical gift* is disappointingly meager. He wrote many tuneful and readable lyrics, such as *She walks in Beauty* and *To Thyrza*. His favorite theme draws on variations of the following mood:

Do thou, amid the fair white walls,
If Cadiz still be free,
At times, from out her latticed halls,
Look o'er the dark blue sea;

Then think upon Calypso's isles,
Endeared by days gone by;
To others give a thousand smiles,
To me a single sigh.

In such lyrics he is merely sentimental, and the reader cannot avoid thinking that he is posturing before the world. When he attempts more elevated

themes, as he does in *The Isles of Greece*, he is little better than a poetical tub-thumper. Of the genuine passionate lyric there is little trace in his poems.

(*b*) His *satirical power* is gigantic. In the expression of his scorn, a kind of sublime and reckless arrogance, he has the touch of the master. Yet in spite of his genius he has several defects. In the first place, his motive is to a very large extent personal, and so his scorn becomes one-sided. It is, however, a sign of the essential bigness of his mind that he hardly ever becomes mean and spiteful. Secondly, he lacks the deep vision of the supreme satirist, like Cervantes, who behind the shadows of the crimes and follies of men can see the pity of it all. In the third place, he is often deliberately outrageous. When he found how easily and deeply he could shock a certain class of people he went out of his way to shock them, and succeeded only too well. No doubt this satisfied Byron's injured feelings, but it is a rather cheap and juvenile proceeding, and detracts from the solid value of his work.

(*c*) He treats *nature* in a rather lordly fashion, more as a humble helper in his poems than as a light and inspiration. In his later poems he agreeably modified this attitude; and his passion for the sea never paled.

(*d*) His *style* has been sufficiently revealed in the extracts we have given. He could modulate it with great skill to the purpose in hand. Dignified in his dramas, melodious in his songs, vigorous in his narratives, and stinging in his satires, he is hardly ever dull, seldom obscure, and always the master of his medium.

(*e*) A word is necessary regarding the fluctuations

of his *reputation*. In his earlier manhood he was reckoned among the great poets; he lived to hear himself denounced, and his poetry belittled. After his death Victorian morality held up hands in horror over his iniquity, and his real merits were steadily decried. Since those days his reputation has been climbing back to take a stable position high above the second-rate poets. In some European countries he still ranks second to none among English poets. He broke down the labored insularity of the English, and he gave to non-English readers a clear and forcible example of what the English language can accomplish.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

1. His Life. Shelley was born in Sussex, the heir to a baronetcy and a great fortune. He was educated at Eton and Oxford, but from a very early age showed great eccentricity of character. He frequented graveyards, studied alchemy, and read books of dreadful import. While he was at the university he wrote several extraordinary pamphlets, one of which, *The Necessity of Atheism*, caused him to be expelled from Oxford. He had already developed extreme notions on religion, politics, and morality generally, a violence that was entirely theoretical, for by nature he was among the most unselfish and amiable of mankind. His opinions, as well as an early and unhappy marriage which he contracted, brought about a painful quarrel with his relatives. This was finally composed by the poet's father, Sir Timothy Shelley, who settled an annuity upon his son. The poet immediately took to the life that suited him best, ardently devoting himself to his writing, and wandering where the spirit led him. In 1816 his first wife committed suicide; and Shelley, having married

the daughter of William Godwin, settled in Italy, the land he loved the best. The intoxication of Rome's blue sky and the delicious unrestraint of his Italian existence set his genius blossoming into the rarest beauty. In the full flower of it he was drowned, when he was only thirty years old, in a sudden squall that overtook his yacht in the Gulf of Spezzia. His body—a fit consummation—was burned on the beach where it was found, and his ashes were laid beside those of Keats in the Roman cemetery that he had nobly hymned. It is impossible to estimate the loss to literature that was caused by his early extinction. The crudeness of his earlier opinions was passing away, his vision was gaining immeasurably in clearness and intensity, and his singing-robes seemed to be developing almost into seraph's wings. In his case the grave can indeed claim a victory.

2. His Poetry. His earliest effort of any note is *Queen Mab* (1813). The poem is clearly immature; it is lengthy, and contains much of Shelley's cruder atheism. It is written in the irregular unrhymed meter that was made popular by Southey. The beginning is worth quoting, for already it reveals a touch of the airy music that was to distinguish his later work:

> How wonderful is Death,
> Death and his brother Sleep!
> One, pale as yonder waning moon
> With lips of lurid blue;
> The other, rosy as the morn
> When throned on ocean's wave
> It blushes o'er the world:
> Yet both so passing wonderful!

Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude (1816) followed. It is a kind of spiritual autobiography. The chief character is a wild youth who retires into the

wilderness and stays there under highly romantic circumstances. The poem is too long and formless, and in places the expression becomes so wild as to be only a foamy gabble of words. It is written in blank verse that shows Shelley's growing skill as a poet. After this came *Laon and Cynthia* (1817), afterward called *The Revolt of Islam*. It has the fault of its immediate predecessor—lack of grip and coherence; but it is richer in descriptive passages, and has many outbursts of rapturous energy.

Then Shelley left for Italy. The first fruits of his new life were apparent in *Prometheus Unbound* (1819). This wonderful production is a combination of the lyric and the drama. The story is that of Prometheus, who defied the gods and suffered for his presumption. There is a small proportion of narrative in blank verse, but the chief feature of the poem is the series of lyrics that both sustain and embellish the action. As a whole the poem has a sweep, a soar, and an unearthly vitality that sometimes staggers the imagination. It is peopled with spirits and demigods, and its scenes are cast in the inaccessible spaces of sky, mountain, and sea.

In *The Cenci* (1819) Shelley started to write formal drama. In this play he seems deliberately to have set upon himself the restraints that he defied in *Prometheus Unbound*. The plot is not of the sky and the sea; it is a grim and sordid family affair; in style it is neither fervent nor ornate, but bleak and austere. Yet behind this reticence of manner there is a deep and smoldering intensity of passion and enormous adequacy of tragic purpose. Many of the poet's admirers look upon it as his masterpiece; and there can be little doubt that, with the exception possibly of the *Venice Preserved* of Otway, it is the

most powerful tragedy since the days of Shakespeare. The last words of the play, when the heroine goes to her doom, are almost heart-breaking in their simplicity:

> *Beatrice.* Give yourself no unnecessary pain,
> My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, mother, tie
> My girdle for me, and bind up this hair
> In any simple knot; ay, that does well.
> And yours I see is coming down. How often
> Have we done this for one another! Now
> We shall not do it any more. My lord,
> We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well.

The poems of this period are extraordinary in their number and quality. Among the longer ones are *Julian and Maddalo* (1818) and *The Masque of Anarchy* (1819). The latter, inspired by the news of the massacre of Peterloo, expresses Shelley's revolutionary political views, and is very severe on Lord Castlereagh. The beginning of the poem is startling enough:

> I met Murder on the way,
> He had a mask like Castlereagh;
> Very smooth he looked, yet grim,
> Seven bloodhounds followed him.

In *The Witch of Atlas* (1820) and *Epipsychidion* (1821) Shelley rises further and further into the ether of poetical imagination, until he becomes almost impossible of comprehension. *Adonais* (1821) is a lament for the death of Keats. In plan the poem is crazily constructed, but it glows with some of the most splendid of Shelley's conceptions:

> He has outsoared the shadow of our night.
> Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
> And that unrest which men miscall delight,
> Can touch him not and torture not again.
> From the contagion of the world's slow stain
> He is secure; and now can never mourn

A heart grown cold, a head grown grey, in vain—
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou, young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone!
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains; and, thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

With the longer poems went a brilliant cascade of shorter lyrical pieces. To name them is to mention some of the sweetest English lyrics. The constantly quoted *Skylark* and *Cloud* are among them; so are some exquisite songs, such as *Lines to an Indian Air*, *Music, when soft voices die*, *On a Faded Violet*, *To Night*, and the longer occasional pieces—for example, *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*, and the *Letter to Maria Gisborne*. Of his many beautiful odes, the most remarkable is *To the West Wind*. The stanzas have the elemental rush of the wind itself, and the conclusion, where Shelley sees a parallel to himself, is the most remarkable of all:

Make me thy lyre, ev'n as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like wither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth;
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

3. His Prose. Shelley began his literary career with two boyish romances, *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*. These books were written when he was still at school, and are almost laughably bad in style and story. The only other prose work that is worth mention is his short essay *The Defence of Poetry*. The work is soundly written, and is a strong exposition of the Romantic point of view. His published letters show him to have been a man of considerable common sense, and not merely the crazy theorist of popular imagination. His prose style is somewhat heavy, but always clear and readable.

4. Features of his Poetry. (*a*) His *lyrical power* is equal to the highest to be found in any language. It is now recognized to be one of the supreme gifts in literature, like the dramatic genius of Shakespeare. This gift is shown at its best when it expresses the highest emotional ecstasy, as in the lyrics of *Prometheus Unbound*. It is a sign of his great genius that, in spite of the passion that pervades his lyrics, he is seldom shrill and tuneless. He can also express a mood of blessed cheerfulness, a sane and delectable joy. To the Spirit of Delight he says:

I love Love, though he has wings,
  And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
  Spirit, I love thee.
Thou art love and life! O come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

He can also express the keenest note of depression and despair, as in the lyric *O World! O Life! O Time!*

(*b*) In his *choice of subject* he differs from such a poet as Burns, who is almost the only other poet who

challenges him as master of the lyric. Shelley lacks the homely appeal of Burns; he loves to roam through space and infinity. In his own words he

> Feeds upon the aerial kisses
> Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.

He rejoices in nature, but nature of a spiritual kind, which he peoples with phantoms and airy beings:

> I love all that thou lovest,
> Spirit of Delight!
> The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,
> And the starry night;
> Autumn evening, and the morn
> When the golden mists are born.
>
> I love snow, and all the forms
> Of the radiant frost:
> I love waves, and winds, and storms,
> Everything almost
> Which is nature's, and may be
> Untainted by man's misery.

(*c*) His *descriptive power* at once strikes the imagination. The effect is instantaneous. His fancy played among wild and elemental things, but it gave them form and substance, as well as a radiant loveliness. His favorite device for this purpose is personification, of which the following is an excellent example:

> For Winter came; the wind was his whip;
> One choppy finger was on his lip;
> He had torn the cataracts from the hills,
> And they clanked at his girdle like manacles.
>
> *The Sensitive Plant*

We add another extract to show his almost unearthly skill in visualizing the wilder aspects of nature. Note the extreme simplicity and ease of the

style:

> We paused among the pines that stood
> The giants of the waste,
> Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
> As serpents interlaced.
>
> *The Pine Forest*

(*d*) His *style* is perfectly attuned to his purpose. Like all the finest lyrical styles, it is simple, flexible, and passionate. Sometimes, as in *The Cenci*, it rises to a commanding simplicity. The extracts already given sufficiently show this.

(*e*) Shelley's *limitations* are almost as plain as his great abilities. His continual rhapsodizings tend to become tedious and baffling; in his narrative he is diffuse and argumentative; he lacks humor; and his political poetry is often violent and unreasonable.

(*f*) *His Reputation.* During his lifetime Shelley's opinions obscured his powers as a poet. Even to Scott, who with all his Tory prejudices was liberal enough in his views on literature, he was simply "that atheist Shelley." After his death his reputation rose rapidly, and by the middle of the nineteenth century his position was assured. By the curious alternation that seems to affect popular taste, his fame since that time has paled a little; but no fluctuations in taste can ever remove him from his place among the great.

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

1. His Life. Keats was born in London, the son of the well-to-do keeper of a livery stable. He was educated at a private school at Enfield, and at the age of fifteen was apprenticed to a surgeon. In 1814 he transferred his residence to London, and followed part of the regular course of instruction prescribed

for medical students. Already, however, his poetical bent was becoming apparent. Surgery lost its slight attraction, and the career of a poet became a bright possibility when he made the acquaintance of Leigh Hunt (1815), the famous Radical journalist and poet, whose collisions with the Government had caused much commotion and his own imprisonment. Keats was soon intimate with the Radical brotherhood that surrounded Leigh Hunt, and thus he became known to Shelley and others. In 1817 he published his first volume of verse, but it attracted little notice, in spite of the championship of Hunt. By this time the family tendency to consumption became painfully manifest in him, and he spent his time in searching for places, including the Isle of Wight and the suburbs of London, where his affliction might be remedied. While he was staying in London he became acquainted with Fanny Brawne, and afterward was engaged to her for a time. His malady, however, became worse, and the mental and physical distress caused by his complaint, added to despair regarding the success of his love-affair, produced a frantic state of mind painfully reflected in his letters to the young lady. These letters were foolishly printed (1879), long after the poet's death.

His second volume of verse, published in 1818, was brutally assailed by *The Quarterly Review* and (to a lesser degree) by *Blackwood's Magazine*. These Tory journals probably struck at him because of his friendship with the radical Leigh Hunt. Keats bore the attack with apparent serenity, and always protested that he minded it little; but there can be little doubt that it affected his health to some degree. In 1820 he was compelled to seek warmer skies, and died in Rome early in the next year, at the age of twenty-five.

2. His Poetry. When he was about seventeen years old Keats became acquainted with the works of Spenser, and this proved to be the turning-point in his life. The mannerisms of the Elizabethan immediately captivated him, and he resolved to imitate him. His earliest attempt at verse is his *Imitation of Spenser* (1813), written when he was eighteen. This and some other short pieces were published together in his *Poems* (1817), his first volume of verse. This book contains little of any outstanding merit. The different poems, which include the pieces *On Death*, *To Hope*, and *Sleep and Poetry*, follow the methods of Shenstone, Gray, and Byron. Of a different quality was his next volume, which bore the title of *Endymion* (1818). Probably based partly on Drayton's *Man in the Moon* and Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, this remarkable poem of *Endymion* professes to tell the story of the lovely youth who was kissed by the moon-goddess on the summit of Mount Latmos. Keats develops this simple myth into an intricate and flowery tale of over four thousand lines. The work is clearly immature, and flawed with many weaknesses both of taste and of construction, but many of the passages are most beautiful, and the poem shows the tender budding of the Keatsian style—a rich and suggestive beauty obtained by a richly ornamented diction. The first line is often quoted, and it contains the theory that Keats followed in a subconscious fashion during most of his poetical career:

> A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

The crudeness of the work laid it temptingly open to attack, and, as we have noticed, the hostile reviews found it an easy prey.

Keats's health was already failing, but the amount

of poetry he wrote is marvelous both in magnitude and in quality. His third and last volume, published just before he left England, contains a collection of poems of the first rank, which were written approximately in the order that follows.

Isabella, or The Pot of Basil (1818), is a version of a tale from Boccaccio, and deals with the murder of a lady's lover by her two wicked brothers. The poem, which is written in *ottava rima*, marks a decided advance in Keats's work. The slips of taste are fewer; the style is richer and deeper in tone; and the conclusion, though it is sentimentally treated, is not wanting in pathos.

The Eve of St. Agnes (1818) has for a plot the merest incident dealing with the elopement of two lovers. The tale is so sumptuously adorned with the silks and jewels of poetical imagination that it is almost lost in the decoration. This is sometimes considered his masterpiece; it is certainly the most typical of his poems. The richness of fancy and pictorial effect mark the summit of the poet's art. It is somewhat hectic and overloaded, but its faults are quite venial. We add one of its exquisite Spenserian stanzas:

> Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
> And threw warm gules on Madeleine's fair breast,
> As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
> Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
> And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
> And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
> She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,
> Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
> She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Hyperion (1818) is of a different type. For this poem Keats adopts blank verse, and for theme he goes to the primeval warfare between early deities,

such as Saturn and Thea, and younger divinities, such as Apollo and Minerva. The poem remains unfinished, owing, it is stated, to the poet's discouragement over the reception of *Endymion*. It is doubtful if Keats could ever have finished it. The scale of the story is so gigantic, and the style is pitched at such an altitude of sublimity that Keats appears to have been lacking in mere physical fitness to carry it to a conclusion. In the fragment that we have an observant reader can see that the poet's grip is loosening, and his breath failing, before the effort ceases entirely. Keats, with his usual insight, appropriately writes the poem in a style of bleak and almost terrible simplicity. The opening lines are among the best:

> Deep in the shady sadness of a vale,
> Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
> Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
> Sat gray-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,
> Still as the silence round about his lair;
> Forest on forest hung about his head
> Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
> Not so much life as on a summer's day
> Robs not one light seed from the feathered grass,
> But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
> A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
> By reason of his fallen divinity
> Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
> Pressed her cold finger closer to her lips.

Next was written *The Eve of St. Mark* (1819), which also remains unfinished. The tale shows how far even Keats can improve upon himself. It is adorned with brilliant descriptive passages, and the strokes are more dashing than usual. The earlier languor and sentimentality are almost eliminated:

> The bells had ceased, the prayers begun,
> And Bertha had not yet half done
> A curious volume, patched and torn,

That all day long, from earliest morn,
Had taken captive her two eyes,
Among its golden broideries;
Perplexed her with a thousand things,
The stars of heaven, and angels' wings,
Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
Azure saints and silver rays,
Moses' breastplate, and the seven
Candlesticks John saw in heaven,
The winged Lion of St Mark,
And the Covenantal Ark,
With its many mysteries,
Cherubim and golden mice.

The story of *Lamia* (1819) is taken from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and tells of a beautiful enchantress. It is the weakest of all the longer poems, and the lapses are more numerous. The language becomes mannered and overdone:

He answered, bending to her open eyes,
Where he was mirrored small in paradise,—
"My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
While I am striving how to fill my heart
With deeper crimson, and a double smart?
How to entangle, trammel up and snare
Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there,
Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?"

In this passage we observe the strength of Keats running to seed. Phrases like "plead yourself" and "labyrinth you" go beyond the limits of poetical license; and the whole passage in conception resembles the conceits of the Caroline poets rather than the finer and stronger flights of imagination of which Keats was so thoroughly capable.

Together with the longer poems are many shorter pieces of supreme beauty. The great odes—*To a Nightingale*, *On a Grecian Urn*, *To Autumn*—were nearly all written in 1819. Among the other shorter poems *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, a kind of lyrical

ballad, is considered to be one of the choicest in the language.

In 1819 Keats collaborated in a drama, *Otho the Great*, and began another, *King Stephen*, which he did not complete. Neither effort is of much consequence. *The Cap and Bells*, a longish fairy-tale which also is unfinished, is much below the level of his usual work.

3. Features of his Poetry. (*a*) His *style* should be considered first, for Keats is above all a stylist. The typical Keatsian poetry is, one imagines, the ideal of what is popularly considered to be "poetry": it is gorgeously attractive, with its melodic beauty and sensuous passion; soft and caressing, like velvet; and richly colored and odorous. At its very best the spell of it works like a divine enchantment; but at even a little less than the best it becomes unctuous, sickly, and stuffily uncomfortable. There can be little doubt that Keats's physical malady shows itself in his writings. With all their genius, they are the work of an unhealthy brain. His heroes are languid and neurotic creatures, and his style is attuned to their swoons and faintings. A stanza from *Isabella* will illustrate what has already been exemplified in the verse we have quoted from *The Eve of St. Agnes*:

> So once more had he waked and anguished
> A dreary night of love and misery,
> If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
> To every symbol on his forehead high;
> She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
> And straight all flushed; so, lisped tenderly,
> "Lorenzo!"—here she ceased her timid quest,
> But in her tone and look he read the rest.

(*b*) His *descriptive and romantic quality* is of the highest. He modeled his work upon that of Spenser, but before he had finished he almost bettered his

model. In beauty and splendor he is nearly unrivaled. He ranges among classical and medieval subjects, and distills from them the essence of their beauty. For example, he knew no Greek, but he could reproduce the full charm of the Greek seaboard:

> Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
> To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
> Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
> And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
> What little town by river or sea-shore,
> Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
> Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
> And, little town, thy streets for evermore
> Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
> Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.
>
> *Ode on a Grecian Urn*

(*c*) Keats's *lyrical faculty* is limited. When brooding over his woes he can utter a complaint on the true lyrical note. Hence we obtain such results as his wonderful last sonnet and *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, which is a lyric thinly disguised as a ballad. He was perhaps physically unable to experience the healthier joys of Burns, and so was incapable of expressing them.

(*d*) *His Influence.* A single glance at the table at the head of this chapter will show how piteously short was his poetical career; but, short as it was, his labor created a larger school than that of any of his contemporaries. His tradition was carried on by Tennyson and the Pre-Raphaelites, and to this day his influence is strong in English poetry.

OTHER POETS

1. Robert Southey (1774–1843). Southey was born at Bristol, educated at Westminster School and at Oxford, and settled down to lead the laborious life of a man of letters. He produced a great mass of

work, much of which is of considerable merit, and he ranked as one of the leading writers of his age. Most of his work was written at Greta Hall, near Keswick, where he lived most of his life. He was made Poet Laureate in 1813. His reputation, especially as a poet, has not been maintained.

His poems, which are of great bulk, include *Joan of Arc* (1798), *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), and *Roderick the Goth* (1814); they are pretentious in style and subject, but are now almost forgotten. Some shorter pieces, such as *The Holly-tree*, *The Battle of Blenheim*, and *The Inchcape Rock*, are still in favor, and deservedly so.

His numerous prose works include *The History of Brazil* (1810–19) and *The Peninsular War* (1822–33). The slightest of them all, *The Life of Nelson* (1813), is the only one now freely read. It shows Southey's easy yet scholarly style at its best.

2. Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864). Landor had a long life, for he was born five years after Wordsworth, and lived to see the full yield of the Victorian era. Of an ancient family, he was born in Warwickshire, and was educated at Rugby and Oxford. Later he was fired with republican ideas, abandoned his projected career in the British Army, and supported the revolutionaries in Spain. In temper he was impulsive to the point of mania; and his life is marked by a succession of violent quarrels with his friends and enemies. The middle years of his life were passed in Italy. He returned to England in 1838, and lived in Bath until 1858. In this year his pugnacity involved him in an action for damages, in which as defendant he cut a lamentable figure. Poor and dishonored, he forsook England, and settled again in Florence, where he died.

His *Gebir* (1798) is a kind of epic poem written in blank verse. It is “classical” in its stiff and formal style; but it has a stately beauty and much powerful natural description. *Count Julian* (1812), a tragedy, has much the same qualities, good and bad, as *Gebir*. His shorter pieces, especially the eight-line lyric *Rose Aylmer*, have more ease and passion, and are gracefully expressed.

His bulkiest prose work is his *Imaginary Conversations*, which was published at intervals from 1824 to 1846. The volumes record imaginary dialogues between all kinds of people on a great variety of subjects. They have Landor’s chief defect, a stony lifelessness; but in style they are stately, strong, and scholarly, with frequent passages of noble description. All his life he continued to issue essays and pamphlets. A collection of them, called *Dry Sticks* (1858), as has been noticed, brought upon his head the weight of the law. Landor professed to despise popularity; he was moody, crotchety, and often deliberately perverse. Posterity has repaid him by consigning him to an oblivion that only the devotion of a small but eminent band of admirers keeps from being absolute.

3. Thomas Moore (1779–1852). Moore was born in Dublin, took his degree at Trinity College, and studied law in the same city. He too was imbued with revolutionary notions, and attempted to apply them to Ireland, but with no success. He obtained a valuable appointment in the Bermudas, the duties of which were discharged by a deputy, who in this case proved faithless and caused Moore financial loss. Moore was a friend of Byron and a prominent literary figure of the time. Most of his life was passed as a successful man of letters.

His poems were highly successful during his lifetime, but after his death there was a reaction against them. His *Irish Melodies* are set to the traditional musical airs of Ireland. They are graceful, and adapt themselves admirably to the tunes. Moore, however, lacked the depth and far-ranging strength of Burns, and so he failed to do for Ireland what the Ayrshire poet did for Scotland: he did not raise the national sentiment of Ireland into one of the precious things of literature. His *Lalla Rookh* (1817) is an Oriental romance, written in the Scott-Byron manner then so popular. The poem had an immense success, which has now almost totally faded. It contains an abundance of florid description, but as poetry it is hardly second-rate. Moore's political satires, such as *The Twopenny Postbag* (1813), *The Fudge Family in Paris* (1818), and *Fables for the Holy Alliance* (1823), are keen and lively, and show his Irish wit at its very best.

His prose works include his *Life of Byron* (1830), which has taken its place as the standard biography of that poet. It is an able and scholarly piece of work, and is written with much knowledge and sympathy.

4. Thomas Campbell (1777–1844). Campbell was born in Glasgow, of a poor but ancient family. After studying at Glasgow University he became tutor to a private family; but his *Pleasures of Hope* (1799) brought him fame, and he adopted the career of a poet. He visited the Continent, and saw much of the turmoil that there reigned. Returning, he settled in London, where he was editor of *The New Monthly Magazine* from 1820 to 1830.

His longer poems are quite numerous, and begin with the *Pleasures of Hope*, which consists of a series of descriptions of nature in heroic couplets, written

in a style that suggests Goldsmith. Other longer poems include *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809), a longish tale of Pennsylvania, written in Spenserian stanzas, and *The Pilgrim of Glencoe* (1842). Campbell, however, is chiefly remembered for his stirring songs, some of which were written during his early Continental tour and were published in newspapers. His most successful are *Ye Mariners of England* and *The Battle of the Baltic*, which are spirited without containing the bluster and boasting that so often disfigure the patriotic song.

5. Samuel Rogers (1763–1855). Rogers was born in London, the son of a rich banker. He soon became a partner in his father's firm, and for the rest of his life his financial success was assured. His chief interest lay in art and poetry, which he cultivated in an earnest fashion. He was a generous patron of the man of letters, and was acquainted with most of the literary people of the time. His breakfasts were famous.

His *Pleasures of Memory* (1792) is a reversion to the typical eighteenth-century manner, and as such is interesting. He could compose polished verses, but he was little of the poet. Other works are *Columbus* (1812), *Jacqueline* (1814), a tale in the Byronic manner, and *Italy* (1822).

Rogers was a careful and fastidious writer, but his excellence does not go much further. His name is a prominent one in the literary annals of the time, but his wealth rather than his merit accounts for this.

6. Leigh Hunt (1784–1859), unlike Rogers, was not a wealthy amateur who could trifle for years with mediocre production; he was of the arena, taking and giving hard knocks in both political and literary scuffles. He was born in Middlesex, educated

at Christ's Hospital, and while still in his teens became a journalist, and remained a journalist all his life. His Radical journal *The Examiner* (1808) was strongly critical of the Government, and Hunt's aptitude for abuse landed him in prison for two years. His captivity, as he gleefully records, made a hero of him; and most of the literary men who prided themselves upon their Liberalism—among them being Wordsworth, Byron, Moore, Keats, and Shelley—sought his friendship. Hunt had a powerful influence on Keats, and published some of the latter's shorter poems in *The Examiner*. He tried various other journalistic ventures, but none of them had the success of *The Examiner*; his attempted collaboration in journalism with Byron was a lamentable failure. He died, like Wordsworth and others, a respectable pensioner of the Government he had once so strongly condemned.

He much fancied himself as a poet, and popular taste confirmed him in his delusion. The best of his longer poems is *Rimini* (1811), an Italian tale in verse. The poem is of interest because its flowing couplets were the model for Keats's *Endymion*. Hunt's shorter pieces—for example, *Abou Ben Adhem*—are often graceful, but their poetical value is not very high.

His prose includes an enormous amount of journalistic matter, which was occasionally collected and issued in book form. Such was his *Men, Women, and Books* (1847). His *Autobiography* (1850) contains much interesting biographical and literary gossip. He is an agreeable essayist, fluent and easygoing; his critical opinions are solid and sensible, though often half-informed. He wrote a novel, *Sir Ralph Esher* (1832), and a very readable book on London called

The Town (1848). Hunt is not a genius, but he is a useful and amiable second-rate writer.

7. James Hogg (1770–1835). Hogg became known to the world as "the Ettrick Shepherd," for he was born of a shepherd's family in the valley of the Ettrick, in Selkirkshire. He was a man of much natural ability, and from his infancy was an eager listener to the songs and ballads of his district. He was introduced to Walter Scott (1802) while the latter was collecting the Border minstrelsy, and by Scott he was supported both as a literary man and as a farmer. Many of his admirers assisted him in the acquisition of a sheep-farm, but Hogg proved to be a poor farmer. He was known to most of the members of the Scottish literary circle, but his shiftless and unmanageable disposition alienated most of his friends. He died in his native district.

Hogg had little education and very little sense of discrimination, so that much of his poetry is very poor indeed. Sometimes, however, his native talent prevails, and he writes such poems as *Kilmeny* and *When the Kye comes Hame*. The latter is a lyric resembling those of Burns in its humor and simple appeal. In *Kilmeny* (in *The Queen's Wake*) he achieves what is commonly held to be the true Celtic note: the eerie description of elves and the gloaming, and murmuring and musical echoes of things half seen and half understood. Some of his books are *The Forest Minstrel* (1801), *The Queen's Wake* (1813), and *The Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1818), the last being a prose tale.

8. Ebenezer Elliott (1781–1849). Elliott was born at Masborough, in Yorkshire, and worked as an iron-founder. The struggles of the poor, oppressed by the Corn Laws, were early borne in upon him, and

his poetical gift was used in a fierce challenge to the existing system. Like Crabbe, he devoted himself to the cause of the poor; and it is a tribute to his merit as a poet that, in spite of his bristling assertiveness, he produced some work of real value. He became known as the "Corn Law Rhymer," and he lived to see the abolition of the laws that he had always attacked.

His best book is *Corn Law Rhymes* (1830), which includes the powerful and somber *Battle-song*. This poem is a kind of anthem for the poor, and breathes a spirit of fierce unrest.

9. Felicia Hemans (1793–1835). Mrs. Hemans's maiden name was Browne, and she was born at Liverpool. Later she removed to Wales, where a large part of her life was spent. At the age of fifteen she began to write poetry, and persisted in the habit all her life. She married somewhat unhappily, but she lived to be a highly popular poetess, and produced a large amount of work. She died in Dublin.

Nobody can call Mrs. Hemans a great poetess, but her verses are facile and fairly melodious, and she can give simple themes a simple setting. One can respect the genuine quality of her emotions, and the zeal with which she expressed them. Some of her better lyrics—for example, *The Stately Homes of England*, *The Graves of a Household*, and *The Pilgrim Fathers*—are in their limited fashion well done.

10. Thomas Hood (1799–1845). Hood was a native of London, and became a partner in a book-selling firm. He took to a literary career, and contributed to many periodicals, including *The London Magazine*. For a time he edited *The New Monthly Magazine*, but he was much troubled by illness, and died prematurely.

Hood first gained notoriety with some humorous poems, published under the title of *Whims and Oddities* (1826). To modern taste the humor is rather cheap, for it consists largely of verbal quibblings, such as the free use of the pun. It seemed to be acceptable to the public of the time, for the book had much success. Other volumes in the same vein were *The Comic Annual*, *Up the Rhine* (1839), and *Whimsicalities* (1843). Hood, in spite of his smartness, could not keep free of vulgarity, and his wit often jars. As a kind of tragic relief Hood sometimes produced poems of a tearful intensity, such as *The Death-bed* and *The Bridge of Sighs*. One could believe that his grief was genuine if he did not dwell so much upon it. His *Song of the Shirt*, first published in *Punch* in 1845, is rather a versified political pamphlet than a real poem, but it is powerful verse, and one can forgive much on account of the motive, which was to help the sweated sempstress. His *Dream of Eugene Aram* (1829) was an attempt at the horrible, and was long a *bravura* piece for aspiring elocutionists. It is a middling specimen of poetical rhetoric.

11. John Clare (1793–1864) was a true peasant poet, and in his day he had a great popularity. After his death his works fell into neglect, but recently (1920) a reissue of his poems, some of them new to the public, has recalled attention to the considerable value of much that he wrote. He was born near Peterborough, his father being a cripple and a pauper. At the age of thirteen he saved sufficient money to buy a copy of *The Seasons*, which fired his poetic ability. His *Collection of Original Trifles* (1817) attracted notice, and his *Poems* (1820) was much praised. The patronage of rich admirers put him above poverty, but a tendency to insanity developed,

and, like Christopher Smart, he died in a madhouse.

Clare's poems are seen at their best when they deal with simple rustic themes, and then they are quite charming. He rejoices in the ways of animals and insects. He is not a great poet, but there are many poets with flaunting credentials who have less claims to consideration than he.

12. James Smith (1775–1837) and **Horace Smith (1779–1849)**, two brothers, collaborated in the production of a work that was one of the "hits" of the period. This book was *Rejected Addresses* (1812). When the Drury Lane Theatre was burned down and rebuilt the management offered a prize for the best poem to be recited on the opening night. The Smiths hit on the idea of making parodies of the notable poets of the time and pretending that they were the rejected poems of the writers mentioned. The result is the classical collection of parodies in English. Scott, Wordsworth, and other well-known authors are imitated, usually with much cleverness. The Wordsworth poem is recited by Nancy Lake, a girl of eight, who is drawn upon the stage in a perambulator:

> My brother Jack was nine in May,
> And I was eight on New Year's Day;
> So in Kate Williams' shop
> Papa (he's my papa and Jack's)
> Bought me, last week, a doll of wax,
> And brother Jack a top.

WALTER SCOTT (1771–1832)

1. His Life. Scott was born in Edinburgh, of an ancient stock of Border freebooters. At the age of eighteen months he was crippled for life by a childish ailment; and though he grew up to be a man of great physical robustness he never lost his

lameness. He was educated at the High School of Edinburgh and at the university; and there he developed that powerful memory which, though it rejected things of no interest to it, held in tenacious grasp a great store of miscellaneous knowledge. His father was a lawyer, and Scott himself was called to the Scottish Bar (1792). As a pleader he had little success, for he was much more interested in the lore and antiquities of the country. He was glad, therefore, to accept a small legal appointment as Sheriff of Selkirkshire (1799). Just before this, after an unsuccessful love-affair with a Perthshire lady, he had married the daughter of a French exile. In 1806 he obtained the valuable post of Clerk of Session, but for six years he received no salary, as the post was still held by an invalid nominally in charge.

In 1812, on receipt of his first salary as Clerk of Session, he removed from his pleasant home of Ashiestiel to Abbotsford, a small estate near Melrose. For the place he paid £4000, which he characteristically obtained half by borrowing and half on security of the poem *Rokeby*, still unwritten. During the next dozen years he played the laird at Abbotsford, keeping open house, sinking vast sums of money in enlarging his territory, and adorning the house in a manner that was frequently in the reverse of good taste. In 1826 came the crash. In 1801 he had assisted a Border printer, James Ballantyne, to establish a business at Edinburgh. In 1805 Scott became secretly a partner. As a printing firm the concern was a fair success; but in an evil moment, in 1809, Scott, with another brother, John Ballantyne, started a publishing business. The new firm was poorly managed from the beginning; in 1814 it was only the publication of *Waverley* that kept it on its legs, but the enormous success of the later Waverley

Novels gave it abounding prosperity—for the time. Then John Ballantyne, a reckless fellow, plunged heavily into further commitments, which entailed great loss; Scott in his easy fashion also drew heavily upon the firm's funds; and in 1826 the whole erection tumbled into ruin. With great courage and sterling honesty Scott refused to take the course that the other principals accepted naturally, and compound with his creditors. Instead he attempted what turned out to be the impossible task of paying the debt and surviving it. His liabilities amounted to £117,000, and before he died he had cleared off £70,000. After his death the remainder was made good, chiefly from the proceeds of Lockhart's *Life*, and his creditors were paid in full.

The gigantic efforts he made brought about his death. He had a slight paralytic seizure in 1830. It passed, but it left him with a clouded brain. He refused to desist from novel-writing, or even to slacken the pace. Other illness followed, his early lameness becoming more marked. After an ineffectual journey to Italy, he returned to Abbotsford, and died within sound of the river he loved so well.

2. His Poetry. Scott's earliest poetical efforts were translations from the German. *Lenore* (1799), the most considerable of them, is crude enough, but it has much of his later vigor and clatter. In 1802 appeared the first two volumes of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. In some respects the work is a compilation of old material; but Scott patched up the ancient pieces when it was necessary, and added some original poems of his own, which were done in the ancient manner. The best of his own contributions, such as *The Eve of St. John*, have a

strong infusion of the ancient force and fire, as well as a grimly supernatural element.

In *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) there is much more originality. The work is a poem of considerable length, professing to be the lay of an aged bard who seeks shelter in the castle of Newark. As a tale the poem is confused and difficult; as poetry it is mediocre; but the abounding vitality of the style, the fresh and intimate local knowledge, and the healthy love of nature made it a revelation to a public anxious to welcome the new Romantic methods. The poem was a great and instant success, and was quickly followed up with *Marmion* (1808).

In popular estimation *Marmion* is held to be Scott's masterpiece. The story deals with Flodden Field, and is intricate in detail, as Scott labors to obtain a *dénouement*. For several cantos the tale is cumbered with the masses of antiquarian and topical matter with which Scott's mind was fully charged. Once the narrative is within touch of Flodden it quickens considerably. The conclusion, dealing with the death of Marmion and the close of the battle, is one of the triumphs of martial verse:

> But as they left the dark'ning heath,
> More desperate grew the strife of death.
> The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
> In headlong charge their horse assail'd;
> Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
> To break the Scottish circle deep,
> That fought around their King.
> But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
> Though charging knights like whirlwinds go
> Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
> Unbroken was the ring;
> The stubborn spear-men still made good
> Their dark impenetrable wood,
> Each stepping where his comrade stood,
> The instant that he fell.
> No thought was there of dastard flight;

Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded King....

Next came *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), a still greater success, but clumsy in plot and heavy with unpoetical matter. The poem made the fortune of the Trossachs. In *Rokeby* (1813) the scene shifts to the North of England. As a whole this poem is inferior to its predecessors, but some of the lyrics have a seriousness and depth of tone that are quite uncommon in the spur-and-feather pageantry of Scott's verse. *The Bridal of Triermain* (1813) and *The Lord of the Isles* (1814) mark a decline in quality.

In addition to the longer poems Scott composed many lyrics, and continued to write such till late in his career. Most of them are passable in a tuneful and picturesque fashion; and in a few, such as *Proud Maisie* and *A Weary Lot is Thine*, he attains to something finer and deeper. A ballad from *Rokeby* has an intensity that gives it a strongly lyrical cast. The conclusion is as follows:

"With burnish'd brand and musketoon
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold Dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum."
"I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.

"And O! though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May!

"Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die;
The fiend whose lantern lights the mead

Were better mate than I!
And when I'm with my comrades met
Beneath the green-wood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.

"Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a summer queen."

As a poet Scott's reputation has depreciated and continues to depreciate. His faults, like his merits, are all on the surface: he lacks the finer poetical virtues, such as reflection, melody, and delicate sympathy; he (in poetry) is deficient in humor; he records crude physical action simply portrayed. Even the vigor that is often ascribed to him exists fitfully, for he loads his narrative with overabundant detail, often of a technical kind. When he does move freely he has the stamp, the rattle, and the swing of martial music. One must nevertheless do credit to the service he did to poetry by giving new zest to the Romantic methods that had already been adopted in poetry.

3. His Prose. About 1814 Scott largely gave up writing poetry, and save for a few short pieces wrote no more in verse. There are two chief reasons for his desertion of the poetical form. With his native shrewdness he saw that he had marketed as much verse as the public could absorb; and, secondly, as he confessed in the last year of his life, Byron had "bet" him by producing verse tales that were fast swallowing up the popularity of his own. In 1814 Scott returned to a fragment of a Jacobite prose romance that he had started and left unfinished in 1805. He left the opening chapters as they stood, and on to them tacked a rapid and brilliant narrative dealing with the Forty-five. This made the novel *Waverley*, which was issued anonymously in 1814.

Owing chiefly to its ponderous and lifeless beginning, the book hung fire for a space; but the remarkable remainder was almost bound to make it a success. After *Waverley* Scott went on from strength to strength: *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816), *The Black Dwarf* (1816), *Old Mortality* (1816), *Rob Roy* (1818), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), and *The Legend of Montrose* (1819). All these novels deal with scenes in Scotland, but not all with historical Scotland. They are not of equal merit, but even the weakest, *The Black Dwarf*, is astonishingly good. Scott now turned his gaze abroad, producing *Ivanhoe* (1820), the scene of which is pitched in early England; then turned again to Scotland and suffered failure with *The Monastery* (1820), though he triumphantly rehabilitated himself with *The Abbot* (1820), a sequel to the last. Henceforth he ranged abroad or stayed at home as he fancied in *Kenilworth* (1821), *The Pirate* (1822), *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822), *Peveril of the Peak* (1823), *Quentin Durward* (1823), *St. Ronan's Well* (1824), *Redgauntlet* (1824), *The Betrothed* (1825), and *The Talisman* (1825). By this time such enormous productivity was telling even on his gigantic powers. In the later books the narrative is often heavier, the humor more cumbrous, and the descriptions more labored.

Then came the financial deluge, and Scott began a losing battle against misfortune and disease. But even yet the odds were not too great for him; for in succession appeared *Woodstock* (1826), *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), *Count Robert of Paris* (1831), and *Castle Dangerous* (1831). The last works were dictated from the depths of mental and bodily anguish, and the furrows of mind and brow are all over them. Yet frequently the old spirit revives and

the ancient glory is renewed.

It should never be forgotten that along with these literary] labors Scott was filling the office of Clerk of Session, was laboriously performing the duties of a Border laird, and was compiling a mass of miscellaneous prose. Among this last are his editions of Dryden (1808) and Swift (1814), heavy tasks in themselves; the *Lives of the Novelists* (1820); the *Life of Napoleon* (1827), a gigantic work that cost him more labor than ten novels; and the admirable *Tales of a Grandfather* (1827–29). His miscellaneous articles, pamphlets, journals, and letters are a legion in themselves.

4. Features of his Novels. (*a*) *Rapidity of Production.* Scott's great success as a novelist led to some positive evils, the greatest of which was a too great haste in the composition of his stories. His haphazard financial methods, which often led to his drawing upon future profits, also tended to overproduction. Haste is visible in the construction of his plots, which are frequently hurriedly improvised, developed carelessly, and finished anyhow. As for his style, it is spacious and ornate, but he has little ear for rhythm and melody, and his sentences are apt to be shapeless. The same haste is seen in the handling of his characters, which sometimes finish weakly after they have begun strongly. An outstanding case of this is Mike Lambourne in *Kenilworth*.

It is doubtful if Scott would have done any better if he had taken greater pains. He himself admitted, and to a certain extent gloried in, his slapdash methods. So he must stand the inevitable criticisms that arise when his methods are examined.

(*b*) His *contribution to the novel* is very great

indeed. To the historical novel he brought a knowledge that was not pedantically exact, but manageable, wide, and bountiful. To the sum of this knowledge he added a life-giving force, a vitalizing energy, an insight, and a genial dexterity that made the historical novel an entirely new species. Earlier historical novels, such as Clara Reeve's *Old English Baron* (1777) and Miss Porter's *Scottish Chiefs* (1810), had been lifeless productions; but in the hands of Scott the historical novel became of the first importance, so much so that for a generation after his time it was done almost to death. It should also be noted that he did much to develop the domestic novel, which had several representatives in the Waverley series, such as *Guy Mannering* and *The Antiquary*. To this type of fiction he added freshness, as well as his broad and sane handling of character and incident.

(*c*) *His Shakespearian Qualities.* Scott has often been called the prose Shakespeare, and in several respects the comparison is fairly just. He resembles Shakespeare in the free manner in which he ranges high and low, right and left, in his search for material. On the other hand, in his character-drawing he lacks much of the Elizabethan's deep penetration, though he has much of Shakespeare's genial, tolerant humor, in which he strongly resembles also his great predecessor Fielding. It is probably in this large urbanity that the resemblance to Shakespeare is observed most strongly.

(*d*) *His Style.* The following extract will give some idea of Scott's style at its best. It lacks suppleness, but it is powerful, solid, and sure. In his use of the Scottish vernacular he is exceedingly natural and vivacious. His characters who employ the Scottish

dialect, such as Cuddie Headrigg or Jeanie Deans, owe much of their freshness and attraction to Scott's happy use of their native speech:

> Fergus, as the presiding judge was putting on the fatal cap of judgment, placed his own bonnet upon his head, regarded him with a steadfast and stern look, and replied in a firm voice: "I cannot let this numerous audience suppose that to such an appeal I have no answer to make. But what I have to say you would not bear to hear, for my defence would be your condemnation. Proceed, then, in the name of God, to do what is permitted to you. Yesterday and the day before you have condemned loyal and honourable blood to be poured forth like water. Spare not mine. Were that of all my ancestors in my veins, I would have perilled it in this quarrel." He resumed his seat, and refused again to rise.
>
> Evan Maccombich looked at him with great earnestness, and, rising up, seemed anxious to speak; but the confusion of the court and the perplexity arising from thinking in a language different from that in which he was to express himself, kept him silent. There was a murmur of compassion among the spectators, from the idea that the poor fellow intended to plead the influence of his superior as an excuse for his crime. The judge commanded silence, and encouraged Evan to proceed.
>
> "I was only ganging to say, my lord," said Evan, in what he meant to be an insinuating manner, "that if your excellent Honour and the honourable court would let Vich Ian Vohr go free just this once, and let him gae back to France, and no to trouble King George's government again, ony six o' the very best of his clan will be willing to be justified in his stead; and if you'll just let me gae down to Glennaquoich, I'll fetch them up to ye mysell, to head or hang, and you may begin wi'

me the very first man."

Waverley

JANE AUSTEN (1775–1817)

1. Her Life. Jane Austen was the daughter of a Hampshire clergyman. She was educated at home; her father was a man of good taste in the choice of reading material, and Jane's education was conducted on sound lines. Her life was unexciting, being little more than a series of pilgrimages to different places of residence, including the fashionable resort of Bath (1801). On the death of the rector his wife and two daughters removed to the neighbourhood of Southampton, where the majority of Jane Austen's novels were written. Her first published works were issued anonymously, and she died in middle age, before her merits had received anything like adequate recognition.

2. Her Novels. The chronology of Miss Austen's novels is not easy to follow, for her earliest works were the last to be published. In what follows we shall take the books approximately in their order of composition, not of publication.

Her first novel was *Northanger Abbey*, which was finished in 1798, but not published till 1818, after her death. The book begins as a burlesque of the Radcliffe type of the terror novel, which was then all the rage. The heroine, after a visit to Bath, is invited to an abbey, where she imagines romantic possibilities, but is in the end ludicrously undeceived. The incidents in the novel are ingloriously commonplace, and the characters flatly average. Yet the treatment is deft and touched with the finest needle-point of satiric observation. The style is smooth and unobtrusive, but covers a delicate

pricking of irony that is agreeable and masterly in its quiet way. Nothing quite like it had appeared before in the novel.

In *Pride and Prejudice* (1797) the same methods are to be seen. We have the same middle-class people pursuing the common round. The heroine is a girl of spirit, but she has no extraordinary qualities; the pride and prejudice of rank and wealth are gently but pleasingly titillated, as if they are being subjected to an electric current of carefully selected intensity. In unobtrusive and dexterous art the book is considered to be her masterpiece.

Sense and Sensibility (1798) was her third novel, and it followed the same general lines as its predecessors. Then came a long pause, for she could find no publisher to issue her work. The first to see print was the last mentioned, which appeared in 1811. Stimulated to further effort, in quick succession she wrote *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1816), and *Persuasion* (1818). The latter group are of the type of the others; if there is development it is seen in the still more inflexible avoidance of anything that is unusual or startling. The novels are all much the same, yet subtly and artistically different.

3. Features of her Novels. (*a*) *Her Plots.* Her plots are severely unromantic. Her first work, beginning as a burlesque of the horrible in fiction, finishes by being an excellent example of her ideal novel. As her art develops, even the slight casualties of common life—such an incident, for example, as the elopement that appears in *Pride and Prejudice*—become rarer; with the result that the later novels, such as *Emma*, are the pictures of everyday existence. Only the highest art can make such plots attractive, and Jane

Austen's does so.

(*b*) Her *characters* are developed with minuteness and accuracy. They are ordinary people, but are convincingly alive. She is fond of introducing clergymen, all of whom strike the reader as being exactly like clergymen, though each has his own individual characteristics. She has many characters of the first class, like the servile Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*, the garrulous Miss Bates in *Emma*, and the selfish and vulgar John Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey*. Her characters are not types, but individuals. Her method of portrayal is based upon acute observation and a quiet but incisive irony. Her male characters have a certain softness of thew and temper, but her female characters are almost unexceptionable in perfection of finish.

(*c*) Her *place in the history of fiction* is remarkable. Her qualities are of a kind that are slow to be recognized, for there is nothing loud or garish to catch the casual glance. The taste for this kind of fiction has to be acquired, but once it is acquired it remains strong. Jane Austen has won her way to a foremost place, and she will surely keep it.

We add a short extract to illustrate her clear and careful style, her skill in handling conversation, and the quiet irony of her method.

(*Catherine Morland, the heroine of the novel, is introduced to the society of Bath, where she cuts rather a lonely figure till she meets a young man called Tilney—"not quite handsome, but very near it." The following is part of their conversation at a dance.*)

After chatting some time on such matters as naturally arose from the objects around them, he suddenly addressed her with—"I have hitherto

been very remiss, madam, in the proper attentions of a partner here; I have not yet asked you how long you have been in Bath; whether you were ever here before; whether you have been at the Upper Rooms, the theatre, and the concert; and how you like the place altogether. I have been very negligent—but are you now at leisure to satisfy me in these particulars? If you are I will begin directly."

"You need not give yourself that trouble, sir."

"No trouble, I assure you, madam." Then forming his features into a set smile, and affectedly softening his voice, he added, with a simpering air, "Have you been long in Bath, madam?"

"About a week, sir," replied Catherine, trying not to laugh.

"Really!" with affected astonishment.

"Why should you be surprised, sir?"

"Why, indeed!" said he, in his natural tone; "but some emotion must appear to be raised by your reply, and surprise is more easily assumed, and not less reasonable, than any other.—Now let us go on. Were you never here before, madam?"

"Never, sir."

"Indeed! Have you yet honoured the Upper Rooms?"

"Yes, sir, I was there last Monday."

"Have you been to the theatre?"

"Yes, sir, I was at the play on Tuesday."

"To the concert?"

"Yes, sir, on Wednesday."

"And are you altogether pleased with Bath?"

"Yes—I like it very well."

"Now I must give one smirk, and then we may be rational again."

Northanger Abbey

OTHER NOVELISTS

1. Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849). This novelist was born in County Longford, Ireland. Her life is largely the catalogue of her books, which are numerous, varied, and in quality very unequal. Her best novels deal with Irish life. They were warmly praised by Scott, who declared that they gave him ideas for his own stories. *Castle Rackrent* (1800) is successful in its dealing with Irish characters; *Lenora* (1806) shows a good deal of power; *Tales of Fashionable Life* (1809) contains much of her best work, including *The Absentee*, which is commonly considered her masterpiece. Other works are *Patronage* (1814), *Harrington* (1817), and *Ormand* (1817). Her type of fiction is lively and agreeable, except when she indulges in a shallow kind of moralizing. In her day her popularity ran a close second to Scott's, but now only a slight flicker survives.

2. John Galt (1779–1839) was born in Ayrshire, and there he passed the early years of his life, afterward removing to Greenock. He studied for the Bar, but delicate health drove him abroad. After much traveling he settled in Scotland, and produced a large amount of literary work. He engaged unsuccessfully in business transactions, then took once more to writing novels and to journalism. He died at Greenock, where his career had commenced.

The best of his novels are *The Ayrshire Legatees* (1820), in the form of a letter-series, containing much amusing Scottish narrative; *The Annals of the*

Parish (1821), his masterpiece, which is the record of a fictitious country minister, doing in prose very much what Crabbe had done in verse; *The Entail* (1821); and *The Provost* (1822). Galt had a vigorous style and abundant imagination, with a great deal of humor and sympathetic observation. He is too haphazard and uneven to be a great novelist, though he has value as a painter of Scottish manners.

3. William Harrison Ainsworth (1805–82) was an early imitator of Scott. He wrote a great number of novels, which cover many periods of English history. The first was *Sir John Chiverton* (1825), but he scored his great success with the Dick Turpin romance *Rookwood* (1834). A few of the many others were *Jack Sheppard* (1839), an immense success, *The Tower of London* (1840), *Old St. Paul's* (1841), *Windsor Castle* (1843), *The Star Chamber* (1854), *The Constable of the Tower* (1861), and *Preston Fight* (1875). Ainsworth possesses little of Scott's genius, for his handling of history is crude and heavy, and consists of throwing in large, undigested lumps of history. He is feeble in his treatment of his characters, but when he is in the right vein he can give the reader a vigorous narrative and a fair quality of description.

4. George P. R. James (1801–60) was another follower of the method of Scott, and he was responsible for a hundred and eighty-nine volumes, chiefly novels. He was born in London; traveled abroad; settled down to novel-writing; on the strength of some serious historical work was appointed Historiographer Royal; entered the consular service; and died at Venice.

Richelieu (1828), which bears a strong resemblance to *Quentin Durward*, was his earliest,

and is by many considered to be his best, novel. Others include *Darnley* (1830), *De l'Orme* (1830), *The Gipsy* (1835), and *Lady Montague's Page* (1858). As was almost inevitable with such mass-production, he makes his novels on a stock pattern. He is fond of florid pageantry, and can be rather ingeniously mysterious in his plots. He has little power in dealing with his characters, and no imaginative grasp of history. In style he is undistinguished, but fluent and clear.

5. Charles Lever (1806–72). Lever was born in Dublin, was educated at Trinity College and Göttingen, and became a physician. The success of his novels caused him to desert his profession, and in the course of time (1842) he became editor of *The Dublin University Magazine*, which had published his first stories. In his latter years he lived abroad, was appointed consul in Sardinia (1858), and after some other changes died when consul at Trieste.

Harry Lorrequer (1839), his first novel, made a great hit. It is a novel of the picaresque type, dealing with the adventures of the hare-brained but lovable hero. *Charles O'Malley* (1841) is of the same species, and others are *Jack Hinton* (1842) and *Tom Burke of Ours* (1844). The scenes of these novels are pitched in Ireland; there is little plot, what there is consisting of the scrapes of the heroes; the humor is rough-and-tumble, though agreeably lively; and the heroes, who are all much the same, are amiable fellows, with a propensity for falling into trouble and falling out of it. A later class of Lever's novels was more of the historical cast, and includes *The O'Donovan* (1845) and *The Knight of Gwynne* (1847). Others dealt with the Continent, and include *The Dodd Family Abroad* (1854) and *The Fortunes of Glencore* (1857). These

latter are more stable and serious, and as novels are better than the earlier groups.

6. Frederick Marryat (1792–1848) followed the Smollett tradition of writing sea-stories. He was born in London, entered the Navy at an early age (1806), and saw some fighting just before the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars. He saw further service in different parts of the world, rose to be a captain, and spent much of his later life writing the novels that have given him his place in literature.

His earliest novel was *The Naval Officer* (1829), a loose and disconnected narrative, which was followed by *The King's Own* (1830), a much more able piece of work. From this point he continued to produce fiction at a great rate. The best of his stories are *Jacob Faithful* (1834), *Peter Simple* (1834), *Japhet in Search of a Father* (1836), *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836), and *Masterman Ready* (1841). All his best books deal with the sea, and have much of its breeziness. Marryat has a considerable gift for plain narrative, and his humor, though it is often coarse, is entertaining. His characters are of the stock types, but they are lively and suit his purpose, which is to produce a good yarn.

7. Michael Scott (1789–1835) was another novelist whose favorite theme was the sea. Scott was not a sailor like Marryat, but a merchant, first in Jamaica and then in his native city of Glasgow. His two tales, *Tom Cringle's Log* (1829) and *The Cruise of the Midge* (1834), were published in *Blackwood's Magazine*. They have attempts at fine writing which Marryat did not aspire to, and are none the better for it, for Scott seldom succeeds in being impressive. His actual nautical details lack the intimacy and freshness of Marryat's. He was, however, a gifted

story-teller, and his tales are rarely dull.

8. Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81), Lord Beaconsfield, was a Londoner of Jewish race, and after many struggles and failures rose to be leader of the Tory party in Parliament and Prime Minister. His political career does not concern us here.

He began his literary career as a novelist. *Vivian Grey* (1826) soon set the fashionable world talking of its author. It dealt with fashionable society, it was brilliant and witty, and it had an easy arrogance that amused, incensed, and attracted at the same time. The general effect of cutting sarcasm was varied, but not improved, by passages of florid description and sentimental moralizing. His next effort was *The Voyage of Captain Popanilla* (1829), a modern *Gulliver's Travels*. The wit is very incisive, and the satire, though it lacks the solid weight of Swift's, is sure and keen. Disraeli wrote a good number of other novels, the most notable of which were *Contarini Fleming* (1831), *Henrietta Temple* (1837), *Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845), and *Tancred* (1847). These last books, written when experience of public affairs had added depth to his vision and edge to his satire, are polished and powerful novels dealing with the politics of his day. At times they are too brilliant, for the continual crackle of epigram dazzles and wearies, and his tawdry taste leads him to overload his ornamental passages. Disraeli also carried further the idea of *Captain Popanilla* by writing *Alroy* (1832), *Ixion in Heaven* (1833), and *The Infernal Marriage*, which are half allegorical, half supernatural, but wholly satirical romances. In style the prose is inflated, but the later novels sometimes have flashes of real passion and insight.

9. Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1805–73) was the son

of General Bulwer. On the death of his mother he succeeded to her estate and took the name of Lytton, later becoming Lord Lytton. He was at first educated privately, and then at Cambridge, where he won a prize for English verse. He had a long and successful career both as a literary man and as a politician. He entered Parliament, was created in turn a baronet and a peer, and for a time held Cabinet rank.

His earliest efforts in literature were rather feeble imitations of the Byronic manner. His first novel was *Falkland* (1827), which was published anonymously, and then came *Pelham* (1828). These are pictures of current society, and are immature in their affectation of wit and cynicism. They contain some clever things, but they lack the real merit of the early novels of Disraeli. Another of the same kind was *Devereux* (1829). *Paul Clifford* (1830) changed the scene to the haunts of vice and crime, but was not at all convincing. Lytton now took to writing historical novels, the best of which were *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), *Rienzi* (1835), and *Harold* (1848). They are rather garish, but clever and attractive, and they had great popularity. He did not neglect the domestic novel, writing *The Caxtons* (1849) and *My Novel* (1853); and the terror and supernatural species were ably represented by *A Strange Story* (1862) and *The Coming Race* (1871). Lytton is never first-rate, but he is astonishingly versatile, and, considering the speed of his production, his books are of a high quality. His plays, such as *Richelieu* (1839) and *Money* (1840), had great success.

CHARLES LAMB (1775–1834)

1. His Life. Lamb was born in London, his father being a kind of factotum to a Bencher of the Middle Temple. The boy, who was a timid and retiring

youth, was educated at Christ's Hospital, where he was a fellow-pupil of Coleridge, whose early eccentricities he has touched upon with his usual felicity. He would have entered the Church, but an impediment in his speech made such a course impossible; instead he obtained a clerkship first in the South Sea House, then (1792) in the East India House, where the remainder of his working life was spent. There was a strain of madness in the family which did not leave him untouched, for in 1795–96 he was under restraint for a time. In the case of his sister, Mary Lamb, the curse was a deadly one. In September 1796 she murdered her mother in a sudden frenzy, and thereafter she had intermittent attacks of insanity. Lamb devoted his life to the welfare of his afflicted sister, who frequently appears in his essays under the name of Cousin Bridget. After more than thirty years' service Lamb retired (1825) on a pension, and the last ten years of his life were passed in blessed release from his desk. He was a charming man, a delightful talker, and one of the least assuming of writers. His reputation, based upon his qualities of humor, pathos, and cheery goodwill, is unsurpassed in our literature.

2. His Essays. Lamb started his literary career as a poet, producing short pieces of moderate ability, including the well-known *The Old Familiar Faces* and *To Hester*. He attempted a tragedy, *John Woodvil* (1801), in the style of his favorite Elizabethan playwrights, but it had no success on the stage. His *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), written in collaboration with his sister, are skillfully done, and are agreeable to read. His critical work, narrow in scope, is remarkable for its delicate insight and good literary taste. All these writings, however, are of little importance compared with his essays.

The first of his essays appeared in *The London Magazine* in 1820, when Lamb was forty-five years old. It was signed "Elia," a name taken almost at random as that of an old foreigner who used to haunt the South Sea House. The series continued till October 1822, and was published as *The Essays of Elia* (1823). A second series lasted from May 1824 to August 1825, and was published under the title of *The Last Essays of Elia* (1833).

The essays are unequaled in English. In subject they are of the usual miscellaneous kind, ranging from chimneysweeps to old china. They are, however, touched with personal opinions and recollections so oddly obtruded that interest in the subject is nearly swamped by the reader's delight in the author. No essayist is more egotistical than Lamb; but no egotist can be so artless and yet so artful, so tearful and yet so mirthful, so pedantic and yet so humane. It is this delicate clashing of humors, like the chiming of sweet bells, that affords the chief delight to Lamb's readers.

It is almost impossible to do justice to his style. It is old-fashioned, bearing echoes and odors from older writers like Sir Thomas Browne and Fuller; it is full of long and curious words; and it is dashed with frequent exclamations and parentheses. The humor that runs through it all is not strong, but airy, almost elfish, in note; it vibrates faintly, but in application never lacks precision. His pathos is of much the same character; and sometimes, as in *Dream-Children*, it deepens into a quivering sigh of regret. He is so sensitive and so strong, so cheerful and yet so unalteringly doomed to sorrow.

The extract given below deals with the playhouse, which was one of his greatest passions. The reader

can easily observe some of the above-mentioned features of his style.

> In those days were pit orders. Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them!—with one of these we went. I remember the waiting at the door—not that which is left—but between that and an inner door in shelter—O when shall I be such an expectant again!—with the cry of nonpareils, an indispensable playhouse accompaniment in those days. As near as I can recollect, the fashionable pronunciation of the theatrical fruiteresses then was, "Chase some oranges, chase some num-parels, chase a bill of the play;"—chase *pro* chuse. But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed—the breathless anticipations I endured! I had seen something like it in the plate prefixed to *Troilus and Cressida*, in Rowe's Shakespeare—the tent scene with Diomede—and a sight of that plate can always bring back in a measure the feeling of that evening.—The boxes at that time, full of well-dressed women of quality, projected over the pit; and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistering substance (I know not what) under glass (as it seemed), resembling—a homely fancy—but I judged it to be sugar-candy—yet, to my raised imagination, divested of its homelier qualities, it appeared a glorified candy! —The orchestra lights at length arose, those "fair Auroras!" Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again—and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up—I was not past six years old—and the play was *Artaxerxes*!
>
> *My First Play*

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785–1859)

1. His Life. De Quincey was born at Manchester,

where his father was a rich merchant. The elder De Quincey left considerable property, but De Quincey himself was improvident and unreliable in his financial affairs. He was educated first at Manchester Grammar School and then at Oxford. There he studied for a long time (1803–8), distinguishing himself by his ability in Greek. While he was an undergraduate (1804) he first became acquainted with opium, soaking his tobacco in the drug and then smoking it in order to alleviate the pains of neuralgia. His money was always easily spent, and his early struggles were a painful effort to make both ends meet. He earned a precarious livelihood by journalism, and lived for a long time (1809–30) in the Lake District, becoming intimate with the local literary celebrities. During this time his devotion to the drug was excessive, but he produced a large amount of work. Then, becoming loosely attached to the staff of *Blackwood's Magazine*, he removed to Edinburgh. In this neighborhood he remained till the end of his long life, and was buried in the Scottish capital.

2. His Works. De Quincey is one of the authors whose work is to be rigorously sifted. He wrote a large amount of prose; most of it is hack-work, a fair proportion is of good quality, and a small amount is of the highest merit. He wrote no book of any great length, in this respect resembling another opium-eater, Coleridge.

The book that made his name was his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821), which appeared in *The London Magazine*. The work, which is chaotic in its general plan, is a series of visions that melt away in the manner of dreams. Much is tawdry and unreal, but the book contains passages of great power and

beauty. The remainder of his work is a mass of miscellaneous production, the best of which is *The English Mail-coach*, *Suspiria de Profundis*, and *Murder considered as One of the Fine Arts*.

A great part of his work is dreary and diffuse, and vitiated by a humor that is extremely flat and ineffective. He displays a wide range of knowledge, though it is often flawed with inaccuracy. In style he is apt to stumble into vulgarity and tawdriness; but when inspiration descends upon him he gives to the English tongue a wonderful strength and sweetness. In these rare moments he plunges into an elaborate style and imagery, but never loses grip, sweeping along with sureness and ease. In rhythm and melody he is almost supreme; he can "blow through bronze" and "breathe through silver," and be impressive in both.

The passage we now give is among his most impressive efforts. It has the unity and passion of the lyric, and its effect is both thrilling and profound. Observe the studied rhythm, often ejaculatory, the deep and solemn beauty, and the simplicity of diction. This is poetic prose at its best:

> As a final specimen, I cite one of a different character, from 1820.
>
> The dream commenced with a music which now I often heard in dreams—a music of preparation and of awakening suspense; a music like the opening of the coronation anthem, and which, like *that*, gave the feeling of a vast march —of infinite cavalcades filing off—and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of final hope for human nature, then suffering some mysterious eclipse, and labouring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, I knew not where—somehow, I knew

not how—by some beings, I knew not whom—a battle, a strife, an agony was conducting—was evolving like a great drama, or piece of music; with which my sympathy was the more insupportable from my confusion as to its place, its cause, its nature, and its possible issue. I, as is usual in dreams (where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement), had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself, to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt. "Deeper than ever plummet sounded," I lay inactive.

Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some great interest was at stake; some mightier cause than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms: hurryings to and fro: trepidations of innumerable fugitives, I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad: darkness, and lights: tempest, and human faces; and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me, and but a moment allowed,—and clasped hands, and heart-breaking partings, and then—everlasting farewells! and with a sigh, such as the caves of hell sighed when Sin uttered the abhorred name of Death, the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells! and again, and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells!

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud—"I will sleep no more!"

The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater

WILLIAM HAZLITT (1778–1830)

The period now under review is very rich in critical and miscellaneous work. Of the writers of

literary criticism Hazlitt may be taken as representative.

1. His Life. Hazlitt was born in Shropshire, the son of a Unitarian minister. His first intention was to be a painter, but he abandoned the idea and took to letters as a profession. He was a friend of Coleridge, with whom he shared an ardent admiration for revolutionary principles. This enthusiasm, and others of a similar nature, Hazlitt was not slack in expressing; and this habit, added to a brawling acerbity of temper, made his life largely a series of quarrels and controversies.

2. His Works. His output was very large, and included many political works. Those that are of importance here are *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817), *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818), and *The Spirit of the Age* (1825). His longest work was the *Life of Napoleon* (1828) but it was of no great value.

Hazlitt's criticism, though it is limited in scope to English literature, shows great ability, shrewd insight, and sanity in its enthusiasms. It is far more precise and equable than that of Coleridge, broader and more incisive than Lamb's, and much more reasoned and scientific than De Quincey's. It is often spoilt by his political views, but when they are allowed for it can be trusted to a great degree.

His style is admirable for his purpose. It is readable and clear, and when necessary it can rise into expressing the keen zest that Hazlitt felt for the good and the wholesome in English literature. The following extract is of interest as a comparison of Addison and Steele:

> It may be said, that all this is to be found, in the same or a greater degree, in the *Spectator*. For

myself, I do not think so; or, at least, there is in the last work a much greater proportion of commonplace matter. I have, on this account, always preferred the *Tatler* to the *Spectator*. Whether it is owing to my having been earlier or better acquainted with the one than the other, my pleasure in reading these two admirable works is not at all in proportion to their comparative reputation. The *Tatler* contains only half the number of volumes, and, I will venture to say, at least an equal quantity of sterling wit and sense. "The first sprightly runnings" are there—it has more of the original spirit, more of the freshness and stamp of nature. The indications of character and strokes of humour are more true and frequent; the reflections that suggest themselves arise more from the occasion, and are less spun out into regular dissertations. They are more like the remarks which occur in sensible conversation, and less like a lecture. Something is left to the understanding of the reader. Steele seems to have gone into his closet chiefly to set down what he observed out of doors. Addison seems to have spent most of his time in his study, and to have spun out and wire-drawn the hints, which he borrowed from Steele, or took from nature, to the utmost. I am far from wishing to depreciate Addison's talents, but I am anxious to do justice to Steele, who was, I think, upon the whole, a less artificial and more original writer. The humorous descriptions of Steele resemble loose sketches, or fragments of a comedy; those of Addison are rather comments, or ingenious paraphrases, on the genuine text.

The English Comic Writers

OTHER WRITERS OF MISCELLANEOUS PROSE

1. Francis Jeffrey (1773–1850), one of the founders of *The Edinburgh Review*, was born at

Edinburgh, educated at the high school and university of his native city, and was called to the Scottish Bar. Though for many years an industrious writer for his journal, he maintained a considerable legal practice, and distinguished himself in politics as an ardent Whig and a supporter of the Reform Bill of 1832. When, after the passage of the Bill, his party came into office he was rewarded by being appointed Lord Advocate. This meant the abandonment of his position on the *Review*, though he always kept a paternal eye on its progress. He was finally appointed to the Bench, with the title of Lord Jeffrey.

The Edinburgh Review was at first a joint production of a group of young and zealous Whigs, including Sydney Smith and Dr. John Brown. After the first number Jeffrey was in sole control, and he drew around him a band of distinguished contributors, including at one time Sir Walter Scott and Lockhart. The journal led the way among the larger reviews, and was noted for its briskness. It was not above prejudice, as was shown in its opposition to the Lake School, but it did much to raise the standard of criticism, and it succeeded in bringing much talent to light, including the early efforts of Macaulay.

2. Sydney Smith (1771–1845) was for a time a colleague of Jeffrey. He was born in Essex, and was the son of a clergyman. He was educated at Winchester and Oxford, and became a clergyman in his turn. After traveling on the Continent as a tutor, he settled for a time at Edinburgh, and assisted in the launching of *The Edinburgh Review* (1802). He took a large share in the political squabbles of the time, and wrote much on behalf of the Whig party.

His works consist of many miscellaneous pieces,

most of them of a political character. The most noteworthy of them is a collection called *The Letters of Peter Plymley* (1807), which deals with Catholic Emancipation. A more general selection from his writings was published in 1855, and his *Wit and Wisdom* in 1861. Nowadays it is somewhat difficult to account for his great influence, for he has left so little of real merit; but to his own contemporaries he was a very important person. He was admired and feared as a wit, and some of his best witticisms have been preserved. He was always a gentlemanly opponent, always easy but deadly in the shafts leveled against his political foes. He wrote the prose of an educated man, and is clear and forcible.

3. John Wilson (1785–1854), who appears in literature as **Christopher North**, was born at Paisley, the son of a wealthy manufacturer. He was educated at Glasgow and Oxford, wrote poetry, and for a time settled in the Lake District. He lost most of his money, tried practice as a barrister, and then joined the staff of *Blackwood's Magazine*. He was appointed in 1820 Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University.

His early poems, *The Isle of Palms* (1812) and *The City of the Plague* (1816), are passable verse of the romantic type. His novels—for example, *The Trials of Margaret Lyndsay* (1823)—are sentimental pictures of Scottish life. His longest work, and the one that perpetuates his name, is his *Noctes Ambrosianæ* (beginning in 1822), which had a long and popular run in *Blackwood's*. This is an immensely long series of dialogues on many kinds of subjects. The characters are the members of a small club who meet regularly, consume great quantities of meat and drink, and frequently indulge in immoderate

clowning. The talk is endless, and is often tedious in the extreme. At times Wilson rises into striking descriptive passages, more florid and less impressive than De Quincey's, but beautiful in a sentimental fashion. His taste, however, cannot be trusted, and his humor is too often crude and boisterous.

4. John G. Lockhart (1794–1854) was born at Cambusnethan, educated at Glasgow and Oxford, and became a member of the Scottish Bar. He soon (1817) became a regular contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*, sharing in its strong Tory views and its still stronger expression of them. He rather gloried in these literary and political fisticuffs, which in one case led to actual bloodshed, though he did not participate in it. In 1820 he married Scott's favorite daughter Sophia, and lived to be the biographer of his famous father-in-law. He was editor of *The Quarterly Review* from 1826 till 1852.

Lockhart wrote four novels, the best of which are *Valerius* (1821) and *Adam Blair* (1822). They are painstaking endeavors, but they lack the fire of genius, and are now almost forgotten. His poetry is quite lively and attractive, especially his *Spanish Ballads* (1821). *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* (1819) is a collection of brilliant sketches of Edinburgh society. Lockhart's fame, however, rests on *The Life of Scott* (1837–38), which was first published in seven volumes. This book ranks as one of the great biographies in the language. Though it is full of intimate and loving detail, it possesses a fine sense of perspective and coherence; and while it is influenced by a natural partiality for its subject, the story is judiciously told. In this book Lockhart casts aside his aggressiveness of manner. His descriptions, as, for example, that of the death of Scott, have a masterly

touch.

5. William Cobbett (1762–1835) was born at Farnham, Surrey, and was the son of a farm-laborer. He enlisted in the Army, rose to be sergeant-major, emigrated to America, where he took to journalism, and returned to England, to become actively engaged in politics. In 1835 he was elected to Parliament, but was not a success as a public man. He was a man of violent opinions, boxed the political compass, and died an extreme Radical.

He was an assiduous journalist, beginning with *Peter Porcupine's Journal* (1801). His other paper was his *Political Register*, which he began in 1802 and carried on till 1835. His further literary work is contained in his *Rural Rides in England*. He writes with an unaffected simplicity that reminds the reader of Bunyan, and his descriptions of contemporary England are clear and forcible.

6. The **historians** belonging to this period are both numerous and important, but we can mention only a few.

(*a*) **Henry Hart Milman (1791–1868)** was educated at Eton and Oxford, and afterward wrote some plays, including the tragedy *Fazio* (1817). His chief historical works are *The History of the Jews* (1829) and *The History of Latin Christianity* (1856). Milman is a solid and reliable historian, with a readable style.

(*b*) **George Grote (1794–1871)** was a London banker, and entered politics. His *History of Greece* (1846–56) is based on German research, and is well informed and scholarly. The work, however, is sometimes considered to be too long and tedious in its detail.

(*c*) **Henry Hallam (1777–1859)** was a member of the Middle Temple, but he practiced very little. He wrote on both literary and historical subjects, and contributed to *The Edinburgh Review*. His historical works include *A Constitutional History of England* (1827) and *An Introduction to the Literature of Europe* (1838–39). Hallam acquired a great and deserved reputation for solid scholarship. Like Gibbon, he tried to attune his style to his subject, and wrote in a grave and impressive manner, but, lacking the genius of Gibbon, he succeeded only in making his style lifeless and frigid.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

The amount of actual development during this period was not so great as the immense output. Authors were content with the standard literary forms, and it was upon these as models that the development took place.

1. Poetry. (*a*) This was indeed the golden age of the *lyric*, which reflected the Romantic spirit of the time in liberal and varied measure. It comprised the exalted passion of Shelley, the meditative simplicity of Wordsworth, the sumptuous descriptions of Keats, and the golden notes of Coleridge. It is to be noted that in form the lyric employed the ancient externals of the stereotyped meters and rhymes. There was some attempt at rhymeless poems in the work of Southey and the early poems of Shelley, but this practice was never general.

(*b*) With *descriptive and narrative poems* the age was richly endowed. One has only to recall Byron's early work, Keats's tales, Coleridge's supernatural stories, and Scott's martial and historical romances to perceive how rich was the harvest. Once more the

poets work upon older methods. The Spenserian stanza is the favorite model, but the ballad is nearly as popular. These older types suffered some change, as was almost inevitable with such inspired minds at work upon them. The Spenserian manner was loosened and strengthened; it was given richer and more varied beauties in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and a sharper and more personal note in the *Childe Harold* of Byron. In the case of Wordsworth we observe the frequent use of blank verse for meditative purposes, as in *The Prelude*.

(*c*) *Satirical poems* were numerous; and their tone was fierce, for the success of the French Revolution led to the expression of new hopes and desires. Outstanding examples were Byron's *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgment* and Shelley's *Masque of Anarchy*.

2. Drama. Drama was written as freely as ever, but rather as a form of literary exercise than as a serious attempt at creating a new dramatic standard. Tragedy almost monopolized the activities of the major poets. Of all the tragedies Shelley's *Cenci* came first in power and simplicity. Byron's tragedies had little merit as dramas; and Wordsworth's *Borderers* and Coleridge's *Remorse* added little to the fame of their authors.

The comic spirit in drama was in abeyance. Shelley's *Œdipus Tyrannus, or Swellfoot the Tyrant*, is almost the only instance of it worth mention, and this was a poor specimen of that writer's creative power.

3. Prose. (*a*) *The Novel.* Of the different kinds of prose composition, the novel showed in this period the most marked development. This was largely due to the work of Scott and Jane Austen, who

respectively established the historical and domestic types of novel.

With regard to the work of Scott, we can here only briefly summarize what has already been said. He raised the historical novel to the rank of one of the major kinds of literature; he brought to it knowledge, and through the divine gift of knowledge made it true to life; he fired historical characters with living energy; he set on foot the device of the unhistorical hero—that is, he made the chief character purely fictitious, and caused the historical persons to rotate about it; he established a style that suited many periods of history; and pervading all these advances was a great and genial personality that transformed what might have been mere lumber into an artistic product of truth and beauty.

Miss Austen's achievement was of a different kind. She revealed the beauty and interest that underlie ordinary affairs; she displayed the infinite variety of common life, and so she opened an inexhaustible vein that her successors were assiduously to develop.

Most of the other novelists of the time were either imitators of Scott, like James and Ainsworth, or a combination of Scott and Miss Austen, like Bulwer-Lytton. Disraeli developed a rather different species in his brilliant society novels, which depended for their chief effects on satiric insight and caustic epigram. *Tancred* is probably the best of this species.

(*b*) *Periodical Literature.* At the beginning of this chapter we noted the chief members of a great new community of literary journals. These periodicals were of a new type. Previous literary journals, like *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1731), had been feeble productions, the work of elegant amateurs or underpaid hack-writers. Such papers had little

weight. The new journals were supreme in the literary world; they attracted the best talent; they inspired fear and respect; and in spite of many defects their literary product was worthy of their reputation.

(*c*) *The Essay*. Finding a fresh outlet in the new type of periodical, the essay acquired additional importance. The purely literary essay, exemplified in the works of Southey, Hazlitt, and Lockhart, increased in length and solidity. It now became a review—that is, a commentary on a book or books under immediate inspection, but in addition expounding the wider theories and opinions of the reviewer. This new species of essay was to be developed still further in the works of Carlyle and Macaulay.

The miscellaneous essay, represented in the works of Lamb, likewise, acquired an increased dignity. It was growing beyond the limits set by Addison and Johnson. It was more labored and aspiring, and contained many more mannerisms of the author. This kind also was to develop in the hands of the succeeding generation.

(*d*) Other prose works must receive scanty notice. The art of letter-writing still flourished, as can be seen in the works of Byron, Shelley, and Lamb. Lamb in particular has a charm that reminds the reader of that of Cowper. Byron's letters, though egotistical enough, are breezy and humorous.

Biographical work is adequately represented in *The Life of Byron*, by Moore, and *The Life of Scott*, by Lockhart. These books in their general outlines follow the model of Boswell, though they do not possess the artless self-revelation of their great predecessor. There is an advance shown by their

division into chapters and other convenient stages, a useful arrangement that Boswell did not adopt.

The amount of historical research was very great, and the historians ranged abroad and tilled many fields; but in their general methods there was little advance on the work of their predecessors.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

1. Poetry. This period being instinct with the spirit of revolt, it may be taken for granted that in poetic style there is a great range of effort and experiment. The general tendency is toward simplicity of diction and away from the mannerisms of the eighteenth century. In the case of the major poets, the one who comes nearest in style to the eighteenth century is Byron; next to him, in spite of his theories of simplicity, comes Wordsworth, who has a curious inflation of style that is kept within bounds only by his intense imaginative power. The best work of Coleridge and Shelley is marked by the greatest simplicity; but, on the other hand, Keats is too fond of golden diction to resist the temptation to be ornate.

2. Prose. In this period we behold the dissolution of the more formal prose style of the previous century. With this process the journalists and miscellaneous prose-writers have much to do. In the place of the older type we see a general tendency toward a useful middle style, as in the books of Southey and Hazlitt. Outside this mass of middle prose we have a range from the greatest simplicity to the highest efforts of poetic prose. At one end of the scale we have the perfectly plain style of Cobbett. The passage we give (from the *Rural Rides*) could not be simpler, but it is energetic and expressive:

> When I returned to England in 1800, after an absence from the country parts of it for sixteen years, the trees, the hedges, even the parks and woods, seemed so small! It made me laugh to hear little gutters, that I could jump over, called rivers. The Thames was but a 'creek!' But when in about a month after my arrival in London, I went to Farnham, the place of my birth, what was my surprise! Every thing was become so pitifully small! I had to cross in my postchaise the long and dreary heath of Bagshot. Then at the end of it, to mount a hill called Hungry Hill: and from that hill I knew that I should look down into the beautiful and fertile vale of Farnham. My heart fluttered with impatience, mixed with a sort of fear, to see all the scenes of my childhood; for I had learned before the death of my father and mother.

From Cobbett we range through a large number of writers, like Lockhart and Miss Austen, who write in the usual middle style to the more labored manner of Scott, who in his descriptive passages adopts a kind of Johnsonese. When he writes in the Scots dialect he writes simply and clearly, but in his heavier moods we have a style like that which follows. Note the long and complicated sentences, and the labored diction.

> The brow of the hill, on which the Royal Life-Guards were now drawn up, sloped downwards (on the side opposite to that which they had ascended) with a gentle declivity for more than a quarter of a mile, and presented ground which, though unequal in some places, was not altogether unfavourable for the manœuvres of cavalry, until near the bottom, when the slope terminated in a marshy level, traversed through its whole length by what seemed either a natural gully or a deep artificial drain, the sides of which

were broken by springs, trenches filled with water, out of which peats and turf had been dug, and here and there by some straggling thickets of alders, which loved the moistness so well that they continued to live as bushes, although too much dwarfed by the sour soil and the stagnant bog-water to ascend into trees. Beyond this ditch or gully the ground arose into a second heathy swell, or rather hill, near to the foot of which, and as if with the object of defending the broken ground and ditch that covered their front, the body of insurgents appeared to be drawn up with the purpose of abiding battle.

Old Mortality

From Scott the evolution of style can be traced through the mannered, half-humorous ornateness of Lamb to the florid poetic prose of Wilson and the dithyrambic periods of De Quincey. As a final specimen we give an extract from the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. The style is fervidly exclamatory, but it lacks the depth of De Quincey's at its best.

Shepherd. Oh that I had been a sailor! To hae circumnavigated the world! To hae pitched our tents, or built our bowers, on the shores o' bays sae glittering wi' league-long wreaths o' shells, that the billows blushed crimson as they murmured! To hae seen our flags burning meteor-like, high up among the primeval woods, while birds, bright as bunting, sat trimming their plumage amang the cordage, sae tame in that island where ship had haply never touched before, nor ever might touch again, lying in a latitude by itself, and far out of the breath o' the tradewinds! Or to hae landed with a' the crew, marines and a'—except a guard on shipboard to keep aff the crowd o' canoes—on some warlike isle, tossing wi' the plumes on chieftain's heads, and sound—sound—sounding wi' gongs! What's a man-o'-

war's barge, Mr Tickler, beautiful sight tho' it be, to the hundred-oared canoe o' some savage Island-king!

TABLE TO ILLUSTRATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

DATE	POETRY			DRAMA	
	Lyric	Narrative-Descriptive	Satirical and Didactic	Comedy	Trag
1800	Wordsworth[198] Coleridge[198]	Southey Landor			
1810	Moore Campbell	Scott[201] Wordsworth			
1820	Byron Hogg Shelley Keats	Byron[202] Hogg Shelley[203] Moore Keats[206]	J. and H. Smith Moore Shelley Byron[208]		Byron[205 Shelley[20

1830					
	Elliott		Elliott		
1840			Hood		Wordsv

EXERCISES

1. Below are given two extracts on autumn, one written by Keats and one by Shelley. Compare them carefully with regard to selection of details, style, and meter. How far does each reflect the nature of its author?

(1) Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease;
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

KEATS, *Ode to Autumn*

(2) The warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying,
And the Year
On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
Is lying.
Come, Months, come away,
From November to May,
In your saddest array;
Follow the bier
Of the dead cold Year,

And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.
SHELLEY, *Autumn: A Dirge*

2. From an examination of the following extracts, and from what has already been said regarding their respective authors, write a brief account of the style of the authors. How do the extracts compare as regards clearness, lucidity, and melody?

(1) During the first year that Mr Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such, as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them, when they present themselves.

COLERIDGE, *Biographia Literaria*

(2) I thought that it was a Sunday morning in

May, that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnised by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet; but the mountains were raised to more than alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of meadows and forest lawns; the hedges were rich with white roses; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves, and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had tenderly loved, just as I had really beheld them, a little before sunrise in the same summer, when that child died.

DE QUINCEY, *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*

(3) When a child, what a mysterious pleasure it was to witness their operation!—to see a chit no bigger than one's-self enter, one knew not by what process, into what seemed the *fauces Averni* —to pursue him in imagination, as he went sounding on through so many dark stifling caverns, horrid shades!—to shudder with the idea that "now, surely, he must be lost for ever!"—to revive at hearing his feeble shout of discovered daylight—and then (O fulness of delight!) running out of doors, to come just in time to see the sable phenomenon emerge in safety, the brandished weapon of his art victorious like some flag waved over a conquered citadel! I seem to remember having been told that a bad sweep was once left in a stack with his brush, to indicate which way the wind blew. It was an awful spectacle certainly; not much unlike the old stage direction in *Macbeth*, where the "Apparition of a child

crowned, with a tree in his hand, rises."

LAMB, *The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers*

(4) If a young reader should ask, after all, What is the best way of knowing bad poets from good, the best poets from the next best, and so on? the answer is, the only and two-fold way; first, the perusal of the best poets with the greatest attention; and second, the cultivation of that love of truth and beauty which made them what they are. Every true reader of poetry partakes of a more than ordinary portion of the poetic nature; and no one can be completely such, who does not love, or take an interest in everything that interests the poet, from the firmament to the daisy —from the highest heart of man, to the most pitiable of the low. It is a good practice to read with pen in hand, marking what is liked or doubted. It rivets the attention, realises the greatest amount of enjoyment, and facilitates reference. It enables the reader also, from time to time, to see what progress he makes with his own mind, and how it grows up to the stature of its exalter.

LEIGH HUNT, *Letters*

3. Each of the following extracts from narrative poetry is an example of the Romantic style. How is the Romantic spirit revealed in each, and how far is each different from the others?

(1) The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemock'd the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watch'd the water-snakes:
They mov'd in tracks of shining white,
And when they rear'd, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watch'd their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coil'd and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

COLERIDGE, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

(2) And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavendered,
While he forth from the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd,
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon,
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

KEATS, *The Eve of St. Agnes*

(3) Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
Received, but recked not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round.
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel,
Through bars of brass and triple steel!
They tug, they strain; down, down they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below!
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compressed,
His knee was planted on his breast;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!

SCOTT, *The Lady of the Lake*

(4) While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile, or Inde,

Or Thames, or Tweed), and 'midst them an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
Seated their fellow traveller on a cloud.

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved;
His brow was like the deep when tempest-toss'd;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

BYRON, *The Vision of Judgment*

4. The two following extracts represent two styles used by Scott. How far is each appropriate to the characters, the period, and the occasion of each novel? Which seems the more natural? How does this compare with Shakespeare's use of prose and blank verse in his plays?

(1) "Od, here's another," quoth Mrs Mailsetter. "A ship-letter—post-mark, Sunderland." All rushed to seize it.—"Na, na, leddies," said Mrs Mailsetter, interfering; "I hae had eneugh o' that wark—ken ye that Mr Mailsetter got an unco rebuke frae the secretary at Edinburgh, for a complaint that was made about the letter of Aily Bisset's that ye opened, Mrs Shortcake?"

"Me opened!" answered the spouse of the chief baker of Fairport; "ye ken yoursel', madam, it just cam open o' free will in my hand—what could I help it?—folk suld seal wi' better wax."

"Weel I wot that's true, too," said Mrs Mailsetter, who kept a shop of small wares, "and we have got some that I can honestly recommend, if ye ken onybody wanting it. But the short and the lang o't is, that we'll lose the place gin there's ony mair complaints o' the kind."

"Hout, lass—the provost will take care o' that."

"Na, na—I'll neither trust to provost nor bailie," said the postmistress,—"but I wad ay be obliging and neighbourly, and I'm no again your looking at the outside of a letter neither.—See, the seal has an anchor on't—he's done't wi' ane o' his buttons, I'm thinking."

The Antiquary

(2) "And these are all nobles of Araby?" said Richard, looking around on wild forms with their persons covered with haiks, their countenances swart with the sunbeams, their teeth as white as ivory, their black eyes glancing with fierce and preternatural lustre from under the shade of their turbans, and their dress being in general simple, even to meanness.

"They claim such rank," said Saladin; "but, though numerous, they are within the conditions of the treaty, and bear no arms but the sabre—even the iron of their lances is left behind."

"I fear," muttered De Vaux in English, "they have left them where they can be soon found.—A most flourishing House of Peers, I confess, and would find Westminster Hall something too narrow for them."

"Hush, De Vaux," said Richard, "I command thee.—Noble Saladin," he said, "suspicion and thou cannot exist on the same ground.—Seest thou," pointing to the litters—"I too have brought some champions with me, though armed, perhaps, in breach of agreement, for bright eyes and fair features are weapons which cannot be left behind."

The Talisman

5. Compare Wordsworth's view of nature with that of Byron, as revealed in the two following extracts.

Which view seems to be the deeper and clearer? How far does each reflect the life and habits of the author?

(1)The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn, nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed,—for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue.

WORDSWORTH, *Tintern Abbey*

(2) And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wantoned with thy breakers, they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror,'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

BYRON, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

6. The first extract below gives Shelley's idea of the cause of Keats's death. Compare it with the more cynical utterance of Byron, quoted next. How far does each extract reveal the author's attitude toward life in general? How far is each statement true?

(1) Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown:

It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre
unstrung.

Adonais

(2) John Keats, who was killed off with one critique,
Just as he really promised something great,
If not intelligible, without Greek
Contrived to talk about the gods of late,
Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;
'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should of itself be snuffed out by an article.

Don Juan

7. Compare Scott and Coleridge as narrative poets.

8. How far does the supernatural enter into the work of Scott, Shelley, and Coleridge? Give a brief account of each.

9. Mention some of the chief literary critics of the period. What are the main features of their criticism?

10. Give an account of the contemporary drama, naming some of the chief plays and giving a criticism of their principal features.

11. What use do Shelley, Keats, and Coleridge make of natural features? How do their attitudes compare with that of Wordsworth?

12. Write a note on the chief satirists of the period both in prose and poetry.

13. Estimate the importance of Scott's contribution to the novel.

14. Who are the chief lyrical poets of the period? Point out their respective excellences and defects.

15. "In the earliest years of the nineteenth

century, all the influences which were most harmful to prose style were most rife. The best elements of the eighteenth-century prose were gone, and a new host were rushing into literature." (Craik.) What were the influences that were at work? How far did they affect prose style? How far did the influence of journalism affect prose style?

16. "In point of genius the period is a period of poetry; in point of mere form the remarkable change in it concerns not poetry but prose." (Saintsbury.) Discuss this statement. How far do the poets excel the prose-writers in merit? Did the prose-writers revolt more strongly against the earlier fashions?

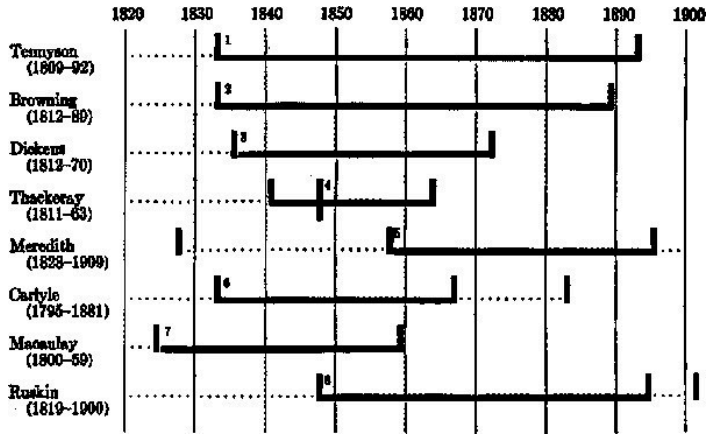
17. "*The Excursion* and *The Prelude*, his poems of greatest bulk, are by no means Wordsworth's best work. His best work is in his shorter pieces." (Matthew Arnold.) Discuss this statement.

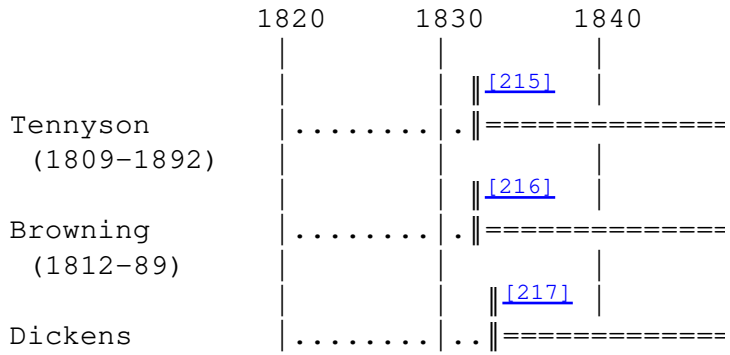
CHAPTER XI

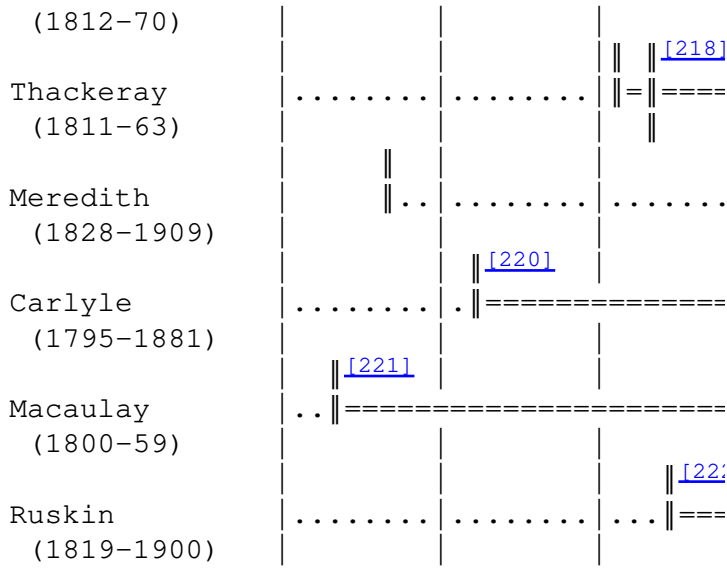
THE VICTORIAN AGE

TIME-CHART OF THE CHIEF AUTHORS

The thick line represents the period of important literary work.







THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. An Era of Peace. The few colonial wars that broke out during the Victorian epoch did not seriously disturb the national life. There was one Continental war that directly affected Britain—the Crimean War—and one that affected her indirectly though strongly—the Franco-German struggle; yet neither of these caused any profound changes. In America the great civil struggle left scars that were soon to be obliterated by the wise statesmanship of her rulers. The whole age may be not unfairly described as one of peaceful activity. In the earlier stages the lessening surges of the French Revolution were still left; but by the middle of the century they had almost completely died down, and other hopes and ideals, largely pacific, were gradually taking their place.

2. Material Developments. It was an age alive with new activities. There was a revolution in

commercial enterprise, due to the great increase of available markets, and, as a result of this, an immense advance in the use of mechanical devices. The new commercial energy was reflected in the Great Exhibition of 1851, which was greeted as the inauguration of a new era of prosperity.

3. Intellectual Developments. There can be little doubt that in many cases material wealth produced a hardness of temper and an impatience of projects and ideas that brought no return in hard cash; yet it is to the credit of this age that intellectual activities were so numerous. There was quite a revolution in scientific thought following upon the works of Darwin and his school, and an immense outburst of social and political theorizing which was represented in England by the writings of men like Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill. In addition, popular education became a practical thing. This in its turn produced a new hunger for intellectual food, and resulted in a great increase in the productions of the Press and of other more durable species of literature.

LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

The sixty years (1830–90) commonly included under the name of the Victorian age present many dissimilar features; yet in several respects we can safely generalize.

1. Its Morality. Nearly all observers of the Victorian age are struck by its extreme deference to the conventions. To a later age these seem ludicrous. It was thought indecorous for a man to smoke in public and (much later in the century) for a lady to ride a bicycle. To a great extent the new morality was a natural revolt against the grossness of the earlier Regency, and the influence of the Victorian

Court was all in its favor. In literature it is amply reflected. Tennyson is the most conspicuous example in poetry, creating the priggishly complacent Sir Galahad and King Arthur. Dickens, perhaps the most representative of the Victorian novelists, took for his model the old picaresque novel; but it is almost laughable to observe his anxiety to be "moral." This type of writing is quite blameless, but it produced the kind of public that denounced the innocuous *Jane Eyre* as wicked because it dealt with the harmless affection of a girl for a married man.

2. The Revolt. Many writers protested against the deadening effects of the conventions. Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, in their different accents, were loud in their denunciations; Thackeray never tired of satirizing the snobbishness of the age; and Browning's cobbly mannerisms were an indirect challenge to the velvety diction and the smooth self-satisfaction of the Tennysonian school. As the age proceeded the reaction strengthened. In poetry the Pre-Raphaelites, led by Swinburne and William Morris, proclaimed no morality but that of the artist's regard for his art. By the vigor of his methods Swinburne horrified the timorous, and made himself rather ridiculous in the eyes of sensible people. It remained for Mr. Hardy (whom we reserve for the next chapter) to pull aside the Victorian veils and shutters and with the large tolerance of the master to regard men's actions with open gaze. To the present day, sometimes wisely, often unwisely, poet and novelist have carried on the process; and the end is not yet.

3. Intellectual Developments. The literary product was inevitably affected by the new ideas in science, religion, and politics. *The Origin of Species*

(1859) of Darwin shook to its foundations scientific thought. We can perceive the influence of such a work in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, in Matthew Arnold's meditative poetry, and in the works of Carlyle. In religious and ethical thought the "Oxford Movement," as it was called, was the most noteworthy advance. This movement had its source among the young and eager thinkers of the old university, and was headed by the great Newman, who ultimately (1845) joined the Church of Rome. As a religious portent it marked the widespread discontent with the existing beliefs of the Church of England; as a literary influence it affected many writers of note, including Newman himself, Froude, Maurice, Kingsley, and Gladstone.

4. The New Education. The Education Acts, making a certain measure of education compulsory, rapidly produced an enormous reading public. The cheapening of printing and paper increased the demand for books, so that the production was multiplied. The most popular form of literature was the novel, and the novelists responded with a will. Much of their work was of a high standard, so much so that it has been asserted by competent critics that the middle years of the nineteenth century were the richest in the whole history of the novel.

5. International Influences. During the nineteenth century the interaction among American and European writers was remarkably fresh and strong. In Britain the influence of the great German writers was continuous, and it was championed by Carlyle and Matthew Arnold. Subject nations, in particular the Italians, were a sympathetic theme for prose and verse. The Brownings, Swinburne, Morris, and Meredith were deeply absorbed in the long

struggle of the followers of Garibaldi and Cavour; and when Italian freedom was gained the rejoicings were genuine.

6. The Achievement of the Age. With all its immense production, the age produced no supreme writer. It revealed no Shakespeare, no Shelley, nor (in the international sense) a Byron or a Scott. The general literary level was, however, very high; and it was an age, moreover, of spacious intellectual horizons, noble endeavor, and bright aspirations.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–92)

1. His Life. Alfred Tennyson, the son of a clergyman, was born at his father's living at Somersby in Lincolnshire. After some schooling at Louth, which was not agreeable to him, he proceeded to Cambridge (1828). At the university he was a wholly conventional person, and the only mark he made was to win the Chancellor's Prize for a poem on Timbuctoo. He left Cambridge without taking a degree; but before doing so he published a small volume of mediocre verse. During the next twenty years he passed a tranquil existence, living chiefly with his parents, and writing much poetry. Pleasant jaunts—to the Lake District, to Stratford-on-Avon, and other places—varied his peaceful life, and all the while his fame as a poet was making headway. In 1844 he lost most of his small means in an unlucky speculation, but in the nick of time (1845) he received a Government pension. He was appointed Poet Laureate (1850) in succession to Wordsworth, married, and removed to Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, which was his home for the next twenty years. In his later years recognition and applause came increasingly upon him, and he was regarded as the greatest poet of his day. In 1884 he

was created a baron, sat in the House of Lords, and for a time took himself rather seriously as a politician, falling out with Gladstone over the Irish question. He died at Aldworth, near Haslemere, in Surrey, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

2. His Poetry. When he was seventeen years old Tennyson collaborated with his elder brother Charles in *Poems by Two Brothers* (1826). The volume is a slight one, but in the light of his later work we can already discern a little of the Tennysonian metrical aptitude and descriptive power. His prize poem of *Timbuctoo* (1829) is not much better than the usual prize poem. His *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830), published while he was an undergraduate, are yet immature, but in pieces like *Isabel* and *Madeleine* the pictorial effect and the sumptuous imagery of his maturer style are already conspicuous.

His volume of *Poems* (1832) is of a different quality, and marks a decided advance. In this book, which contains *Mariana in the South* and *The Palace of Art*, we see the Tennysonian features approaching perfection. *Poems* (1833), with such notable items as *Œnone* and *The Lotos-Eaters*, advances still further in technique. Then in 1842 he produced two volumes of poetry that set him once and for all among the greater poets of his day. The first volume contains revised forms of some of the numbers published previously, the second is entirely new. It opens with *Morte d'Arthur*, and contains *Ulysses*, *Locksley Hall*, and several other poems that stand at the summit of his achievement.

The later stages of his career are marked chiefly by much longer poems. *The Princess* (1847) is a serio-comic attempt to handle the theme that was then known as "the new woman." For the sake of his story

Tennyson imagines a ladies' academy with a mutinously intellectual princess at the head of it. For a space a tragedy seems imminent, but in the end all is well, for the Princess is married to the blameless hero. The poem is in blank verse, but interspersed are several singularly beautiful lyrics. The humor is heavy, but many of the descriptions are as rich and wonderful as any Tennyson ever attempted.

In Memoriam (1850) caused a great stir when it first appeared. It is a very long series of meditations upon the death of Arthur Henry Hallam, Tennyson's college friend, who died at Vienna in 1833. Tennyson brooded over the subject for years; and upon this elegiac theme he imposed numerous meditations on life and death, showing how these subjects were affected by the new theories of the day. To a later generation his ideas appear pallid enough; but at the time they marked a great advance upon the notions of the past. The poem is adorned with many beautiful sketches of English scenery; and the meter—now called the *In Memoriam* meter—which is quite rare, is deftly managed.

Maud and Other Poems (1855) was received with amazement by the public. The chief poem is called a "monodrama"; it consists of a series of lyrics which reflect the love and hatred, the hope and despair, of a lover who slays his mistress's brother, and then flies broken to France. The whole tone of the work is forced and fevered, and it ends in a glorification of war and bloodshed. It does not add to Tennyson's fame.

Beginning in 1859, Tennyson issued a series of *Idylls of the King*, which had considered and attempted a great theme that Milton abandoned—that of King Arthur and the Round Table. Many

doting admirers saw in the *Idylls* an allegory of the soul of man; but in effect Tennyson drew largely upon the simple tales of Malory, stripping them of their "bold bawdry" to please his public, and covering them with a thick coating of his delicate and detailed ornamentation. It is doubtful if this unnatural compound of Malory-Tennyson is quite a happy one, but we do obtain much blank verse of noble and sustained power.

The only other poem of any length is *Enoch Arden* (1864), which became the most popular of all, and found its way in translation into foreign languages. The plot is cheap enough, dealing with a seaman, supposedly drowned, who returns and, finding his wife happily married to another man, regretfully retires without making himself known. The tale, as ever, is rich with Tennysonian adornment. In particular, there is a description of the tropical island where Enoch is wrecked that is among the highest flights of the poet:

> The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
> And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,
> The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
> The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
> The lustre of the long convolvuluses
> That coiled around the stately stems, and ran
> Even to the limit of the land, the glows
> And glories of the broad belt of the world,
> All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
> He could not see, the kindly human face,
> Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
> The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
> The league-long roller thundering on the reef.

His last poems contain a harsher note, as if old age had brought disillusion and a peevish discontent with the pleasant artifices that had graced his prime. Even the later instalments of the *Idylls of the King* contain jarring notes, and are often fretful and

unhappy in tone. Among the shorter poems, *Locksley Hall Sixty Years after* (1885) and *The Death of Œnone* (1892) are sad echoes of the sumptuous imaginings of the years preceding 1842.

3. His Plays. Tennyson's dramas occupied his later years. He wrote three historical plays—*Queen Mary* (1875), *Harold* (1877), and *Becket* (1884). The last, owing chiefly to the exertions of Sir Henry Irving, the actor-manager, was quite a stage success. None, however, ranks high as a real dramatic effort, though all show much care and skill. *The Falcon* (1879) is a comedy based on a story from Boccaccio; *The Cup* (1880) is based on a story from Plutarch, and scored a success, also through the skill of Irving. *The Foresters* (1892), dealing with the familiar Robin Hood theme, was produced in America.

4. His Poetical Characteristics. (*a*) *His Craftsmanship.* No one can deny the great care and skill shown in Tennyson's work. His method of producing poetry was slowly to evolve the lines in his mind, commit them to paper, and to revise them till they were as near perfection as he could make them. Consequently we have a high level of poetical artistry. No one excels Tennyson in the deft application of sound to sense and in the subtle and pervading employment of alliteration and vowel-music. Such passages as this abound in his work:

> Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
> The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees.
>
> *The Princess*

This is perhaps not the highest poetry, but shows only a kind of manual, or rather aural, dexterity; yet as Tennyson employs it, it is effective to a degree.

His excellent craftsmanship is also apparent in his handling of English meters, in which he is a tireless experimenter. In blank verse he is not so varied and powerful as Shakespeare, nor so majestical as Milton, but in the skill of his workmanship and in his wealth of diction he falls but little short of these great masters.

(*b*) *His Pictorial Quality*. In this respect Tennyson follows the example of Keats. Nearly all of his poems, even the simplest, abound in ornate description of natural and other scenes. His method is to seize upon appropriate details, dress them in expressive and musical phrases, and thus throw a glistening image before the reader's eye:

> The silk star-broider'd coverlid
> Unto her limbs itself doth mould
> Languidly ever; and, amid
> Her full black ringlets downward rolled,
> Glows forth each softly-shadowed arm
> With bracelets of the diamond bright:
> Her constant beauty doth inform
> Stillness with love, and day with light.
>
> *The Sleeping Beauty*

> Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
> The knolls once more where, couched at ease,
> The white kine glimmered, and the trees
> Laid their dark arms about the field:
>
> And sucked from out the distant gloom
> A breeze began to tremble o'er
> The large leaves of the sycamore,
> And fluctuate all the still perfume.
>
> *In Memoriam*

Such passages as these reveal Tennyson at his best; but once again the doubt arises as to whether they represent the highest poetry. They show care of observation and a studious loveliness of epithet; but they lack the intense insight, the ringing and

romantic note, of the best efforts of Keats.

(*c*) Tennyson's *lyrical quality* is somewhat uneven. The slightest of his pieces, like *Blow, bugle, blow*, are musical and attractive; but on the whole his nature was too self-conscious, and perhaps his life too regular and prosperous, to provide a background for the true lyrical intensity of emotion. Once or twice, as in the wonderful *Break, break, break* and *Crossing the Bar*, he touches real greatness:

Break, break, break,
  On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
  The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
  That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
  That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
  To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
  And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
  At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
  Will never come back to me.

This lyric has a brevity, unity, and simple earnestness of emotion that make it truly great.

(*d*) The extracts already given have sufficiently revealed the qualities of his *style*. It can be quite simple, as in *The Brook* and *Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue*; but his typical style shows a slow and somewhat sententious progress, heavy with imagery and all the other devices of the poetical artist. In particular, he is an adept at coining phrases—"jewels five words long," as he himself aptly expressed it; and he is almost invariably happy in his choice of

epithet.

(*e*) His *reputation* has already declined from the idolatry in which he was held when he was alive. He himself foresaw "the clamour and the cry" that was bound to arise after his death. To his contemporaries he was a demigod; but younger men strongly assailed his patent literary mannerisms, his complacent acceptance of the evils of his time, his flattery of the great, and his somewhat arrogant assumption of the airs of immortality. Consequently for twenty years after his death his reputation suffered considerably. Once more reaction has set in, and his detractors have modified their attitude. He is not a supreme poet; and whether he will maintain the primacy among the singers of his own generation, as he undoubtedly did during his lifetime, remains to be seen; but, after all deductions are made, his high place in the Temple of Fame is assured.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–89)

1. His Life. Browning was born at Camberwell, his father being connected with the Bank of England. The future poet was educated semi-privately, and from an early age he was free to follow his inclination toward studying unusual subjects. As a child he was precocious, and began to write poetry at the age of twelve. Of his predecessors Shelley in particular influenced his mind, which was unformed and turbulent at this time with the growing power within. After a brief course at London University, Browning for a short period traveled in Russia (1833); then he lived in London, where he became acquainted with some of the leaders of the literary and theatrical worlds. In 1834 he paid his first visit to Italy, a country which was for him a fitful kind of home. In 1845 he visited Elizabeth Barrett, the

poetess, whose works had strongly attracted him. A mutual liking ensued, and then, after a private marriage, a sort of elopement followed, to escape the anger of the wife's stern parent. The remainder of Browning's life was occupied with journeys between England and France and Italy, and with much poetical activity. His wife died at Florence in 1861, leaving one son. Browning thereupon left the city for good and returned to England, though in 1878 he went back once more to Italy. His works, after suffering much neglect, were now being appreciated, and in 1867 Oxford conferred upon him the degree of D.C.L. He died in Italy, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

2. His Poems and Plays. His first work of any importance is *Pauline* (1833). The poem is a wild imitation of the more extravagant outbursts of Shelley, whom it praises effusively. The work is crude and feverish, and at the time it attracted little notice. *Paracelsus* (1835) reveals Browning's affection for unusual subjects. The poem, a very long one, is composed largely of monologues of the medieval charlatan whose name forms the title. The work gave the public its first taste of Browning's famous "obscurity." The style is often harsh and rugged, but the blank verse contains many isolated passages of great tenderness and beauty. There are in addition one or two charming lyrics that are as limpid as well-water:

Thus the Mayne glideth
Where my love abideth.
Sleep's no softer: it proceeds
On through lawns, on through meads,
On and on, whate'er befall,
Meandering and musical,
Though the niggard pasturage
Bears not on its shaven ledge

Aught but weeds and waving grasses
To view the river as it passes,
Save here and there a scanty patch
Of primrose too faint to catch
A weary bee.

His next effort was the play *Strafford* (1837), which was written at the suggestion of the actor Macready, and was fairly successful. *Sordello* (1840) established Browning's reputation for obscurity. The poem professes to tell the life-story of a Mantuan troubadour, but most of it is occupied with long irrelevant speeches and with Browning's commentary thereon. *Pippa Passes* (1841) is in form a drama. In plot it is highly improbable, as it is based on several coincidences that all happen in one day. The work is rather more terse than its predecessors, and the purple patches are more numerous. Pippa's songs, moreover, are often of great beauty. In *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842) there are many examples of clear and forcible work, including his Cavalier lyrics and such well-known pieces as *Home Thoughts from Abroad*. Other works of this period include *The Return of the Druses* (1843), a play; *Dramatic Romances* (1846), which shows the Browning obscurity and virility at their best and worst; *Luria* (1846), perhaps the weakest of his tragedies, resembling *Othello* in some respects; *Men and Women* (1855), consisting of dramatic monologues, some of great power and penetration; *Dramatis Personæ* (1864), containing more monologues; *Balaustion's Adventure* (1871), a transcript from Euripides; and the longest of all his works, *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69), with which the period closes.

The Ring and the Book is (the word is so apt as to be inevitable) a literary "stunt." It is the story of the murder of a young wife, Pompilia, by her worthless

husband, in the year 1698, and the same story is told by nine different people, and continues for twelve books. The result is a monument of masterly discursiveness.

In the later stages of his career Browning's mannerisms are accentuated in the dreary wildernesses of *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau* (1871), *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country* (1873), *The Inn Album* (1875), and *La Saisiaz* (1878). It is difficult to understand the use of such poems, except to give employment to the Browning Societies that were springing up to explain them. But his better qualities are shown in *Fifine at the Fair* (1872), which is still too long; *Dramatic Idylls* (1879–80); *Jocoseria* (1883); *Ferishtah's Fancies* (1884); and *Parleyings with Certain People* (1887). His long life's work has a powerful close in *Asolando* (1889), which, along with much of the tired disillusion of the old man, has in places the firmness and enthusiasm of his prime. The last verses he ever wrote describe himself in the character he most loved to adopt:

> One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake.
>
> No, at noonday in the bustle of man's worktime
> Greet the unseen with a cheer!
> Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
> "Strive and thrive!" cry, "Speed,—fight on, fare ever
> There as here!"

3. Features of his Work. (*a*) *His Style.* Browning's style has been the subject of endless discussion, for it

presents a fascinating problem. Within itself it reveals the widest range. Its famous "obscurity" was so pronounced that it led to the production of "Browning dictionaries" and other apparatus to disclose the deep meanings of the master. This feature of his work is partly due to his fondness for recondite subjects, to his compression and also to his diffuseness of thought and language, and to his juggling with words and meters. It often leads to such passages as the following, which is nothing less than jockeying with the English language:

> Now, your rater and debater
> Is baulked by a mere spectator
> Who simply stares and listens
> Tongue tied, while eye nor glistens
> Nor brow grows hot and twitchy,
> Nor mouth, for a combat itchy,
> Quivers with some convincing
> Reply—that sets him wincing?
> Nay, rather, reply that furnishes
> Your debater with what burnishes
> The crest of him, all one triumph,
> As you see him rise, hear him cry "Humph!
> Convinced am I? This confutes me.
> Receive the rejoinder that suits me!
> Confutation of vassal for prince meet—
> Wherein all the powers that convince meet,
> And mash my opponent to mincemeat!"
>
> *Pacchiarotto*

In contrast with this huddle of words, Browning can write clearly and with perfect cohesion and directness, as may easily be seen in such well-known poems as *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*, *Time's Revenges*, and *The Glove*. His middle style, common in his blank verse and his lyrics, is somewhat like that of Byron in its fine prosaic aptness:

> This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,
> Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its claim;

Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,
Its soft meandering Spanish name:

What a name! Was it love or praise?
Speech half-asleep or song half-awake?
I must learn Spanish, one of these days,
Only for that slow sweet name's sake.

Garden Fancies

(*b*) *His Descriptive Power*. In this respect Browning differs widely from Tennyson, who slowly creates a lovely image by careful massing of detail. Browning, however, makes one or two dashing strokes, and, by his complete mastery of phrase, the picture is revealed:

Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech;
Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,
That floats and feeds; a certain badger brown
He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge eye
By moonlight; and the pie with the long tongue
That pricks deep into oakworts for a worm,
And says a plain word when she finds her prize.

Caliban upon Setebos

This love for the picturesque leads him into many crooked byways of life, manners, and history, often with results that dismay his warmest admirers. Frequently, however, the stubborn thistle of his style blossoms into glossy purples. For example, in *The Ring and the Book*, we often light upon a tender passage like the following, which refreshes the whole arid page around it:

So, when the she-dove breeds, strange yearnings come
For the unknown shelter by undreamed-of shores,
And there is born a blood-pulse in her heart
To fight if needs be, though with flap of wing,
For the wool-flock or the fur-tuft, though a hawk
Contest the prize.

(*c*) *His Teaching.* Much play has been made with this side of his writings. But, after analysis, his teaching can with fairness be summed up in the simple exhortation to strive, hope, and fear not. A fair proportion of his poems are inspired with the facile optimism that led him to cry,

> God's in his heaven,
> All's right with the world,

but his sager mind let him perceive that much of the world was wrong. He had generous enthusiasms, such as that for the cause of Italian liberty; several strong prejudices, such as that against spiritualism; but on the whole his is a fair reflex of the average mind of his day, with the addition of much reading and observation and the priceless boon of genuine poetical genius.

(*d*) *His Reputation.* Recognition was slow in coming, but like Wordsworth he lived to see his name established high among his fellows. He wrote too freely, and often too carelessly and perversely, and much of his work will pass into oblivion; but the residue will be of quality high enough to make his fame secure.

OTHER POETS

1. Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–61), whose maiden name was Elizabeth Barrett, was the daughter of a West India planter, and was born at Durham. She began to write poems at the age of eight; her first published work worth mentioning was *An Essay on Mind* (1826), which is of slight importance. When she was about thirty years old delicate health prostrated her, and for the rest of her life she was almost an invalid. In 1846, when she was forty, she and Robert Browning were married,

and stole off to Italy, where they made Florence their headquarters. She was a woman of acute sensibilities, and was fervid in the support of many good causes, one of which was the attainment of Italian independence. On the death of Wordsworth in 1850 it was suggested that the Laureateship should be conferred upon her, but the project fell through. After a very happy married life she died at Florence.

Only the chief of her numerous poetical works can be mentioned here. After her first work noted above there was a pause of nine years; then appeared *Prometheus Bound* (1835). Other works are *The Seraphim* (1838), *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1846), *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), *Aurora Leigh* (1857), an immense poem in blank verse, and *Last Poems* (1861). She wrote many of her shorter pieces for magazines, the most important contributions being *The Cry of the Children* (1841) for *Blackwood's* and *The Great God Pan* (1860) for the *Cornhill*. As a narrative poet Mrs. Browning is a comparative failure, for in method she is discursive and confused, but she has command of a sweet, clear, and often passionate style. She has many slips of taste, and her desire for elevation sometimes leads her into what Rossetti called "falsetto masculinity," a kind of hysterical bravado.

2. Matthew Arnold (1822–88) was a writer of many activities, but it is chiefly as a poet that he now holds his place in literature. He was the son of the famous headmaster of Rugby, and was educated at Winchester, Rugby, and at Balliol College, Oxford, where he gained the Newdigate Prize for poetry. Subsequently he became a Fellow of Oriel College (1845). In 1851 he was appointed an inspector of schools, and proved to be a capable official. His life

was busily uneventful, and in 1886 he resigned, receiving a pension from the Government. Less than two years afterward he died suddenly of heart disease.

His poetical works are not very bulky. *The Strayed Reveller* (1848) appeared under the *nom de plume* of "A"; then followed *Empedocles on Etna* (1853), *Poems* (1854), and *New Poems* (1868). None of these volumes is of large size, though much of the content is of a high quality. For subject Arnold is fond of classical themes, to which he gives a meditative and even melancholy cast common in modern compositions. In some of the poems—as, for example, in the nobly pessimistic *Scholar-Gipsy*—he excels in the description of typical English scenery. In style he has much of the classical stateliness and more formal type of beauty, but he can be graceful and charming, with sometimes the note of real passion. His meditative poetry, like *Dover Beach* and *A Summer Night*, resembles that of Gray in its subdued melancholy resignation, but all his work is careful, scholarly, and workmanlike.

His prose works are large in bulk and wide in range. Of them all his critical essays are probably of the highest value. *Essays in Criticism* (1865) contains the best of his critical work, which is marked by wide reading and careful thought. His judgment, usually admirably sane and measured, is sometimes distorted a little by his views on life and politics. Arnold also wrote freely upon theological and political themes, but these were largely topics of the day, and his works on such subjects have no great permanent value. His best books of this class are *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) and *Literature and Dogma* (1873).

3. Edward Fitzgerald (1809–83), like Thomas Gray, lives in general literature by one poem. This, after long neglect, came to be regarded as one of the great things in English literature. He was a man of original views and retiring habits, and spent most of his life in his native Suffolk. In 1859 he issued the *Rubáiyát* of the early Persian poet Omar Khayyám. His version is a very free translation, cast into curious four-lined stanzas, which have an extraordinary cadence, rugged yet melodious, strong yet sweet. The feeling expressed in the verses, with much energy and picturesque effect, is stoical resignation. Fitzgerald also wrote a prose dialogue of much beauty called *Euphranor* (1851); and his surviving letters testify to his quiet and caustic humor.

4. Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–61) was born at Liverpool, and educated at Rugby, where Dr. Arnold made a deep impression upon his mind. He proceeded to Oxford, where, like his friend Matthew Arnold, he later became a Fellow of Oriel College. He traveled much, and then became Warden of University Hall, London. This post he soon resigned, and some public appointments followed. He died at Florence, after a long pilgrimage to restore his failing health. His death was bewailed by Arnold in his beautiful elegy *Thyrsis*.

Clough's first long poem was *The Bothie of Toberna-Vuolich* (1848), which is written in rough classical hexameters and contains some fine descriptions of the Scottish Highlands. He wrote little else of much value. His *Amours de Voyage* (1849) is also in hexameters; *Dipsychus* (1850) is a meditative poem. His poetry is charged with much of the deep-seated unrest and despondency that mark the work of

Arnold. His lyrical gift is not great, but once at least, in the powerful *Say not the Struggle Naught Availeth*, he soared into greatness.

5. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82) was the eldest of the Pre-Raphaelite school of artists and poets. He himself was both artist and poet. He was the son of an Italian refugee, and early became an artist. In art, as in poetry, he broke away from convention when he saw fit. His poetical works are small in bulk, consisting of two slight volumes, *Poems* (1870) and *Ballads and Sonnets* (1881).

Of the high quality of these poems there can be little question. With a little more breadth of view, and with perhaps more of the humane element in him, he might have found a place among the very highest. For he had real genius, and in *The Blessed Damozel* his gifts are fully displayed: a gift for description of almost uncanny splendor, a brooding and passionate introspection, often of a religious nature, and a verbal beauty as studied and melodious as that of Tennyson—less certain and decisive perhaps, but surpassing that of the older poet in unearthly suggestiveness. In his ballads, like *Rose Mary* and *Troy Town*, the same powers are apparent, though in a lesser degree; these have in addition a power of narrative that is only a very little short of the greatest. An extract appears on p. 515.

6. Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830–94) was a younger sister of the poet last named, and survived him by some years. Her life was uneventful, like her brother's, and was passed chiefly in London.

Her bent was almost entirely lyrical, and was shown in *Goblin Market* (1862), *The Prince's Progress* (1866), *A Pageant* (1881), and *Verses* (1892). Another volume, called *New Poems* (1896), was published

after her death, and contains much excellent early work. Her poetry, perhaps less impressive than that of her brother in its descriptive passages, has a purer lyrical note of deep and sustained passion, with a somewhat larger command of humor, and a gift of poetical expression as noble and comprehensive as his own. They resemble each other in a curious still undertone of passionate religious meditation joined to a fine simplicity of diction.

7. William Morris (1834–96) produced a great amount of poetry, and was one of the most conspicuous figures in mid-Victorian literature. He was born near London, the son of a wealthy merchant, and was educated at Marlborough and Oxford. His wealth, freeing him from the drudgery of a profession, permitted him to take a lively and practical interest in the questions of his day. Upon art, education, politics, and social problems his great energy and powerful mind led him to take very decided views, sometimes of an original nature. Here we are concerned only with his achievement in literature.

At an early period he was drawn into the Pre-Raphaelite movement, for he was keenly alive to its studied beauty and rather extreme medievalism. *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858), written in this manner, was received with neglect. The poems are laboriously fantastic, but they show great beauty and a sense of restrained passion. *The Life and Death of Jason* (1866) is a long narrative poem on a familiar theme, written in the heroic couplet in a manner suggestive of Chaucer, but easy and melodious to an extent that makes the tale almost monotonous. *The Earthly Paradise* (1868–70) develops this narrative method still further, and is a collection of twenty-four tales

on various subjects of classical and medieval origin. In meter the poems vary, but the couplet is prominent. In range and vivacity the work is extraordinary, and the framework into which the tales are set is both ingenious and beautiful. *Poems by the Way* (1891) contains some fine miscellaneous pieces. A brief extract from his poems will be found on p. 514.

Morris also busied himself with the composition of long prose tales, produced in great quantity during the later years of his life. The tales are written in a curious headlong, semi-rhythmical, semi-archaic style. Much reading of it tends to give the reader mental indigestion, but the vigor and skill of the prose are very considerable. Some of the tales are *The House of the Wolfings* (1889), *The Roots of the Mountains* (1890), *The Story of the Glittering Plain* (1891), and *The Sundering Flood* (1898).

8. Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909) had a long life and his poetical work was in proportion to it. Of aristocratic lineage, he was educated at Eton and Oxford. He left Oxford (1860) without taking a degree, and for the rest of his life wrote voluminously, if not always judiciously. He was a man of quick attachments and violent antagonisms, and these features of his character did much to vitiate his prose criticisms, of which he wrote a large number. In his later years, from 1879 onward, he lived with his friend Theodore Watts-Dunton at Putney Hill, where he died.

Atalanta in Calydon (1865), an attempt at an English version of an ancient Greek tragedy, was his first considerable effort in poetic form, and it attracted notice at once. At a bound the young poet had attained to a style of his own: tuneful and

impetuous movement, a cunning metrical craftsmanship, and a mastery of melodious diction. The excess of these virtues was also its bane, leading to diffuseness, breathlessness, and incoherence. *Poems and Ballads* (1866), a second extraordinary book, was, owing to its choice of unconventional subjects, criticized as being wicked. In it the Swinburnian features already mentioned are revealed in a stronger fashion. Only a few of his later poetical works can be mentioned here: *Songs before Sunrise* (1871), a collection of poems chiefly in praise of Italian liberty, some of them of great beauty, but marred by his reckless defiance of the common view; *Erectheus* (1876), a further and less successful effort at Greek tragedy; and *Tristram of Lyonesse* (1882), a narrative of much passion and force, composed in the heroic couplet. Some of his shorter poems were reproduced in two further series of *Poems and Ballads* in 1878 and 1889, but they are inferior to those of his prime.

Swinburne wrote a large number of plays, of which the most noteworthy are *The Queen Mother and Rosamond* (1860), with which he began his career as an author; three plays on the subject of Mary Queen of Scots, called *Chastelard* (1865), *Bothwell* (1874), and *Mary Stuart* (1881); *Locrine* (1887); and *The Sisters* (1892). The gifts of Swinburne are lyrical rather than dramatic, and his tragedies, like those of most of his contemporaries, are only of literary importance. His blank verse is strongly phrased, and in drama his diffuseness—that desire for mere sound and speed which was his greatest weakness—has little scope.

9. Arthur Edward O'Shaughnessy (1844–81) was born in London, of Irish descent. In 1861 he

joined the staff of the British Museum Library, where a promising career was cut short by his early death. He wrote little, and his books came close upon each other: *The Epic of Women* (1870), *Lays of France* (1872), *Music and Moonlight* (1874), and *Songs of a Worker* (1881), the last appearing after his death. His longer poems have a certain haziness and incoherence, but the shorter pieces have a musical and attractive style and a certain half-mystical wistfulness. His ode beginning "We are the music-makers" is often quoted, and other poems quite as good are *A Neglected Heart* and *Exile*.

CHARLES DICKENS (1812–70)

1. His Life. Dickens was born near Portsea, where his father was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. Charles, the second of eight children, was a delicate child, and much of his boyhood was spent at home, where he read the novels of Smollett, Fielding, and Le Sage. The works of these writers were to influence his own novels very deeply. At an early age also he became very fond of the theater, a fondness that remained with him all his life, and affected his novels to a great extent. In 1823 the Dickens family removed to London, where the father, an improvident man of the Micawber type, soon drew them into money difficulties. The schooling of Charles, which had all along been desultory enough, was temporarily suspended. The boy for a time worked in a blacking factory while his father was an inmate of the debtors' prison of the Marshalsea. After a year or so financial matters improved; the education of Charles was resumed; then in 1827 he entered the office of an attorney, and in time became an expert shorthand-writer. This proficiency led (1835) to an appointment as reporter on the *Morning*

Chronicle. In this capacity he did much traveling by stage-coach, during which a keen eye and a retentive memory stored material to exploit a greatness yet undreamed of. Previously, in 1833, some articles which he called *Sketches by Boz* had appeared in *The Monthly Magazine*. They were brightly written, and attracted some notice.

In 1836 Messrs. Chapman and Hall, a firm of publishers, had agreed to produce in periodical form a series of sketches by Seymour, a popular black-and-white artist. The subjects were of a sporting and convivial kind, and to give them more general interest some story was needed to accompany them. Dickens was requested to supply the "book," and thus originated *The Pickwick Papers* (1836). Before the issue of the second number of the prints Seymour committed suicide, and Hablot K. Browne, who adopted the name of "Phiz," carried on the work. His illustrations are still commonly adopted for Dickens's books.

The Pickwick Papers was a great success; Dickens's fame was secure, and the rest of his life was that of a busy and successful novelist. He lived to enjoy a reputation that was unexampled, surpassing even that of Scott; for the appeal of Dickens was wider and more searching than that of the Scottish novelist. He varied his work with much traveling—among other places to America (1842), to Italy (1844), to Switzerland (1846), and again to America (1867). His popularity was exploited in journalism, for he edited *The Daily News* (1846), and founded *Household Words* (1849) and *All the Year Round* (1859). In 1858 Dickens commenced his famous series of public readings. These were actings rather than readings, for he chose some of the most violent or affecting

scenes from his novels and presented them with full-blown histrionic effect. The readings brought him much money, but they wore him down physically. They were also given in America, with the greatest success. He died in his favorite house, Gad's Hill Place, near Rochester, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

2. His Novels. *Sketches by Boz* (1833), a series dealing with London life in the manner of Leigh Hunt, is interesting, but trifling when compared with *The Pickwick Papers* (1836), its successor. The plot of the latter book is rudimentary. In order to provide an occasion for Seymour's sketches Dickens hit upon the idea of a sporting club, to be called the Pickwick Club. As the book proceeds this idea is soon dropped, and the story becomes a kind of large and genial picaresque novel. The incidents are loosely connected and the chronology will not bear close inspection, but in abundance of detail of a high quality, in vivacity of humor, in acute and accurate observation, the book is of the first rank. It is doubtful if Dickens ever improved upon it. Then, before *Pickwick* was finished, *Oliver Twist* (1837) appeared piecemeal in *Bentley's Miscellany*; and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838) was begun before the second novel had ceased to appear. The demand for Dickens's novels was now enormous, and he was assiduous in catering for his public. For his next novels he constructed a somewhat elaborate framework, calling the work *Master Humphrey's Clock*; but he sensibly abandoned the notion, and the books appeared separately as *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840), which was an immense success, and *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), a historical novel. In 1842 he sailed to America, where his experiences bore fruit in *American Notes* (1843) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843).

These works were not complimentary to the Americans, and they brought him much unpopularity in the United States. *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and *Dombey and Son* (1848) appeared next, the latter being written partly at Lausanne. Then in 1849 he started *David Copperfield*, which contains many of his personal experiences and is often considered to be his masterpiece, though for many critics *The Pickwick Papers* retains its primacy.

From this point onward a certain decline is manifest. His stories drag; his mannerisms become more apparent, and his splendid buoyancy is less visible. *Bleak House* (1852) and *Hard Times* (1854) were written for his *Household Words*; *Little Dorrit* (1856) appeared in monthly parts; *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and *Great Expectations* (1860) were for *All the Year Round*. After producing *Our Mutual Friend* (1864) he paid his second visit to America, and was received very cordially. He returned to England, but did not live to finish *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which was appearing in monthly parts when he died.

3. Features of his Novels. (*a*) *Their Popularity*. At the age of twenty-six Dickens was a popular author. This was a happy state of affairs for him, and to his books it served as an ardent stimulus. But there were attendant disadvantages. The demand for his novels was so enormous that it often led to hasty and ill-considered work: to crudity of plot, to unreality of characters, and to looseness of style. It led also to the pernicious habit of issuing the stories in parts. This in turn resulted in much padding and in lopsidedness of construction. The marvelous thing is that with so strong a temptation to slop-work he created books that were so rich and enduring.

(*b*) *His Imagination.* No English novelist excels

Dickens in the multiplicity of his characters and situations. *Pickwick Papers*, the first of the novels, teems with characters, some of them finely portrayed, and in mere numbers the supply is maintained to the very end of his life. He creates for us a whole world of people. In this world he is most at home with persons of the lower and middle ranks of life, especially those who frequent the neighborhood of London.

(*c*) *His Humor and Pathos.* It is very likely that the reputation of Dickens will be maintained chiefly as a humorist. His humor is broad, humane, and creative. It gives us such real immortals as Mr. Pickwick, Mrs. Gamp, Mr. Micawber, and Sam Weller—typical inhabitants of the Dickensian sphere, and worthy of a place in any literary brotherhood. Dickens's humor is not very subtle, but it goes deep, and in expression it is free and vivacious. His satire is apt to develop into mere burlesque, as it does when he deals with Mr. Stiggins and Bumble. As for his pathos, in its day it had an appeal that appears amazing to a later generation, whom it strikes as cheap and maudlin. His devices are often third-rate, as when they depend upon such themes as the deaths of little children, which he describes in detail. His genius had little tragic force. He could describe the horrible, as in the death of Bill Sikes; he could be painfully melodramatic, as in characters like Rosa Dartle and Madame Defarge; but he seems to have been unable to command the simplicity of real tragic greatness.

(*d*) His *mannerisms* are many, and they do not make for good in his novels. It has often been pointed out that his characters are created not "in the round," but "in the flat." Each represents one mood, one turn of phrase. Uriah Heep is "'umble,"

Barkis is "willin'." In this fashion his characters become associated with catch-phrases, like the personages in inferior drama. Dickens's partiality for the drama is also seen in the staginess of his scenes and plots.

(*e*) In time his *style* became mannered also. At its best it is not polished nor scholarly, but it is clear, rapid, and workmanlike, the style of the working journalist. In the early books it is sometimes trivial with puns, Cockneyisms, and tiresome circumlocutions. This heavy-handedness of phrase remained with him all his life. In his more aspiring flights, in particular in his deeply pathetic passages, he adopted a lyrical style, a kind of verse-in-prose, that is blank verse slightly disguised. We add a passage of this last type. It can be scanned in places like pure blank verse:

> For she was dead. There, upon her little bed, she lay at rest. The solemn stillness was no marvel now.
>
> She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death.
>
> Her couch was dressed with here and there some winter berries and green leaves, gathered in a spot she had been used to favour. "When I die, put near me something that has loved the light, and had the sky above it always." Those were her words.
>
> *The Old Curiosity Shop*

We give also a specimen of the typical Dickensian style. The reader should observe in it the qualities of ease, perspicuity, and humor:

> The particular picture on which Sam Weller's eyes were fixed, as he said this, was a highly coloured representation of a couple of human hearts skewered together with an arrow, cooking before a cheerful fire, while a male and female cannibal in modern attire: the gentleman being clad in a blue coat and white trousers, and the lady in a deep red pelisse with a parasol of the same: were approaching the meal with hungry eyes, up a serpentine gravel path leading thereunto. A decidedly indelicate young gentleman, in a pair of wings and nothing else, was depicted as superintending the cooking; a representation of the spire of the church in Langham Place, London, appeared in the distance; and the whole formed a "valentine," of which, as a written inscription in the window testified, there was a large assortment within, which the shopkeeper pledged himself to dispose of, to his countrymen generally, at the reduced rate of one and sixpence each.
>
> *The Pickwick Papers*

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811–63)

1. His Life. Thackeray was born at Calcutta, and was descended from an ancient Yorkshire family. His father having died in 1816, the boy was sent to England for his education; and on the voyage home he had a glimpse of Napoleon, then a prisoner on St. Helena. His school was the Charterhouse, and his college was Trinity College, Cambridge, which he entered in 1829. Both at school and college he struck his contemporaries as an idle and rather cynical youth, whose main diversions were sketching and lampooning his friends and enemies. For a time Thackeray had some intention of becoming an artist, and studied art in Paris. Then the loss of his entire fortune drove him into journalism for a living. He

contributed both prose and light verse to several periodicals, including *Punch* and *Fraser's Magazine*, winning his way slowly and with much difficulty, for his were gifts that do not gain ready recognition. It was not till nearly the middle of the century that *Vanity Fair* (1847) brought him some credit, though at first the book was grudgingly received. Thenceforward he wrote steadily and with increasing favor until his death, which occurred with great suddenness. Before his death he had enjoined his executors not to publish any biography, so that of all the major Victorian writers we have of him the scantiest biographical materials.

2. His Novels. For a considerable number of years Thackeray was groping for a means of expression, and wavered between verse, prose, and sketching. His earliest literary work consisted of light and popular contributions to periodicals. The most considerable of these are *The Yellowplush Papers* (1837), contributed to *Fraser's Magazine* and dealing with the philosophy and experiences of Jeames, an imaginary footman, and *The Book of Snobs* (1846), which originally appeared in *Punch* as *The Snob Papers*. Snobs, who continued to be Thackeray's pet abhorrence, are defined by him as those "who meanly admire mean things," and in this early book their widespread activities are closely pursued and harried. *The History of Samuel Titmarsh* (1841), *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* (1841), and *The Fitzboodle Papers* (1842) appeared first in *Fraser's Magazine*. They are deeply marked with his biting humor and merciless observation of human weaknesses, but they found little acceptance. *The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon* (1842) is a distinct advance. It is a species of picaresque novel, telling of the adventures of a gambling rascal, an amiable scapegrace who prowls

over Europe. In range the book is wider, and the grasp of incident and character is more sure. In *Vanity Fair* (1847) the genius of Thackeray reaches high-water mark. In theme it is concerned chiefly with the fortunes of Becky Sharp, an adventuress. In dexterity of treatment, in an imaginative power that both reveals and transforms, and in a clear and mournful vision of the vanities of mankind the novel is among the greatest in the language. *Pendennis* (1848) continues the method of *Vanity Fair*. Partly autobiographical, it portrays life as it appears to the author. Thackeray refuses to bow to convention and precedent, except when these conform to his ideals of literature. In this book Thackeray openly avows his debt to Fielding, the master whom he equals and in places excels. *Henry Esmond* (1852) is a historical novel of great length and complexity, showing the previous excellences of Thackeray in almost undiminished force, as well as immense care and forethought, a minute and accurate knowledge of the times of Queen Anne, and an extraordinary faculty for reproducing both the style and the atmosphere of the period. By some judges this book is considered to be his best. His novel *The Newcomes* (1854) is supposed to be edited by Pendennis. In tone it is more genial than its predecessors, but it ends tragically with the death of the aged Colonel Newcome. With *The Virginians* (1857) the list of the great novels is closed. This book, a sequel to *Henry Esmond*, is a record of the experiences of two lads called Warrington, the grandsons of Henry Esmond himself. In the story, a pale shadow of her former self, appears Beatrix Esmond, the fickle heroine of the earlier book.

In 1860 Thackeray was appointed first editor of

The Cornhill Magazine, and for this he wrote *Lovel the Widower* (1860), *The Adventures of Philip* (1861), and a series of essays, charming and witty trifles, which were reissued as *The Roundabout Papers* (1862). Both in size and in merit these last novels are inferior to their predecessors. At his death he left an unfinished novel, *Denis Duval*.

Like Dickens, Thackeray had much success as a lecturer on both sides of the Atlantic, though in his methods he did not follow his fellow-novelist. Two courses of lectures were published as *The English Humourists* (1852) and *The Four Georges* (1857). All his life he delighted in writing burlesques, the best of which are *Rebecca and Rowena* (1850), a comic continuation of *Ivanhoe*, and *The Legend of the Rhine* (1851), a burlesque tale of medieval chivalry.

3. His Poetry. On the surface Thackeray's verse appears to be frivolous stuff, but behind the frivolity there is always sense, often a barb of reproof, and sometimes a note of sorrow. *The Ballads of Policeman X* is an early work contributed in numbers to *Punch*. Others, such as *The White Squall* and *The Ballad of Bouillabaisse*, have more claim to rank as poetry, for they show much metrical dexterity and in places a touch of real pathos.

4. Features of his Works. (*a*) *Their Reputation.* While Dickens was in the full tide of his success Thackeray was struggling through neglect and contempt to recognition. Thackeray's genius blossomed slowly, just as Fielding's did; for that reason the fruit is more mellow and matured, and perhaps on that account it will last the longer. Once he had gained the favor of the public he held it, and among outstanding English novelists there is none whose claim is so little subject to challenge.

(*b*) *His Method.* "Since the writer of *Tom Jones* was buried," says Thackeray in his preface to *Pendennis*, "no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to the best of his power a MAN. We must shape him and give him a certain conventional temper." Thackeray's novels are a protest against this convention. He returns to the Fielding method: to view his characters steadily and fearlessly, and to set on record their failings as well as their merits and capacities. In his hands the results are not flattering to human nature, for most of his clever people are rogues and most of his virtuous folk are fools. But whether they are rogues, or fools, or merely blundering incompetents, his creations are rounded, entire, and quite alive and convincing.

(*c*) *His Humor and Pathos.* Much has been made of the sneering cynicism of Thackeray's humor, and a good deal of the criticism is true. It was his desire to reveal the truth, and satire is one of his most potent methods of revelation. His sarcasm, a deadly species, is husbanded for deserving objects, such as Lord Steyne and (to a lesser degree) Barnes Newcome. In the case of people who are only stupid, like Rawdon Crawley, mercy tempers justice; and when Thackeray chooses to do so he can handle a character with loving tenderness, as can be seen in the case of Lady Castlewood and of Colonel Newcome. In pathos he is seldom sentimental, being usually quiet and effective. But at the thought of the vain, the arrogant, and the mean people of the world Thackeray barbs his pen, with destructive results.

(*d*) His *style* is very near to the ideal for a novelist. It is effortless, and is therefore unobtrusive, detracting in no wise from the interest in the story. It is also flexible to an extraordinary degree. We have

seen how in *Esmond* he recaptured the Addisonian style; this is only one aspect of his mimetic faculty, which in his burlesques finds ample scope. We add a typical specimen of his style:

> As they came up to the house at Walcote, the windows from within were lighted up with friendly welcome; the supper-table was spread in the oak-parlour; it seemed as if forgiveness and love were awaiting the returning prodigal. Two or three familiar faces of domestics were on the look-out at the porch—the old housekeeper was there, and young Lockwood from Castlewood in my lord's livery of tawny and blue. His dear mistress pressed his arm as they passed into the hall. Her eyes beamed out on him with affection indescribable. "Welcome," was all she said: as she looked up, putting back her fair curls and black hood. A sweet rosy smile blushed on her face: Harry thought he had never seen her look so charming. Her face was lighted with a joy that was brighter than beauty—she took a hand of her son who was in the hall waiting his mother—she did not quit Esmond's arm.
>
> *Henry Esmond*

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828–1909)

Of the later Victorian novelists Meredith takes rank as the most noteworthy.

1. His Life. The known details of Meredith's earlier life are still rather scanty, and he himself gives us little enlightenment. He was born at Portsmouth, and until he was sixteen he was educated in Germany. At first he studied law, but, rebelling against his legal studies, took to literature as a profession, contributing to magazines and newspapers. Like so many of the eager spirits of his day, he was deeply interested in the struggles of Italy

and Germany to be free. For some considerable time he was reader to a London publishing house; then, as his own books slowly won their way, he was enabled to give more time to their composition. In 1867 he was appointed editor of *The Fortnightly Review*. He died at his home at Boxhill, Surrey.

2. His Poetry. During all his career as a novelist Meredith published much verse. *Chillianwallah* (1849), his first published work, contains much spirited verse; other works are *Modern Love* (1862), *Ballads and Poems* (1887), and *Poems* (1892). Like his novels, much of Meredith's poetry is almost willfully obscure, as it undoubtedly is in *Modern Love*; but in the case of such poems as *The Nuptials of Attila* he is clear and vigorous. He loved nature and the open air, and in poems like the beautiful *Love in the Valley* such affection is brightly visible. Like Swinburne, he was always eager to champion the cause of the oppressed.

3. His Novels. Meredith's first novel of importance is *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859). Almost at one stride he attains to his full strength, for this novel is typical of much of his later work. In plot it is rather weak, and almost incredible toward the end. It deals with a young aristocrat educated on a system laboriously virtuous; but youthful nature breaks the bonds, and complications follow. Most of the characters are of the higher ranks of society, and they are subtly analyzed and elaborately featured. They move languidly across the story, speaking in a language as extraordinary, in its chiseled epigrammatic precision, as that of the creatures of Congreve or Oscar Wilde. The general style of the language is mannered in the extreme; it is a kind of elaborate literary confectionery—it almost seems a

pity on the part of the hasty novel-reader to swallow it in rude mouthfuls. Nevertheless, behind this appearance of artificiality there ranges a mind both subtle and sure, an elfish, satiric spirit, and a passionate ideal of artistic perfection. Such a novel could hardly hope for a ready recognition; but its ultimate fame was assured.

The next novel was *Evan Harrington* (1860), which contains some details of Meredith's own family life; then followed *Emilia in England* (1864), the name of which was afterward altered to *Sandra Belloni*, in which the scene is laid partly in Italy. In *Rhoda Fleming* (1865) Meredith tried to deal with plebeian folks, but with indifferent success. The heroines of his later novels—Meredith was always careful to make his female characters at least as important as his male ones—are aristocratic in rank and inclinations. *Vittoria* (1867) is a sequel to *Sandra Belloni*, and contains much spirited handling of the Italian insurrectionary movement. Then came *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* (1870), in which the scene is laid in England, and *Beauchamp's Career* (1874), in which Meredith's style is seen in its most exaggerated form. In *The Egoist* (1879), his next novel, Meredith may be said to reach the climax of his art. The style is fully matured, with much less surface glitter and more depth and solidity; the treatment of the characters is close, accurate, and amazingly detailed; and the Egoist himself, Sir Willoughby Patterne—Meredith hunted the egoist as remorselessly as Thackeray pursued the snob—is a triumph of comic artistry. The later novels are of less merit. *The Tragic Comedians* (1880) is chaotic in plot and over-developed in style; and the same faults may be urged against *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), though it contains many beautiful passages; *One of*

our Conquerors (1890) is nearly impossible in plot and style, and *The Amazing Marriage* (1895) is not much better.

We add a short typical specimen of Meredith's style. Observe the studied precision of phrase and epithet, the elaboration of detail, and the imaginative power.

> She had the mouth that smiles in repose. The lips met full on the centre of the bow and thinned along to a lifting dimple; the eyelids also lifted slightly at the outer corners and seemed, like the lip into the limpid cheek, quickening up the temples, as with a run of light, or the ascension indicated off a shoot of colour. Her features were playfellows of one another, none of them pretending to rigid correctness, nor the nose to the ordinary dignity of governess among merry girls, despite which the nose was of fair design, not acutely interrogative or inviting to gambols. Aspens imaged in water, waiting for the breeze, would offer a susceptible lover some suggestion of her face; a pure smooth-white face, tenderly flushed in the cheeks, where the gentle dints were faintly intermelting even during quietness. Her eyes were brown, set well between mild lids, often shadowed, not unwakeful. Her hair of lighter brown, swelling above her temples on the sweep to the knot, imposed the triangle of the fabulous wild woodland visage from brow to mouth and chin, evidently in agreement with her taste; and the triangle suited her; but her face was not significant of a tameless wildness or of weakness; her equable shut mouth threw its long curve to guard the small round chin from that effect; her eyes wavered only in humour, they were steady when thoughtfulness was awakened; and at such seasons the build of her winter-beechwood hair lost the touch of nymph-like and whimsical, and strangely, by mere outline, added

> to her appearance of studious concentration. Observe the hawk on stretched wings over the prey he spies, for an idea of this change in the look of a young lady whom Vernon Whitford could liken to the Mountain Echo, and Mrs Mountstuart Jenkinson pronounced to be "a dainty rogue in porcelain."
>
> *The Egoist*

OTHER NOVELISTS

1. Charlotte Brontë (1816–55) is the most important of three sisters, the other two being **Emily Brontë (1818–48)** and **Anne Brontë (1820–49)**. They were the daughters of an Irish clergyman who held a living in Yorkshire. Financial difficulties compelled Charlotte to become a schoolteacher and then (1832) a governess. Along with Emily she visited Brussels in 1842, and then returned home, where family cares kept her closely tied. Later her books had much success, and so she was released from many of her financial worries. She was married in 1854, but died in the next year. Her two younger sisters, brilliant but erratic creatures, had predeceased her.

The three sisters began their career jointly with a volume of verse, in which they respectively adopted the names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. The poems, which appeared in 1846, are unusually fine in parts, especially the pieces ascribed to Emily. Charlotte's first novel, *The Professor*, which was written before the poems were published, had no success, and was not published till after her death. *Jane Eyre* (1847), which was given to the world after *The Professor* had failed to find a publisher, created a stir by its unusual candor, passion, and power. It was based on the work of Thackeray, whom Miss Brontë,

in the second edition of the book, acknowledged as her Master in the art of fiction. Her other novels were *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1853).

The truth and intensity of Charlotte's work are unquestioned: she can see and judge with the eye of a genius. But these merits have their disadvantages. In the plots of her novels she is largely restricted to her own experiences; her high seriousness is unrelieved by any humor; and her passion is at times overcharged to the point of frenzy. But to the novel she brought an energy and passion that gave to commonplace people and actions the wonder and beauty of the romantic world.

Emily wrote a novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), a wild effort, hit or miss, at the tragical romance. Where she is successful she attains to a tragical emphasis that is almost sublime; but as a whole the book is too unequal to rank as very great.

The third sister, Anne, in her short life wrote two novels, *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1847). They are much inferior to the novels of her sisters, for she lacks nearly all their power and intensity.

2. Charles Reade (1814–84) was born in Oxfordshire, being the youngest son of a squire. He was educated at Iffley and Oxford, and then, entering Lincoln's Inn, was called to the Bar. He was only slightly interested in the legal profession, but very fond of the theater and traveling. After 1852 he settled down to the career of the successful man of letters. He died at Shepherd's Bush.

He began authorship with the writing of plays. As a playwright he had a fair amount of success, his most fortunate production being *Masks and Faces*

(1852), written in collaboration with Tom Taylor. *Peg Woffington* (1853) was his first novel, and was followed by *Christie Johnstone* (1853), which deals with Scottish fisherfolk. *It's Never too Late to Mend* (1856), sometimes considered to be his masterpiece, treats of prisons and of life in the colonies. *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1861), one of his best novels, is a story of the later Middle Ages, and shows the author's immense care and knowledge; *Hard Cash* (1863) is an attack upon private lunatic asylums; and *Griffith Gaunt* (1866), *Foul Play* (1869), and some other inferior books are in the nature of propaganda against abuses of the time.

When he is at his best Reade tells a fine tale, for he can move with speed and describe with considerable power. But he tends to overload his narrative with historical and topical detail, of which he collected great masses. His style, too, is frequently marred by annoying tricks of manner, such as over-emphasis and mechanical repetition. Since his own day his reputation has declined.

3. Anthony Trollope (1815–82) is another Victorian novelist who just missed greatness. The son of a barrister, he was born in London, educated at Harrow and Winchester, and obtained an appointment in the Post Office. After an unpromising start he rapidly improved, and rose high in the service.

In all Trollope wrote over fifty novels, the best of which are *The Warden* (1855), *Barchester Towers* (1857), *Doctor Thorne* (1858), *Framley Parsonage* (1861), and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867). He is at his best when he deals with the lives of the clergymen of the town that he calls Barchester, which has been identified with Salisbury. His novels,

owing to the rapidity of their output, tend to become mechanical and ill constructed; but he has a genial humor, a lively narrative method, and much shrewd observation. *Barchester Towers* contains several characters not unworthy of Dickens.

4. Wilkie Collins (1824–89) is considered to be the most successful of the followers of Dickens. At one time, about 1860, his vogue was nearly as great as that of Dickens himself. Collins was born in London, and was a son of a famous painter. After a few years spent in business he took to the study of the law, but very soon abandoned that for literature. He was a versatile man, dabbling much in journalism and play-writing.

Collins specialized in the mystery novel, to which he sometimes added a spice of the supernatural. In many of his books the story, which is often ingeniously complicated, is unfolded by letters or the narratives of persons actually engaged in the events. To a certain extent this method is cumbrous, but it allowed Collins to draw his characters with much wealth of detail. His characters are often described in the Dickensian manner of emphasizing some humor or peculiarity. He wrote more than twenty-five novels, the most popular being *The Dead Secret* (1857), *The Woman in White* (1860)—the most successful of them all—*No Name* (1862), and *The Moonstone* (1868). *The Moonstone* is one of the earliest and the best of the great multitude of detective stories that now crowd the popular press. Collins was in addition one of the first authors to devote himself to the short magazine story; After Dark is a little masterpiece.

5. George Eliot—the pen name of **Mary Ann Evans (1819–80)**—was during her lifetime reckoned

to be among the greatest authors, but time has dealt rather unkindly with her reputation. Even yet, however, she ranks among the greatest of women novelists. The daughter of a Warwickshire land-agent, she was born near Nuneaton, and after being educated at Nuneaton and Coventry lived much at home. Her mind was well above the ordinary in its bent for religious and philosophical speculation. In 1846 she translated Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, and on the death of her father in 1849 she took entirely to literary work. She was appointed assistant editor of the *Westminster Review* (1851), and became the center of a literary circle. In later life she traveled extensively, and married (1880) Mr. J. W. Cross. She died at Chelsea in the same year.

Her first fiction consisted of three short stories published in *Blackwood's Magazine* and reissued under the title of *Scenes from Clerical Life* (1857). *Adam Bede* (1859), her second book, was brilliantly successful. It is a story of country life, subtly yet powerfully told. To this succeeded *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), partly autobiographical. This book is longer and heavier than its predecessor, but it has much tragic force and acute observation, and a placidly caustic humor. *Silas Marner* (1861) is shorter, crisper, and exceedingly effective, but *Romola* (1863), a laborious story of medieval Florence, is overweighted with learning and philosophizing. After this point the decline is rapid in *Felix Holt* (1866), *Middlemarch* (1872), *Daniel Deronda* (1876), and *The Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879).

In some respects George Eliot is first rate: in humorous observation of country folk, in keen analysis of motive, and in a curious kind of grim

subdued passion. But she lacks fire and rapidity, and is deficient in the warmer kind of humanity. The consequence is that, especially in the later books, when the heart became subordinated to the head, her people are icily unreal. In these last books, moreover, she allowed her religious, racial, and political theories to run away with her, and thus to ruin her work as artistic fiction.

6. Charles Kingsley (1819–75) was a Devonshire man, being born at Holne and brought up at Clovelly. He completed his education at Oxford (1842), where he was very successful as a student, and took orders. During his early manhood he was a strenuous Christian Socialist, and for the first few years of his curacy he devoted himself to the cause of the poor. All his life was spent, first as curate and then as rector, at Eversley, in Hampshire. In the course of time his books brought him honors, including the professorship of history at Oxford and a chaplaincy to the Queen.

His first novels, *Alton Locke* (1849) and *Yeast* (1849), deal in a robust fashion with the social questions of his day. They are crude in their methods, but they were effective both as fiction and social propaganda. *Hypatia* (1853) has for its theme the struggle between early Christianity and intellectual paganism; in workmanship it is less immature, but the cruelly tragic conclusion made it less popular than the others. *Westward Ho!* (1855), a tale of the good old days of Queen Elizabeth, marks the climax of his career as a novelist. At first the book strikes the reader as being wordy and diffuse, and all through it is marred with much tedious abuse of Roman Catholics; but once the tale roams abroad into exciting scenes it moves with a buoyant zest,

and reflects with romantic exuberance the spirit of the early sea-rovers. *Two Years Ago* (1857) and *Hereward the Wake* (1866) did not recapture the note of their great predecessor.

Kingsley excels as the manly and straightforward story-teller. His characters, though they are clearly stamped and visualized, lack delicacy of finish, yet they suit his purpose excellently. In treatment he revels in a kind of florid description which is not always successful.

As a poet Kingsley achieved some remarkable results, especially in his short poems. Of these a few, including the familiar *Sands of Dee*, *The Three Fishers*, and *Airly Beacon*, are of the truly lyrical cast: short, profoundly passionate, and perfectly phrased. His longer poems, such as *The Saint's Tragedy* (1848), are not nearly so good. Kingsley could write also a rhythmic semi-poetical prose, as is seen in his book of stories from the Greek myths called *The Heroes* (1856) and to a less degree in his delightful fantasy *The Water Babies* (1863).

7. Walter Besant (1836–1901) is a good example of the class of light novelist that flourished in the later Victorian epoch. He was born at Portsmouth, educated at London and Cambridge, held a professorship in Mauritius, and then, returning to England (1868), settled down to the life of a novelist. Along with **James Rice (1844–82)** he wrote many novels, including *Ready-Money Mortiboy* (1872) and *The Golden Butterfly* (1876). These books do not aspire to be great literature, but they are healthy and amusing productions.

8. George Borrow (1803–81) had a curious career which did not lose its interest from his method of telling its story. He was born in Norfolk,

and was the son of a soldier. From his earliest manhood he led a wandering life, and consorted with queer people, of whose languages and customs he was a quick observer. At one stage of his career he was a colporteur for the Bible Society, visiting Spain and Morocco (1835–39). Then he married a lady with a considerable income, and died a landed proprietor in comfortable circumstances.

His principal books were *The Bible in Spain* (1843), telling of his adventures as an agent of the Bible Society; *Lavengro* (1851) and *The Romany Rye* (1857), dealing with his life among the gypsies; and *Wild Wales* (1862). His books are remarkable in that they seriously pretend to tell the actual facts of the author's life, but how much is fact and how much is fiction will never be accurately known, so great is his power of imagination. Taken as mere fiction, the books exert a strong and strange fascination on many readers. They have a naïve simplicity resembling that of Goldsmith, a wry humor, and a quick and natural shrewdness. As a blend of fact and fiction, of hard detail and misty imagination, of sly humor and stockish solemnity, the books stand apart in our literature.

9. Richard D. Blackmore (1825–1900) was born in Berkshire, and educated at Tiverton and Oxford. He was called to the Bar, but forsook the law for the occupation of a farmer, which suited him much better. He died at Teddington-on-Thames.

He began authorship by writing verse of little value; then turned to writing novels, which are much worthier as literature. The best of these are *Lorna Doone* (1869), an excellent historical romance of Exmoor, *The Maid of Sker* (1872), and *Cripps the Carrier* (1876). Blackmore had little skill in

contriving plots, and many of his characters, especially his wicked characters, carry little conviction. Yet he has a rare capacity for tale-telling, a real enthusiasm for nature, and a romantic eloquence of style that falls little short of greatness. *Lorna Doone* stands high among historical novels.

10. Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–94) was born at Edinburgh, and was called to the Scottish Bar. He had little taste for the legal profession, and a constitutional tendency to consumption made an outdoor life necessary. He traveled much in an erratic manner, and wrote for periodicals. Then, when his malady became acute, he migrated to Samoa (1888), where the mildness of the climate only delayed a death which came all too prematurely. He lies buried in Samoa.

His first published works were of the essay nature, and included *An Inland Voyage* (1879), *Travels with a Donkey* (1879), and *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881). His next step was into romance, in which he began with *The New Arabian Nights* (1882), and then had real success with *Treasure Island* (1883), a stirring yarn of pirates and perilous seas. Then came *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), a fine example of the terror-mystery novel, and several historical novels: *Kidnapped* (1887), *The Black Arrow* (1888), *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), and *Catriona* (1893), which was a sequel to *Kidnapped*. With the exception of *The Black Arrow*, the historical novels deal with Scotland in the eighteenth century. At his death he left a powerful fragment, *Weir of Hermiston*.

In the novel Stevenson carries on the tradition of George Meredith. He applies to the novel a cultivated style and a laborious craftsmanship. These features would in themselves have made his novels

unattractive, but to them he added a pawky sense of humor, a swift and brilliant descriptive faculty, and a wide knowledge of and a deep regard for the lore of his native land. Compared with Scott he seems cramped and finicking in his methods, and his outlook is sometimes crude and juvenile, but his finer qualities more than atone for his shortcomings.

Stevenson's poetry is charming and dexterous, excelling in its treatment of child-nature. His best volumes are *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), *Underwoods* (1887), and *Ballads* (1889).

11. Samuel Butler (1835–1902) was born in Nottinghamshire, and educated at Shrewsbury and Cambridge. In 1860 he emigrated to New Zealand, where a few years' successful sheep-farming allowed him to return to England and live a modest literary life. Butler was a man who harbored unusual ideas on music, art, education, and social conditions in general. His mind was at once cultured and credulous; and his gift of pungent language gave him much influence among the more ardent and advanced minds of his day.

His first work, *Erewhon* (1872), appeared originally in a newspaper in New Zealand. It is a combination of *Gulliver's Travels* and *Utopia* adapted to modern life, and full of Butler's odd prejudices and sardonic wit. Its acute thinking and solid narrative gifts are also very apparent. His great novel *The Way of All Flesh* was published posthumously in 1903. It is modern enough in its keen satire upon conventional education and parental methods of control and in its candid personal disclosures. As time goes on the work will probably take its place as one of the outstanding novels of the period.

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795–1881)

1. His Life. Carlyle, who was born at Ecclefechan, in Dumfriesshire, was the son of a stonemason. He was educated at Annan and at Edinburgh University, and, giving up his intention of entering the Church, became for a time a schoolteacher in Kirkcaldy. After a few years' teaching, during which he saved a little money, he abandoned the profession and removed to Edinburgh, where he did literary hack-work for a living. At this time (1818) he was poor in means and wretched in health, and his spiritual and bodily torments are revealed in *Sartor Resartus*. In 1828 he married Jane Welsh, an able woman who possessed a little property of her own; and after a brief spell of married life in Edinburgh they removed to Craigenputtock, a small estate in the wilds of Dumfriesshire owned by Mrs. Carlyle. Here they lived unhappily enough, but here Carlyle wrote some of his best-known books. In 1834 they removed to London, and settled permanently in Chelsea. Carlyle's poverty was still acute, and as a means of alleviating it he took to lecturing. He was moderately successful in the effort. Then his books, at first received with complete indifference or positive amazement and disgust, began to find favor, and for the last twenty years of his life he was prominent among the intellectual leaders of the time. His wife died in 1866, and in his latter years he was much afflicted with illness and by his deep concern for the state of public affairs. He died at Chelsea, and was buried among his own people at Ecclefechan.

2. His Works. Carlyle's earliest work consisted of translations, essays, and biographies. Of these the best are his translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1824), his *Life of Schiller* (1825), and his essays on

Burns and Scott. Then *Sartor Resartus* (1833) appeared piecemeal in *Fraser's Magazine*. It is an extraordinary book, pretending to contain the opinions of a German professor; but under a thin veil of fiction Carlyle discloses his own spiritual struggles during his early troubled years. The style is violent and exclamatory, and the meaning is frequently obscured in a torrent of words, but it has an energy and a rapturous ecstasy of revolt that quite take the breath away. Carlyle then turned to historical writing, which he handled in his own unconventional fashion. His major historical works are *The French Revolution* (1837), a series of vivid word-pictures rather than sober history, but full of audacity and color; *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845), a huge effort relieved from tedium only by Carlyle's volcanic methods; *The Life of John Sterling* (1851), a slight work, but more genial and humane than his writing usually is; and *The Life of Frederick II* (1865), enormous in scale and heavy with detail. His works dealing with contemporary events are numerous, and include *Chartism* (1839), *Past and Present* (1843), and *Latter-day Pamphlets* (1850). The series of lectures he delivered in 1837 was published as *Heroes and Hero-worship* (1840).

3. Features of his Works. (*a*) *His Teaching.* It is now a little difficult to understand why Carlyle was valued so highly as a sage in moral and political affairs. Throughout his works there is much froth and thunder, but little of anything that (to a later age) is solid and capable of analysis. Carlyle, however, was a man of sterling honesty, of sagacious and powerful mind, which he applied without hesitation to the troubles of his time. His influence, therefore, was rather personal, like that of Dr. Johnson, and cannot be accurately gauged from his

written works. His opinions were widely discussed and widely accepted, and his books had the force of *ex cathedra* pronouncements. In them he sometimes contradicted himself, but he did great service in his denunciation of shams and tyrannies, and in his tempestuous advocacy of hard work and clear thinking.

(*b*) *His Historical Method.* Carlyle's method was essentially biographical—he sought out the "hero," the superman who could benevolently dominate his fellows, and compel them to do better. Such were his Cromwell and his Frederick. His other aim was to make history alive. He denounced the "Dryasdust" who killed the living force in history. To achieve his purpose he sought out and recorded infinite detail of life and opinion, and by means of his own masculine imagination and pithy style he brought the subject vividly before his reader's eye.

(*c*) His *style* is entirely his own. At the first glance a typical passage seems rude and uncouth: with many capital letters in the German fashion, with broken phrases and ejaculations, he proceeds amid a torrent of whirling words. Yet he is flexible to a wonderful degree: he can command a beauty of expression that wrings the very heart: a sweet and piercing melody, with a suggestion, always present, yet always remote, of infinite regret and longing. In such divine moments his style has the lyrical note that requires only the lyrical meter to become great poetry.[223]

The following are two specimens of his style. The first, based on German models, is in his cruder early manner; the second is more matured and restrained. Note in this the quizzical humor.

(1) "*Es leuchtet mir ein*, I see a glimpse of it!"

cries he elsewhere: "there is in man a HIGHER than Love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness! Was it not to preach-forth this same HIGHER that sages and martyrs, the Poet and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered; bearing testimony, through life and through death, of the Godlike that is in Man, and how in the Godlike only has he Strength and Freedom? Which God-inspired Doctrine art thou also honoured to be taught; O Heavens! and broken with manifold merciful Afflictions, even till thou become contrite, and learn it! O, thank thy Destiny for these; thankfully bear what yet remain: thou hadst need of them; the Self in thee needed to be annihilated. By benignant fever-paroxysms is Life rooting out the deep-seated chronic Disease, and triumphs over Death. On the roaring billows of Time, thou art not engulfed, but borne aloft into the azure of Eternity. Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the EVERLASTING YEA, wherein all contradiction is solved: wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him."

Sartor Resartus

(2) The good man,[224] he was now getting old, towards sixty perhaps; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings; a life heavy-laden, half-vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment. Brow and head were round, and of massive weight, but the face was flabby and irresolute. The deep eyes, of a light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called flabby and irresolute; expressive of weakness under possibility of strength. He hung loosely on his limbs, with knees bent, and stooping attitude; in

> walking, he rather shuffled than decisively stept; and a lady once remarked, he never could fix which side of the garden walk would suit him best, but continually shifted, in cork-screw fashion, and kept trying both. A heavy-laden, high-aspiring, and surely much-suffering man. His voice, naturally soft and good, had contracted itself into a plaintive snuffle and sing-song; he spoke as if preaching,—you would have said, preaching earnestly and also hopelessly the weightiest things. I still recollect his "object" and "subject," terms of continual recurrence in the Kantean province, and how he sang and snuffled them into "om-m-mject," "sum-m-mject," with a kind of solemn shake or quaver, as he rolled along. No talk, in his century or in any other, could be more surprising.
>
> *The Life of John Sterling*

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800–59)

1. His Life. Macaulay was born in Leicestershire, his father being Zachary Macaulay, the earnest upholder of negro emancipation. Macaulay was educated privately, and then at Cambridge. From his infancy he was remarkable for his precocity and his prodigious memory. At Cambridge he twice won the Chancellor's Medal for English verse; and after taking high honors he was called to the Bar. By this time his father's business had collapsed, and Macaulay had to depend partly upon his pen for a living. At first he contributed to *Knight's Quarterly*, but later he began writing his famous essays for *The Edinburgh Review*. Having entered Parliament as a Whig (1830), a very promising political career seemed to be opening before him when he accepted a lucrative legal post in India. He was in India for four years; then, returning to England, he re-entered political life, and became in turn Secretary of State for War and Paymaster of

the Forces. In 1857 he was raised to the peerage, and died when he was still busy with his *History*.

2. His **poetry** was nearly all written early in his career, and most of it is included in his *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842). In style the poems resemble the narrative poems of Scott, and in subject they are based upon the legends of early Rome, the best-known dealing with the story of Horatius. His verse is virile stuff, moving with vigor and assurance, and is full of action and color. Like his prose, however, it is hard and brassy, and quite lacking in the softer qualities of melody and sweetness and in the rich suggestiveness of the early ballad. It is not great poetry, but it will always be popular with those who like plenty of action and little contemplation.

3. His Prose Works. Before he left for India Macaulay had written twenty-two essays for *The Edinburgh Review*; he added three during his stay in India, and finished eleven others after he returned to England. With the five biographies that he contributed to *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, these include all his shorter prose works. The essays are of two kinds—those dealing with literary subjects, such as those on Milton, Byron, and Southey, and the historical studies, including the famous compositions on Warren Hastings and Lord Clive. His method of essay-writing was as follows: he brought under review a set of volumes that had already been published on the subject, then, after a survey, long or short as the case might be, of these volumes, gave his own views at great length. His opinions were often one-sided, and his great parade of knowledge was often flawed with actual error or distorted by his craving for antithesis and epigram; but the essays are clearly and ably written, and they disclose an eye for

picturesque effect that in places is almost barbaric.

His *History of England*, the first volume of which was published in 1849, was unfinished at his death. After two long preliminary chapters, it began with the Whig revolution of 1688, and Macaulay intended to carry the story down to his own time. But he managed to compass within the three completed volumes only the events of a few years. His historical treatment is marked by the following features: (*a*) There are numerous and picturesque details, which retard his narrative while they add to the general interest. (*b*) The desire for brilliant effect resulted in a hard, self-confident manner, and in a lack of broader outlines and deeper views. These defects have deprived his *History* of much of its permanent value. (*c*) To this he added such a partiality for the Whig point of view that his statements, though they are always interesting and illuminating, are generally distrusted as statements of fact. To sum up, he said, "I shall not be satisfied unless I produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies." He had full reason to be satisfied; his book had an instant and enormous success, which, however, has been followed by distrust and neglect.

The extract given below gives some idea of his style. It is entirely direct and clear, and free from any shade of doubt and hesitancy. Observe the use of the short detached sentence, and the copious and expressive vocabulary:

> Then was committed that great crime, memorable for its singular atrocity, memorable for the tremendous retribution by which it was followed. The English captives were left at the mercy of the guards, and the guards determined to secure them for the night in the prison of the

> garrison, a chamber known by the fearful name of the Black Hole. Even for a single European malefactor, that dungeon would, in such a climate, have been too close and narrow. The space was only twenty feet square. The air-holes were small and obstructed. It was the summer solstice, the season when the fierce heat of Bengal can scarcely be rendered tolerable to natives of England by lofty halls and by the constant waving of fans. The number of the prisoners was one hundred and forty-six. When they were ordered to enter the cell, they imagined that the soldiers were joking; and, being in high spirits on account of the promise of the Nabob to spare their lives, they laughed and jested at the absurdity of the notion. They soon discovered their mistake. They expostulated; they entreated; but in vain. The guards threatened to cut down all who hesitated. The captives were driven into the cell at the point of the sword, and the door was instantly shut and locked upon them.
>
> *Essay on Clive*

JOHN RUSKIN (1819–1900)

1. His Life. Ruskin was born in London, of Scottish parentage, and was educated privately before he went to Oxford. During his boyhood he often traveled with his father, whose business activities involved journeys both in England and abroad. After leaving the university Ruskin, who did not need to earn a living, settled down to a literary career. He was not long in developing advanced notions on art, politics, economics, and other subjects. In art he was in particular devoted to the cause of the landscape-painter Turner, and in social and economic theories he was an advocate of an advanced form of socialism. To the present generation his ideas appear innocuous, or even

inevitable, but by the public of his own day they were received with shocked dismay. At first the only notice he received was in the jeers of his adversaries; but gradually his fame spread as he freely expounded his opinions in lectures and pamphlets, as well as in his longer books. In 1869 he was appointed Slade Professor of Fine Arts at Oxford. Illness, however, which was aggravated by hard work and mental worries, led him to resign (1879) after a few years; and though shortly afterward (1883) he resumed the post, it had at last to be abandoned. He retired to Brantwood, on Coniston Water, in the Lake District, where he lived till his death, his later years being clouded by disease and despair.

2. His Works. Ruskin's works are of immense volume and complexity. They were often issued in a haphazard fashion, and this makes it all the more difficult to follow the order of their publication. For a start he plunged into what turned out to be the longest of his books, *Modern Painters*, the first volume of which was issued in 1843 and the fifth and last in 1860. This work, beginning as a thesis in defense of the painting of Turner, develops Ruskin's opinions on many other subjects. The first volume was not long in attracting notice, chiefly owing to its sumptuous style, which was of a kind unknown in English for centuries. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) is a shorter and more popular work, which once again expounds his views on artistic matters. *The Stones of Venice* (1851–53), in four volumes, is considered to be his masterpiece both in thought and style. It is less diffuse than *Modern Painters*; there is a little more plan in the immense array of discursive matter; and the luxuriance of the style is somewhat curtailed. His other writings are of a miscellaneous

kind, and comprise *The Two Paths* (1859), a course of lectures; *Unto this Last* (1860), a series of articles on political economy which began to appear in *The Cornhill Magazine*, but were stopped owing to their hostile reception; *Munera Pulveris* (1862), also an unfinished series of articles on political economy, published in *Fraser's Magazine*, and also withdrawn owing to their advanced views; *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1864), a series of addresses; *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), a course of three lectures, which is now the most popular of his shorter works; and *Præterita*, which first began to appear in 1855, and which is a kind of autobiography.

3. His Style. Ruskin himself often deplored the fact that people read him more for his style than for his creed. His views, which he argued with power and sincerity, must in time give way to others; many of them are now self-evident, so rapid sometimes is the progress of the human intellect; but his prose style, an art as delicate and beautiful as any of those he spent his life in supporting, will long remain a delectable study. For its like we must return to the prose of Milton and Clarendon, and refine and sweeten the manner of these early masters to reproduce the effect that Ruskin achieves. In its less ornate passages Ruskin's diction is marked by a sweet and unforced simplicity; but his pages abound in purple passages, which are marked by sentences of immense length, carefully punctuated, by a gorgeous march of image and epithet, and by a sumptuous rhythm that sometimes grows into actual blank verse capable of scansion. In his later books Ruskin to a certain extent eschewed his grandiose manner, and wrote the language of the Bible, modernized and made supple; but to the very end he was always able to rise to the lyrical mood and fill a page with a

strong and sonorous sentence.

The paragraph given below, it will be noticed, is one sentence. Observe the minute care given to the punctuation, the aptness of epithet, and the rhythm, which in several places is so regular that the matter can be scanned like poetry.

> Then let us pass farther towards the north, until we see the orient colours change gradually into a vast belt of rainy green, where the pastures of Switzerland, and poplar valleys of France, and dark forests of the Danube and Carpathians stretch from the mouths of the Loire to those of the Volga, seen through clefts in gray swirls of rain-cloud and flaky veils of the mist of the brooks, spreading low along the pasture lands: and then, farther north still, to see the earth heave into mighty masses of leaden rock and heathy moor, bordering with a broad waste of gloomy purple that belt of field and wood, and splintering into irregular and grisly islands amidst the northern seas, beaten by storm, and chilled by ice-drift, and tormented by furious pulses of contending tide, until the roots of the last forests fall from among the hill ravines, and the hunger of the north wind bites their peaks into barrenness; and, at last, the wall of ice, durable like iron, sets, deathlike, its white teeth against us out of the polar twilight.
>
> *The Stones of Venice*

OTHER WRITERS OF MISCELLANEOUS PROSE

1. John Addington Symonds (1840–93) was among the foremost of the literary critics who flourished after the middle of the century. He was the son of a Bristol physician, and was educated at Harrow and Oxford. A tendency to consumption checked whatever desire he had to study the law,

and much of his life was spent abroad.

A large proportion of his work was contributed to periodicals, and was collected and issued in volume form. The best collection is *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873). His longest work is *The Renaissance in Italy* (1875–86), in which he contests Ruskin's views on art. In style he is often ornate and even florid, and in treatment he can be diffuse to tediousness; but as a critic he is shrewd and well informed.

2. Walter Horatio Pater (1839–94) was, both as a stylist and as a literary critic, superior to Symonds. Born in London, he was educated at Canterbury and Oxford, becoming finally a Fellow of Brasenose. He devoted himself to art and literature, producing some remarkable volumes on these subjects.

His first essays appeared in book-form as *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1878), and were concerned chiefly with art; *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) is a remarkable philosophical novel, and is the best example of his distinguished style; *Imaginary Portraits* (1887) deals with artists; and *Appreciations* (1889) is on literary themes, and is prefaced by an important essay on style.

Pater's individual style is among the most notable of the latter part of the century. It is the creation of immense application and forethought; every word is conned, every sentence proved, and every rhythm appraised, until we have the perfection of finished workmanship. It is never cheap, but firm and equable, with the strength and massiveness of bronze. Its very perfections are a burden, especially in his novel; it tends to become frigid and lifeless, and the subtle dallyings with refinements of meaning thin it down to mere euphuism. In the novel the action is chilled, and the characters frozen until they

resemble rather a group of statuary than a collection of human beings.

3. James Anthony Froude (1818–94) was born near Totnes, where his father was archdeacon. After three years at Westminster School he proceeded to Oxford, where he was not long in feeling the effects of the High Church movement led by Newman. From this he afterward broke away, and was elected to a fellowship at Exeter College. He toiled ardently at literary work, contributing freely to *The Westminster Review* and other magazines. In 1860 he became editor of *Fraser's Magazine*.

Froude was a man of strong opinions, to which he gave free expression both by voice and pen, and his career was often marked with controversy. His handling of the life of Carlyle provoked much angry comment. In the course of time his true merits came to be valued adequately, and after being appointed to several Government commissions he was elected (1892) Regius Professor of History at Oxford.

Froude's miscellaneous work was published in four volumes called *Short Studies on Great Subjects* (1867–83). His *History of England* (1856–69) was issued in twelve volumes. In period it covers the time of the Reformation, and in method it follows the lead of Carlyle in its great detail and picturesque description. In its general attitude it is an indirect, and therefore an unfair, attack upon the High Church views of Newman. The work, nevertheless, is composed with much vigor, and is in the main accurate, though slightly lax in detail. Other books are *The English in Ireland* (1871–74), *Cæsar* (1879), *Oceana* (1886), and an Irish novel, *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy* (1889). His biography of Carlyle was issued during the period 1882–84.

4. The Historians. The nineteenth century produced many historical writers, of whom only a very few can find a place here.

(*a*) **Alexander Kinglake (1809–91)** was born near Taunton, and educated at Eton and Cambridge. He was called to the Bar, and practiced with some success, but in 1856 he retired to devote himself to literature. He saw much of the world, and watched the progress of the war in the Crimea. In 1857 he became Member of Parliament for Bridgwater.

His *History of the Crimean War* (1863–87) is enormously bulky and full of detail. In attitude it is too favorable to the British commander, Lord Raglan, and in style it is tawdry; at its best, however, it is a picturesque narrative. His other work of note is *Eothen* (1844), a clever account of Eastern travel.

(*b*) **John Richard Green (1837–83)** was born and educated at Oxford, and became a curate in the East End of London. He was delicate in health, and was compelled to retire from his charge in 1869. His last years were spent in writing his historical works.

Of these works the best is *A Short History of the English People* (1874), which at once took rank as one of the few popular text-books which are also literature. It is devoted to the history of the *people* and not to wars and high politics. It is told with a terse simplicity that is quite admirable. *The Making of England* (1882) and *The Conquest of England* (1883) are the only two other works he lived to finish.

(*c*) **Edward Augustus Freeman (1823–92)** was celebrated as the chief opponent of Froude. He was educated privately, and then at Oxford, where he became a Fellow of Trinity College and Regius Professor of Modern History (1884). He wrote many

historical works, the most valuable of which are *The History of the Norman Conquest* (1867–79) and *The Reign of William Rufus* (1882). Freeman specialized in certain periods of English history, which he treated laboriously and at great length. This, as well as his arid style, makes his history unattractive to read, but he did much solid and enthusiastic work for the benefit of his students and successors.

5. The Scientists. The nineteenth century beheld the exposition of scientific themes raised to the level of a literary art.

(*a*) **Hugh Miller (1802–56)** was a natural genius, self-taught and self-inspired. He was born at Cromarty, in the north of Scotland, and became a stonemason, in which capacity he studied geology. In 1835 he became an accountant in a bank. He wrote much for the periodical press, and his writing attracted considerable notice. Latterly he suffered from mental disorder, and in the end committed suicide.

The Old Red Sandstone (1841) contains much patient observation of geological fact, and is still regarded as a valuable contribution to the subject; *The Testimony of the Rocks* (1857) appeared after his death. He wrote a little fiction of mediocre quality, published as *Tales and Sketches* (1863). Miller's style is unforced and often impressive, and for sincerity, piety, and homely wisdom his books leave little to be desired.

(*b*) **Charles Darwin (1809–82)** is one of the greatest names in modern science. He was born at Shrewsbury, where he received his early education, passing later to Cambridge. In 1831 he became naturalist in *The Beagle*, a man-of-war that went around the world on a scientific mission. This lucky

chance determined his career as a scientist. The remainder of his life was laboriously uneventful, being devoted almost wholly to biological and allied studies.

His chief works are *The Voyage of the Beagle* (1836), a mine of accurate and interesting facts; *The Origin of Species* (1859), which is to modern science what *The Wealth of Nations* is to modern economics—the foundation of belief; and *The Descent of Man* (1871). We cannot discuss his theories of evolution, but as general literature his books possess a living interest owing to their rich array of garnered evidence and their masterly gifts of exposition and argument.

(*c*) **Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95)** was one of the ablest and most energetic of Darwin's supporters. He was born at Ealing, and became a surgeon in the Navy. His first post was on Nelson's *Victory*. Like Darwin, he traveled abroad on a warship, *The Rattlesnake*, and during these four years (1846–50) he saw and learned much. Retiring from the Navy, he took enthusiastically to scientific research, and became President of the Royal Society and a prominent public figure in the heated discussions concerning the theories that were then so new and disturbing.

Huxley produced no work in the same class as *The Origin of Species*. His work consisted of lectures and addresses, which were issued in volume form as *Man's Place in Nature* (1863), *Lay Sermons and Addresses* (1870), and *American Lectures* (1877).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

The Victorian epoch was exceedingly productive of literary work of a high quality, but the amount of

actual innovation is by no means great. Writers were as a rule content to work upon former models, and the improvements they did achieve were often dubious and unimportant.

1. Poetry. (*a*) The *lyrical* output is very large and varied, as a glance through the works of the poets already mentioned will show. In form there is little of fresh interest. Tennyson was content to follow the methods of Keats, though Browning's complicated forms and Swinburne's long musical lines were more freely used by them than by any previous writers.

(*b*) In *descriptive and narrative poetry* there is a greater advance to chronicle. In subject—for example, in the poems of Browning and Morris—there is great variety, embracing many climes and periods; in method there is much diversity, ranging from the cultured elegance of Tennyson's English landscapes to the wild impressionism of Whitman in America. The Pre-Raphaelite school, also, united several features which had not been seen before in combination. These were a fondness for medieval themes treated in an unconventional manner, a richly colored pictorial effect, and a studied and melodious simplicity. The works of Rossetti, Morris, and Swinburne provide many examples of this development of poetry. On the whole we can say that the Victorians were strongest on the descriptive side of poetry, which agreed with the more meditative habits of the period, as contrasted with the warmer and more lyrical emotions of the previous age.

There were many attempts at purely narrative poetry, with interesting results. Tennyson thought of reviving the epic, but in him the epical impulse was not sufficiently strong, and his great narrative poem was produced as smaller fragments which he called

idylls. Browning's *Ring and the Book* is curious, for it can be called a psychological epic—a narrative in which emotion removes action from the chief place. In this class of poetry *The Earthly Paradise* of William Morris is a return to the old romantic tale as we find it in the works of Chaucer.

2. Drama. Nearly all the major poets of the period wrote tragedy on the lines of the accepted models. Few of these attained to real distinction; they were rather the conscientious efforts of men who were striving to succeed in the impossible task of really reviving the poetical drama. Of them all, Swinburne's tragedies, especially those concerned with Mary Queen of Scots, possess the greatest warmth and energy; and Browning's earlier plays, before he over-developed his style, have sincerity and sometimes real dramatic power. As for comedy, it was almost wholly neglected as a purely literary form.

A development to be noticed is the popularity of the *dramatic monologue*. In *Ulysses*, *Tithonus*, and other pieces Tennyson achieved some of his most successful results; and Browning's host of monologues, wide in range and striking in detail, are perhaps his greatest contribution to literature. The method common to this kind of monologue was to take some character and make him reveal his inmost self in his own words.

3. Prose. (*a*) By the middle of the nineteenth century the *novel*, as a species of literature, had thrust itself into the first rank. We shall therefore consider it first.

In the novels of Thackeray and Dickens the various qualities of the domestic novel are gathered together and carried a stage forward. Dickens did

much to idealize the England of his day, and to depict the life of the lower and middle classes with imagination and humor. As a satirist and an observer of manners Thackeray easily excels his contemporaries. The other novelists were to a great extent gleaners in the spacious field that was reaped by the two greater writers. Charlotte Brontë supplied a somber passion that colored the drabness of her life; Trollope specialized with his parsons; Collins wrote mystery stories. Of the rest, George Eliot showed a closeness of application to the mental process of her characters that was carried further in the work of Meredith, and has led to the "psychological" novels of the present day.

In *Esmond* the historical novel made an advance. Here Thackeray was not content to master the history of the period he described; he sought to reproduce also the language and atmosphere. This is an extremely difficult thing to achieve, and is possible only in novels dealing with a limited period of time, but Thackeray scored a remarkable success.

(*b*) The development of the *Short story*, as a separate species of literature, will be touched upon in the next chapter.

(*c*) In the case of the *essay* we have to note the expansion of the literary type into the treatise-in-little. This method was made popular by Macaulay, and continued by Carlyle, Symonds, Pater, and many others. Of the miscellaneous essayists, both Dickens, in some parts of *The Uncommercial Traveller*, and Thackeray, in *The Roundabout Papers*, successfully practiced the shorter Addisonian type; and this again was enlarged and made more pretentious by Ruskin, Pater, and Stevenson.

(*d*) The *lecture* becomes a prominent literary

species for a time. Carlyle, Thackeray, Dickens, and many others both in England and America published lectures in book-form. Earlier critics like Hazlitt and Coleridge had done so; but, almost for the first time, Ruskin gave a distinct style and manner to the lecture.

(*e*) The *historians* are strongly represented. Carlyle and Macaulay, in spite of their great industry and real care for history, have now fallen behind in the race as historians, and survive chiefly as stylists. The new method that arose was typified in the solid and valuable work of **William Stubbs (1825–1901)**, **Edward A. Freeman (1823–92)**, and **Samuel R. Gardiner (1829–1902)**. These historians avoided the charms of literary style, concentrated upon some aspect of history, and, basing their results upon patient research into original authorities, produced valuable additions to human knowledge.

(*f*) We have already noticed that in this period the *scientific treatise* attained to literary rank. We may mention as early examples of this type Sir Thomas Browne's curious treatise on *Urne Buriall*, Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and the graceful essays of Berkeley.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

With such an amount of writing as characterizes this age it is quite certain that both in prose and poetry a wide range of style will be observable.

1. Poetry. In the case of poetry the more ornate style was represented in Tennyson, who developed artistic schemes of vowel-music, alliteration, and other devices in a manner quite unprecedented. The Pre-Raphaelites carried the method still further. In diction they were simpler than Tennyson, but their

vocabulary was more archaic and their mass of detail more highly colored. The style of Browning was to a certain extent a protest against this aureate diction. He substituted for it simplicity and a heady speed, especially in his earlier lyrics; his more mature obscurity was merely an effect of his eager imagination and reckless impetuosity. Matthew Arnold, in addition, was too classical in style to care for over-developed picturesqueness, and wrote with a studied simplicity. On the whole, however, we can say that the average poetical style of this period, as a natural reaction against the simpler methods of the period immediately preceding, was ornate rather than simple.

2. Prose. With regard to prose, the greater proportion by far is written in the middle style, the established medium in journalism, in all manner of miscellaneous work, and in the majority of the novels. Outside this mass of middle prose, the style of Ruskin stands highest in the scale of ornateness; of a like kind are the scholarly elegance of Pater and the mannered dictions of Meredith and Stevenson. The style of Carlyle and that of Macaulay are each a peculiar brand of the middle style, Macaulay's being hard, clear, and racy, and Carlyle's gruff and tempestuous, with an occasional passage of soothing beauty.

Of the simpler writers there is a large number, among whom many novelists find a place. We have space here to refer only to the easygoing journalistic manner of Dickens and to the sub-acid flavor of the prose of Thackeray.

We add a specimen of Stevenson's prose style. This style, which in its mannered precision is typical of many modern prose styles, is noteworthy on

account of its careful selection of epithet, its clear-cut expressiveness, and its delicate rhythm.

But Hermiston was not all of one piece. He was, besides, a mighty toper; he could sit at wine until the day dawned, and pass directly from the table to the Bench with a steady hand and a clear head. Beyond the third bottle, he showed the plebeian in a larger print; the low, gross accent, the low, foul mirth, grew broader and commoner; he became less formidable, and infinitely more disgusting. Now, the boy had inherited from Jean Rutherford a shivering delicacy, unequally mated with potential violence. In the playing-fields, and amongst his own companions, he repaid a coarse expression with a blow; at his father's table (when the time came for him to join these revels) he turned pale and sickened in silence. Of all the guests whom he there encountered, he had toleration for only one: David Keith Carnegie, Lord Glenalmond. Lord Glenalmond was tall and emaciated, with long features and long delicate hands. He was often compared with the statue of Forbes of Culloden in the Parliament House; and his blue eye, at more than sixty, preserved some of the fire of youth. His exquisite disparity with any of his fellow-guests, his appearance, as of an artist and an aristocrat stranded in rude company, rivetted the boy's attention; and as curiosity and interest are the things in the world that are the most immediately and certainly rewarded, Lord Glenalmond was attracted to the boy.

Weir of Hermiston

TABLE TO ILLUSTRATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

DATE	POETRY		DRAMA		
	Lyrical	Narrative-Descriptive	Tragedy	Comedy	Novel

	Tennyson[225]				
		Tennyson[226]			
		Browning[228]			
1840	E.B. Browning	E.B. Browning			Dickens[2
	Browning[230]				Thackeray
			Browning[233]		
		Clough			
1850	M. Arnold	M. Arnold			C. Brontë Kingsley
					Borrow
				C. Reade	
					C. Reade
					Trollope
					Collins
1860	W. Morris	W. Morris Fitzgerald			G. Eliot Meredith[
	C. G. Rossetti				
		Swinburne	Swinburne[235]		
1870					Besant

	D. G. Rossetti	D. G. Rossetti			Butler
1880			Tennyson[236]		
1890					Stevenson

EXERCISES

1. The following are brief extracts from dramatic monologues by Tennyson, Browning, and William Morris. Compare them with regard to subject, point of view, and style. How far does each reflect the character of the author?

(1) There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

TENNYSON, *Ulysses*

(2) First, every sort of monk, the black and white,
I drew them, fat and lean: then, folk at church,
From good old gossips waiting to confess
Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends,—

To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,
Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there
With the little children round him in a row
Of admiration, half for his beard, and half
For that white anger of his victim's son
Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,
Signing himself with the other because of Christ
(Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
After the passion of a thousand years).

BROWNING, *Fra Lippo Lippi*

(*Guenevere speaking.*)

(3) And every morn I scarce could pray at all,
For Launcelot's red-golden hair would play,
Instead of sunlight, on the painted wall,
Mingled with dreams of what the priest would say;

Grim curses out of Peter and of Paul;
Judging of strange sins in Leviticus;
Another sort of writing on the wall,
Scored deep across the painted heads of us.

Christ sitting with the woman at the well,
And Mary Magdalen repenting there,
Her dimmed eyes scorched and red at sight of hell
So hardly 'scaped, no gold light on her hair.

MORRIS, *King Arthur's Tomb*

2. In the following extracts point out the features of subject and style that are characteristic of their respective authors. In each case say how far the style suits the subject.

(1) Day has bent downwards. Wearied mortals are creeping home from their field labour; the village artisan eats with relish his supper of herbs, or has strolled forth to the village street for a sweet mouthful of air and human news. Still summer-eventide everywhere! The great sun hangs flaming on the utmost Northwest; for it is his longest day this year. The hill-tops rejoicing will erelong be at their ruddiest, and blush Good-night. The thrush, in green dells, on long-shadowed leafy spray, pours gushing his glad

serenade, to the babble of brooks grown audibler; silence is stealing over the Earth.

CARLYLE, *The French Revolution*

(2) Monmouth was startled by finding that a broad and profound trench lay between him and the camp which he had hoped to surprise. The insurgents halted on the edge of the rhine and fired. Part of the royal infantry on the opposite bank returned the fire. During three-quarters of an hour the roar of the musketry was incessant. The Somersetshire peasants behaved themselves as if they had been veteran soldiers, save only that they levelled their pieces too high.

MACAULAY, *The History of England*

(3) We may not measure to the full the depth of this heavenly gift, in our own land; though still, as we think of it longer, the infinite of that meadow sweetness, Shakespeare's peculiar joy, would open on us more and more, yet we have it but in part. Go out, in the spring time, among the meadows that slope from the shores of the Swiss lakes to the roots of their lower mountains. There, mingled with the taller gentians and the white narcissus, the grass grows deep and free; and as you follow the winding mountain paths, beneath arching boughs all veiled and dim with blossom—paths that for ever droop and rise over the green banks and mounds sweeping down in scented undulation, steep to the blue water, studded here and there with new-mown heaps, filling all the air with fainter sweetness—look up towards the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines; and we may, perhaps, at last know the meaning of those quiet words of the 147th Psalm, "He maketh grass to grow up on the mountains."

RUSKIN, *Modern Painters*

(4)Rats!
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.
BROWNING, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*

3. The two extracts given below are typical of the Pre-Raphaelite school. Point out the features in style and subject common to both. Write a brief appreciation of this style of poetry.

(1) The banners seemed quite full of ease,
That over the turret roofs hung down;
The battlements could get no frown
From the flower-moulded cornices.

Who walked in that garden there?
Miles and Giles and Isabeau,
Tall Jehane du Castel Beau,
Alice of the golden hair,

Big Sir Gervaise, the good knight,
Fair Ellayne le Violet,
Mary, Constance fille de fay,
Many dames with footfall light.
MORRIS, *Golden Wings*

(2) "We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bounds locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles."

D. G. ROSSETTI, *The Blessed Damozel*

4. From a consideration of the specimens given below, and of other examples that occur to you, write a brief essay on the Victorian lyric.

(1) Say not the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
But westward, look, the land is bright!

CLOUGH

(2) Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough

In England—now!
And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge
—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

R. BROWNING

(3) Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

5. Compare the novels of Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot, the chief women novelists of the middle of the nineteenth century.

6. Trace the development of the historical novel from the death of Scott to the death of Stevenson.

7. Write a brief account of the drama of this period.

8. Who are the principal prose stylists of the period? Write a note on the style of each, quoting whenever you can.

9. "The characteristic of the novel, as it was reconstituted towards the middle of the century, was the preference for strictly ordinary life."

(Saintsbury.) Examine this statement.

10. “Prose style in our day is a complex matter.” (Craik.) Expand this statement, pointing out the wide range of style necessary to meet modern requirements.

11. “Men of genius may be divided into regular and irregular.” Bagehot, who makes this remark, calls Dickens an irregular genius. Suggest some of his reasons for doing so.

12. “Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning represent respectively the pure, ornate, and grotesque in poetry.” (Bagehot.) What justification is there for such a statement?

13. “Tennyson’s poetry undoubtedly represents the ideas and tastes, the inherited predilections, the prevailing currents of thought, of Englishmen belonging to his class and generation.” (Sir A. Lyall.) Write a brief essay on this statement.

14. “Thackeray’s manner was mainly realistic.” (Trollope.) How far was Thackeray a realist? How far did he describe persons and actions as they really were? Quote examples from his novels. Compare him in this respect with Dickens.

15. “The novel has supplanted the sermon, the essay, and the play in the place which each at different times held as the *popular* form of literature.” (Saintsbury.) Expand and comment upon this quotation.

16. In what respects did the spread of popular education affect the literary production of the period?

CHAPTER XII

THE POST-VICTORIAN AGE

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1890–1920)

The period covered by this chapter, thirty years in extent, begins with the decline of the Victorian tradition, and practically ends with the European War. It is a time of unrest, of a hardening of temper, of the decay of the larger Victorian ideals, and of the growth of a more critical, cynical, and analytic spirit. The period, one will find, is not very rich in literature of the highest class; and looking back over our literature, and studying the rise and fall of the literary impulse, the alternation of rich harvest with lean years, one is tempted to regard the post-Victorian age as an interval between two epochs, between the great Victorian age and another, still to be, that will be as truly great.

LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

1. Decline of Poetry. For almost the first time in the history of English literature the poetical product must be relegated to a subordinate position. Much verse, some of great charm and considerable power, has been written, but very little of real outstanding literary importance. It is this decided decline in the poetical spirit that must make the period take an inferior place in our literary history. Even the Great War failed to produce a poet who might proclaim its ideals as Wordsworth did those of the French Revolution. One is reluctantly driven to conclude that the divine poetical impulse was not there.

2. The Domination of the Novel. Comparatively late in its appearance, the novel has now become the most prominent of the literary forms. The output is enormous, the general level quite high, and the scope of its subject almost all-embracing. The growth of the popular press, including the cheap magazine specializing in the production of fiction, the cheapening of books and journals, the increasing use of shorthand and the typewriter, all combine to add to the torrent of fiction.

3. Modern "Realism." The tendency of the time is to avoid sentiment, and to look upon life critically and even cynically. There is a supercilious attitude toward enthusiasm, which is banned as being "Victorian," a word which has assumed a derogatory meaning. In the domain of fiction this feeling is the strongest. Victorian convention is anathema; all subjects are explored, and handled with a frankness that would have horrified the moralists of the earlier age. A particularly strong school of novelists is interested in social subjects, and is affected with the prevailing economic unrest.

4. Foreign Influences. In other countries the same tendency toward realism is apparent, and has helped the movement in England. In Europe there were two geniuses of international importance, and both of them were fired with revolutionary social ideals: Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906), the Norse dramatist, and Leo Tolstoï (1828–1910), the Russian novelist. The influence of Ibsen went right to the roots of English drama, and the works of Tolstoï awoke English readers to the importance of Russian fiction, which is strongly realistic. French novelists of the realistic school, such as Émile Zola (1840–1902), had their share in the development of the English

novel.

5. The Celtic Revival. The revival of Irish literature is of much interest. It began in the effort of a group of writers to preserve and reanimate Irish sentiment and (to a certain extent) the Irish language. It has affected all branches of literature: it has affected poetry, producing poems such as those of Mr. Yeats; it has created a type of drama, and a theater in which to act it; its dramatists include Mr. Synge, Lady Gregory, and (partly) Mr. Shaw; it has added a novelist of importance in George Moore; and it has a worthy example of a man of letters in George Russell, whose *nom de plume* is "A. E."

THOMAS HARDY

We shall deal with three outstanding novelists, each of whom is representative of a different class. We shall have space sufficient for a small number only of the other novelists.

1. His Life. Thomas Hardy was born (1840) in Dorsetshire, and after being educated locally finished his studies at King's College, London. He adopted the profession of an architect, being specially interested in the architecture of early churches. Ambitious to achieve fame as an author, he began, as so many other literary aspirants have done, with poetry. In this branch of literature he met with scant recognition; so, when he was over thirty years old, he took to the writing of novels. These too had no popular success, though they did not go unpraised by discerning critics. Nevertheless, Hardy continued uninterruptedly to issue works of fiction, which gradually but surely brought him fame. He was enabled to abandon his profession as an architect and retire to his native Dorchester, where he lived

the life of a literary recluse. Popular applause, which he had never courted, in the end came in full measure. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday the greatest literary figures of the day united to do him homage, and the King, with characteristic felicity, sent a message of gracious compliment. Some years previously (1910) he had received the Order of Merit, no inappropriate distinction.

2. His Poetry. As early as 1865, and thence onward, Mr. Hardy issued fugitive pieces of poetry, which were at length collected and published as *Wessex Poems* (1898). Many of the poems, none of which is very long, are of the dramatic monologue type. The typical Hardy note is apparent in nearly all of them; a careful and measured utterance, a stern eye for the tragedy of common things, and a somber submission to the dictates of an unkind fate. One or two of them are brighter, with a wry kind of humor, like the well-known *Valenciennes*. A second collection, *Poems of the Past and Present* (1901), has a deeper and more sardonic note, but the feeling of pitiful regret is still predominant. This is particularly so in the poems on the South African War. *The Dead Drummer*, a poem of this group, three brief stanzas in length, tells of Drummer Hodge slain and buried in the veld. The Hardy attitude is almost perfectly revealed in the last stanza:

> Yet portion of that unknown plain
> Will Hodge for ever be;
> His homely northern breast and brain
> Grow up a southern tree;
> And strange-eyed constellations reign
> His stars eternally.

In *The Dynasts*, which was published in several parts between 1903 and 1908, we meet with Mr. Hardy's most ambitious poetical effort. In scope the

poem is vast, for it deals with the Napoleonic wars, with all Europe for its scene. In length it is prodigious, and before the reader has reached the end he is overwhelmed with the magnitude of it. In form it is dramatic, in the sense that Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* is dramatic; the scene shifts from point to point, the historical figures utter long monologues, and superhuman intelligences, such as Pity and the Spirit of the Years, add commentaries upon the activities of mankind. Above and behind all of it broods a sense of stern fatalism—the Immanent Will, as the author calls it; and in front of this enormous curtain of fate and futility even the figure of Napoleon is dwarfed and impotent.

Satires of Circumstance (1914) is another collection of shorter pieces. The satires themselves, which occupy quite a small portion of the book, are almost brutal and rancorous in their choice and treatment of unhappy incidents. No doubt their author judges such a tone to be necessary in the production of satire. The effect is very impressive. For example, in the short piece called *In the Cemetery* he begins:

> "You see those mothers squabbling there?"
> Remarks the man of the cemetery.
> "One says in tears, '*'Tis mine lies here!*'
> Another, '*Nay, mine, you Pharisee!*'
> Another, '*How dare you move my flowers*
> *And put your own on this grave of ours!*'
> But all their children were laid therein
> At different times, like sprats in a tin."

And the cemetery man goes on to say that all the bodies had been removed to make room for a drain-pipe, and that the quarreling was taking place over the drain-pipe.

A further group of poems in this same volume is called *Poems of 1912–1913*. In this group of poems,

which are elegiac in nature, Mr. Hardy's lyrical genius develops a late but splendid bloom. It is unique in our history for a poet over seventy years old to surpass all the efforts of his prime. In the depth of their emotion and the terse adequacy of their style they represent the consummation of his poetry. We quote briefly:

(1) I found her out there
On a slope few see,
That falls westwardly
To the sharp-edged air,
Where the ocean breaks
On the purple strand,
And the hurricane shakes
The solid land.

(2) Nobody says: Ah, that is the place
Where chanced, in the hollow of years ago,
What none of the Three Towns cared to know—
The birth of a little girl of grace—
The sweetest the house saw, first or last;
Yet it was so
On that day long past.

Nobody thinks: There, there she lay
In a room by the Hoe, like the bud of a flower,
And listened, just after the bed time hour,
To the stammering chimes that used to play
The quaint Old Hundred-and-Thirteenth tune
In Saint Andrew's tower
Night, morn, and noon.

*****

Nay: one there is to whom these things,
That nobody else's mind calls back,
Have a savour that scenes in being lack,
And a presence more than the actual brings;
To whom to-day is beneaped and stale,
And its urgent clack
But a vapid tale.

Places

3. His Novels. Mr. Hardy's first novel, *Desperate*

Remedies (1871), is, even as a first attempt, a little disappointing. *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) is an improvement, and in its sweet and faithful rendering of country life suggests *Silas Marner*. Next appeared *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), much more powerful, in which coincidences combine to produce a pitifully tragic conclusion. This is a fine specimen of the Hardy "pessimism." By this time Mr. Hardy had matured his style and developed his views, and the succeeding novels display a masterly power that rarely deserts him: *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Trumpet-Major* (1879), *A Laodicean* (1881), *Two on a Tower* (1882), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1885), and *The Woodlanders* (1887). Then Mr. Hardy's career as a novelist culminated in two novels which have already taken rank among the great books of the language: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1894). The first is the story of a woman ("a pure woman," the novelist calls her), of a noble line long decayed, who, as the victim of a malign and persistent destiny, commits murder and perishes on the scaffold; the second is the life-history of an obscure craftsman, fired by the noblest ideals, who struggles to attain to better things, but dies broken and disappointed, like Job cursing the day he was born: drab and somber tales, lit by rare gleams of delicious humor and sentiment, and lifted to the level of great art by boundless insight and pity. After this *The Well Beloved* (1897) was of the nature of an anti-climax, and Mr. Hardy wrote no more novels.

4. Features of his Novels. (*a*) *Their Literary Quality.* Of the novelists of his time Mr. Hardy is the most assiduous in his attention to the practices of his great literary predecessors, such as Sophocles,

Shakespeare, and Shelley. This, perhaps, gives his novels rather a heavy touch, so that he will never find a facile popularity; but he is never cheap and never tawdry, he builds broad and square, and his work will surely endure.

(*b*) *Their English Quality*. Like Chaucer and Shakespeare, Mr. Hardy, though he includes all humanity in his outlook, is profoundly and essentially English. His works embrace English folk and strike their roots deep into English soil. His most successful creations are those of peasants bred in his own native shire, or in the adjacent shires. Hence he has given us a notable gallery of men and women who are true to their breed and satisfying in their actuality. The scene of the majority of his novels is a section of England that he calls Wessex. This includes approximately all the south and west of England south of a line joining Oxford and Bristol. Within this boundary he moves with ease and precision, and there he finds adequate literary sustenance. From a man of the caliber of Mr. Hardy such parochialism hardly requires an apology, but if it does he has given it fully. We quote a passage in which he defends his practice, and which in addition provides a good specimen of his expository prose:

> It has sometimes been conceived of novels that evolve their action on a circumscribed scene—as do many (though not all) of these—that they cannot be so inclusive in their exhibition of human nature as novels wherein the scenes cover large extents of country, in which events figure amid towns and cities, even wander over the four quarters of the globe. I am not concerned to argue this point further than to suggest that the conception is an untrue one in respect of the elementary passions. But I would state that the geographical limits of the stage here trodden were

> not absolutely forced upon the writer by circumstances; he forced them upon himself from judgment. I considered that our magnificent heritage from the Greeks in dramatic literature found sufficient room for a large proportion of its action in an extent of their country not much larger than the half-dozen counties here reunited under the old name of Wessex, that the domestic emotions have throbbed in Wessex nooks with as much intensity as in the palaces of Europe, and that, anyhow, there was quite enough human nature in Wessex for one man's literary purpose. So far was I possessed by this idea that I kept within the frontiers when it would have been easier to overleap them and give more cosmopolitan features to the narrative.
>
> *General Preface to the Wessex Edition*

(*c*) *Their Pessimism.* It cannot be denied that the novels are somewhat oppressive in the gloom of their atmosphere. As a novelist Mr. Hardy seems to conceive mankind as overlooked by a deliberately freakish and malignant Fate. His characters are consistently unfortunate when they deserve it least. In places, as in the case of Tess, he appears to bear down the scales, throwing against them the weight of repeated unhappy coincidences. Such a dismal method would in the end be repulsive to the reader's sense of pity and justice if Mr. Hardy did not add to it a certain largeness and detachment of view and a somber but sympathetic clarity of vision that make the reader's objections seem paltry and spiritless.

(*d*) *Their Humor and Pathos.* In many places, as in the rustic scenes of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the novels have a delicacy and acuteness of humor that strongly resembles that of George Eliot. At other times the humor is hard and heavy, as it is in his satires; at others, again, it has an odd grotesqueness.

A short poetical extract will illustrate the last type:

> That night your great guns, unawares,
> Shook all our coffins as we lay,
> And broke the chancel window-squares.
> We thought it was the Judgment-day
> And sat upright. While drearisome
> Arose the howl of wakened hounds:
> The mouse let fall the altar-crumb,
> The worms drew back into the mounds.
>
> *Channel Firing*

His pathos is deep, sure, and strong, never degenerating into mawkishness or sentimentality. The conclusion of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is a pattern of the dignified expression of sorrow:

> Upon the cornice of the tower a tall staff was fixed. Their eyes were riveted on it. A few minutes after the hour had struck something moved slowly up the staff, and extended itself upon the breeze. It was a black flag.
>
> "Justice" was done, and the President of the Immortals, in Æschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess. And the d'Urberville knights and dames slept on in their tombs unknowing. The two speechless gazers bent themselves down to the earth, as if in prayer, and remained thus a long time, absolutely motionless: the flag continued to wave silently. As soon as they had strength they arose, joined hands again, and went on.

(*e*) *His Style.* Like many other great novelists, Mr. Hardy has no outstanding tricks of style. The general impression given is one of immense strength and dignity. His vocabulary is copious, but handled with scholarly care and accuracy. He is apt in phrase and pithy in expression, and in moments of emotion his prose moves with a strong rhythmic beauty. In his poetry the style may sometimes be crabbed and

unorthodox, but only to suit a definite satiric purpose. We may sum up by saying that in his style, as in all the other constituents of his writing, he is always the sane and catholic artist.

JOSEPH CONRAD (1857–1924)

1. His Life. "Joseph Conrad" is the pen-name of **Teodor Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski**, who was born in the south of Poland in 1857. His father was implicated in the Nationalist plots of the Poles, and the son shared some of his father's wanderings and exile. For a time the boy was educated at Cracow, but very soon an obstinate love of the sea manifested itself; and in 1874, in spite of all obstacles, he shipped as a seaman at Marseilles. His earliest seafaring was done in the Mediterranean. In 1878 he satisfied a lifelong desire by visiting England and making his first practical acquaintance with the English language. He had long wished to sail under the English flag, and for the remainder of his career he continued to do so. Till 1894 he led the life of a deep-sea sailor, rising from the position of an ordinary seaman to that of a master-mariner in the Mercantile Marine. Bad health, partly occasioned by a voyage up the Congo, stopped his seafaring; and then his first novel was accepted by a London publisher. Henceforth he was able to devote himself to writing novels, for his books, after a moderate beginning, have brought him a rapidly widening circle of readers.

2. His Novels. Mr. Conrad's first novel, *Almayer's Folly*, was begun about 1889 and not finished till 1894, when it was published. In some respects the novel is immature, for it is halting in plot, and there is a tendency to fumble in the handling of some of the characters; but the power and originality of the

work are unquestionable. The scene is that of an Eastern river, fatally beautiful, haunted with disease, death, and the destinies of mysterious men. The principal characters are wild and diabolical, of strange race and stranger desires. Over the whole of the book hangs the glamour of a style quite new to English prose: rich and exotic as a tropical blossom, subtly pervasive and powerful, languorous and debilitating, but most fascinating. The book is typical of the remainder of Mr. Conrad's novels; he was to improve upon it; but only in degree, not in substance. We have space to mention only the more important of his later works: *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), a kind of sequel to the first book; *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1898), a brighter tale, full of the glory of the deep seas; *Lord Jim* (1900), an astonishing story, detailed with microscopic care, of a broken sailor who "makes good"; *Youth* (1902), perhaps Mr. Conrad's masterpiece—briefer, more direct, and instinct with the beauty of romantic youth; *Nostromo* (1903), a tale of South American politics and treasure-hunting; *The Secret Agent* (1907), in which the novelist leaves his favorite Eastern scenes for the grimmer purlieus of London; *'Twixt Land and Sea* (1912), three short stories, containing some of his best work; *Chance* (1914); *Within the Tides* (1915); *Victory* (1915); *The Shadow Line* (1917); *The Arrow of Gold* (1919), in which the interest shifts to Spain and the Carlist plotters; and *The Rescue* (1920). In addition there are several other volumes of short stories; two volumes of memories and impressions, extremely valuable as specimens of the Conrad manner, called *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906) and *Some Reminiscences* (1912); and two volumes written in collaboration with Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Inheritors* (1901) and *Romance* (1903).

3. Features of his Novels. (*a*) *Their Exotic Quality*. Just as Mr. Hardy is probably the most English of the greater novelists, so Mr. Conrad is, in no disparaging sense of the term, the most un-English. No other novelist can so well convey the charm and repulsiveness of alien regions. The impression is borne upon the reader through every constituent of the novels. The setting, in the best examples, is among tropical islands, or upon the deep seas. The characters are men and women thoroughly in tune with the scene: nautical people, generally of mixed or alien breed—Danish, Malay, or Italian. Even when Mr. Conrad introduces English scenes and people in some fashion they always succeed in conveying the impression of being un-English.

(*b*) The *style* of the books, moreover, adds to the prevailing feeling. It is haunting and beautiful, sumptuous in detail, delicate in rhythm, but curiously and decidedly exotic.

A brief extract cannot do justice to the style of Mr. Conrad, but we shall quote two passages in illustration. The first shows his prose in its less happy mood: somewhat mechanical and cumbrous in its imagery, and forced and overloaded with epithet. The second is much better. Here every word is necessary and appropriate, the rhythm is free, and the music sweet and persuasive.

> (1) Shaw tried to speak. He swallowed great mouthfuls of tepid water which the wind drove down his throat. The brig seemed to sail through undulating waves that passed swishing between the masts and swept over the decks with the fierce rush and noise of a cataract. From every spar and every rope a ragged sheet of water streamed flicking to leeward. The overpowering deluge seemed to last for an age; became unbearable—

and, all at once, stopped. In a couple of minutes the shower had run its length over the brig and now could be seen like a straight grey wall, going away into the night under the fierce whispering of dissolving clouds. The wind eased. To the northward, low down in the darkness, three stars appeared in a row, leaping in and out between the crests of the waves like the distant heads of swimmers in a running surf; and the retreating edge of the cloud, perfectly straight from east to west, slipped along the dome of the sky like an immense hemispheric iron shutter pivoting down smoothly as if operated by some mighty engine. An inspiring and penetrating freshness flowed together with the shimmer of light through the augmented glory of the heaven, a glory exalted, undimmed, and strangely startling as if a new universe had been created during the short flight of the stormy cloud. It was a return to life, a return to space; the earth coming out from under a pall to take its place in the renewed and immense scintillation of the universe.

The brig, her yards slightly checked in, ran with an easy motion under the topsails, jib, and driver, pushing contemptuously aside the turbulent crowd of noisy and agitated waves. As the craft went swiftly ahead she unrolled behind her over the uneasy darkness of the sea a broad ribbon of seething foam shot with wispy gleams of dark discs escaping from under the rudder. Far away astern, at the end of a line no thicker than a black thread, which dipped now and then in its long curve in the bursting froth, a toy-like object could be made out, elongated and dark, racing after the brig over the snowy whiteness of her wake.

The Rescue

(2) The *Narcissus*, left alone, heading south, seemed to stand resplendent and still upon the

> restless sea, under the moving sun. Flakes of foam swept past her sides; the water struck her with flashing blows; the land glided away, slowly fading; a few birds screamed on motionless wings over the swaying mastheads. But soon the land disappeared, the birds went away; and to the west the pointed sail of an Arab dhow running for Bombay rose triangular and upright above the sharp edge of the horizon, lingered, and vanished like an illusion. Then the ship's wake, long and straight, stretched itself out through a day of immense solitude. The setting sun, burning on the level of the water, flamed crimson below the blackness of heavy rainclouds. The sunset squall, coming up from behind, dissolved itself into the short deluge of a hissing shower. It left the ship glistening from trucks to water-line, and with darkened sails. She ran easily before a fair monsoon, with her decks cleared for the night; and, moving along with her, was heard the sustained and monotonous swishing of the waves, mingled with the low whispers of men mustered aft for the setting of watches; the short plaint of some block aloft; or, now and then, a loud sigh of wind.
>
> *The Nigger of the Narcissus*

(*c*) *Their Graphic Power.* The strongest appeal of Mr. Conrad's novels is to the eye and the ear. His pictures of seafaring life and of life connected with the sea have never been surpassed. Their veracity and beauty are due to his personal acquaintance with the subject; to a scrupulous and artistic selection of detail, often of the technical kind that the sailor loves; and, once more, to the charm of the expression. In addition, his faculty of graphic description is often revealed in the deft manner in which he can outline some personality that flits across the pages of a story:

> He held up his head in the glare of the lamp—a head vigorously modelled into deep shadows and shining lights—a head powerful and misshapen with a tormented and flattened face—a face pathetic and brutal: the tragic, the mysterious, the repulsive mask of the nigger's soul.
>
> *The Nigger of the Narcissus*

(*d*) *Their Narrative Method.* Mr. Conrad has evolved a narrative method of his own, which, while it is usually successful in his own hands, would probably be disastrous in hands less careful and adroit. The method is, first, indirect. The author's favorite device is to create some character (a Captain Marlow often appears for this purpose) who relates the story, or part of the story, in his own words. Often another story crops up in the original story, adding complications, with, as can be seen in *Lord Jim*, results that are a little bewildering. Secondly, the greatest attention is given to details. The motives and impressions of the characters are discussed and analyzed, and their trivial actions faithfully recorded. Moreover, Mr. Conrad delights in leading his characters into morasses of doubt and hesitation. He may be called the novelist of doubt and hesitation, so skilled is he in the elaborate suggestion of such emotions. Consequently many a Conrad story, like one of his ships, is becalmed in its career, and stirs uneasily without making much progress. Hence he who runs must not read Conrad. This author demands a reader who is patient and wary, and who follows the course of the narrative very carefully, for he has a troublesome habit of inserting important matter in the midst of less essential details. If the reader will but observe these cautions, he will be led, deviously perhaps, but none the less certainly, into many regions of delightful romance.

HERBERT GEORGE WELLS

1. His Life. Mr. Wells was born in Kent in the year 1866. His early education was private, and later he studied at London University. Here he finally graduated in science, zoology and kindred subjects being his special choice. But he had his living to earn while he carried on his studies, and the experiences of these early years are reflected in his novels. Teaching, lecturing, and journalistic work followed; but literature was not long in exercising its fascination, and an early measure of success was soon his portion. Henceforth he devoted himself to the writing of books, which command a wide public both in England and America.

2. His Works. For the literary historian the books of Mr. Wells provide an interesting study, as, in the course of their production, they register a clear development of manner. The books themselves are so numerous that here we can mention only the more important among them.

As was only to be expected, Mr. Wells began by utilizing his scientific training as an adjunct to his story-telling. His first efforts in fiction were a series of scientific romances, extremely ingenious in their mingling of fact and fiction, rapidly and felicitously narrated, and casting shrewd side-glances at many social problems. The best of this class were *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *The Food of the Gods* (1904). The second stage of the novelist's career (slightly overlapping the first stage) was represented by a series of genuine novels, which reveal considerable talent in the manipulating of plot, a faculty, amounting to positive genius, for depicting ordinary people with zest, accuracy, and humor, and a clear and flexible style admirably in

keeping with his subject. *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900), *Kipps* (1905), and *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910) were representative of this group. In the third stage problems of modern society, social, religious, political, and commercial, which had all along strongly attracted the attention of Mr. Wells, elbowed themselves into the midst of the fictitious material, claiming an equal place. Of such a nature were *Tono-Bungay* (1909), which is almost an epical treatment of modern commercialism, *Ann Veronica* (1909), concerning a modern love-affair, and *The New Machiavelli* (1911), on contemporary politics. In the fourth stage the discursive and dogmatic elements take the principal place, subordinating the fictitious portions, as can be seen in *Boon* (1915), an extraordinary book, crammed with excellent lively literary criticism, but chaotic, splenetic, and irresponsible; *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* (1916), a book treating of the Great War, with an able beginning, but a hazy and unsatisfactory conclusion; and *Joan and Peter* (1918), also dealing partly with the War, but much concerned with educational matters. A collection of short stories, *The Country of the Blind* (1911), contains, along with much that is scamped and trashy, some first-rate work, notably in the tale that gives the title to the book.

In addition to his numerous works of fiction Mr. Wells has written books that are almost entirely pamphlets, expressing his ideas on social and other problems; *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), *A Modern Utopia* (1905), and *New Worlds for Old* (1908) are only a few out of many. He has also, with much hardihood and considerable success, given the world *The Outline of History* (1920), a work that antagonized the pedants and charmed and instructed the ordinary intelligent man.

3. Features of his Novels. (*a*) *Their "Modern" Quality.* Possessed of an eager and inquiring mind, of great energy, and of a wide public ready to give ear to his opinions, Mr. Wells has come more and more to use the novel as a means of voicing his hopes, his criticisms, and his fears. Such a course must in the end bring about the decay of his novels as works of art. It is possible, indeed, that his later works will rapidly fall into oblivion, as did the later novels of George Eliot, who pursued a course in some respects similar to that of Mr. Wells. No one, however, can question the force and vivacity of his expressed opinions, and the eager reception that awaits them in many quarters. To many of his time he is the sage and prophet, as Carlyle, in his own fashion, was to the Victorian age; and as the need for Carlyle passed away with the problems that he handled, so, perhaps, will the need for the pen of Mr. Wells. It is possible that *Kipps* will be widely read when such works as *The Soul of a Bishop* have been entirely forgotten.

(*b*) *Their Literary Quality.* In addition to his intellectual gifts, Mr. Wells possesses an imagination of great power and grasp. This appears all through his works, being perhaps most prominent in the earlier romances, such as *The First Men in the Moon*, and in the earlier novels. In the novels the strength of Mr. Wells's imagination becomes a positive drawback when it leads to overproduction, which in its turn brings a certain mechanical quality in the plot and in the central characters. His descriptions, however, alike of homely English scenes and of the most fantastic and barbarous regions, are brilliantly dashing and real. Like Dickens, he excels in the creation of ordinary folks, of the type of tradesmen and clerks, upon whom he expends a wealth of

observation and humorous comment.

(*c*) *Their Humor*. Freshness and abundance are the outstanding qualities of Mr. Wells's humor. Sometimes he is almost juvenile in his high spirits. In its more sober moments the humor is the urbane acceptance of men's little weaknesses, somewhat patronizing perhaps, but sharply scrutinizing and faithfully recording. In other moods it is satirical, and then it is swift and destructive. In its more reckless phase it passes into jeering and irreverent laughter. The humor of Mr. Wells is a powerful weapon, and he is somewhat careless in his handling of it.

(*d*) *His Style*. The clearness and rapidity of Mr. Wells's style has undoubtedly led to a lack of taste and balance and (in the mind of the reader) to a sense of improvisation. In its more careless passages it conveys the impression of a brilliant but shallow loquacity. The style, nevertheless, has some great and positive virtues: an instant command of epithet, a vivid pictorial quality, and sometimes a rich suggestiveness of romance. As an example of this last quality, the love-passages in *The Country of the Blind* are idyllically beautiful.

The two brief extracts that follow illustrate two different aspects of his style. The first is a picture of a tropical scene, the style resembling in some respects that of Mr. Conrad. It lacks the intimate detail of Mr. Conrad's descriptions, but it is much less labored. The second is an example of the pictorial narrative power that is Mr. Wells's chief claim to literary greatness:

> (1) Here and there strange blossoms woke the dank intensities of green with a trumpet-call of colour. Things crept among the jungle and peeped

and dashed back rustling into stillness. Always in the sluggishly drifting, opaque water were eddyings and stirrings; little rushes of bubbles came chuckling up lightheartedly from this or that submerged conflict and tragedy; now and again were crocodiles like a stranded fleet of logs basking in the sun. Still it was by day, a dreary stillness broken only by insect sounds and the creaking and flapping of our progress, by the calling of the soundings and the captain's confused shouts; but in the night as we lay moored to a clump of trees the darkness brought a thousand swampy things to life, and out of the forest came screamings and howlings, screamings and yells that made us glad to be afloat. And once we saw between the tree stems long blazing fires. We passed two or three villages landward, and brown-black women and children came and stared at us and gesticulated, and once a man came out in a boat from a creek and hailed us in an unknown tongue; and so at last we came to a great open place, a broad lake rimmed with a desolation of mud and bleached refuse and dead trees, free from crocodiles or water birds or sight or sound of any living thing, and saw far off, even as Nasmyth had described, the ruins of the deserted station and hard by two little heaps of buff-hued rubbish under a great rib of rock. The forest receded. The land to the right of us fell away and became barren, and far off across a notch in its backbone was surf and the sea.

Tono-Bungay

(2) There was a fumbling at the latch of the front door.

"'Ere's my lord," said Mrs Coombes. "Went out like a lion and comes back like a lamb, I'll lay."

Something fell over in the shop: a chair, it sounded like. Then there was a sound as of some complicated step exercise in the passage. Then the

door opened and Coombes appeared. But it was Coombes transfigured. The immaculate collar had been torn carelessly from his throat. His carefully brushed silk hat, half-full of a crush of fungi, was under one arm; his coat was inside out, and his waistcoat adorned with bunches of yellow-blossomed furze. These little eccentricities of Sunday costume, however, were quite overshadowed by the change in his face; it was livid white, his eyes were unnaturally large and bright, and his pale blue lips were drawn back in a cheerless grin. "Merry!" he said. He had stopped dancing to open the door. "Rational 'njoyment. Dance." He made three fantastic steps into the room and stood bowing.

"Jim!" shrieked Mrs Coombes, and Mr Clarence sat petrified, with a drooping lower jaw.

"Tea," said Mr Coombes. "Jol' thing, tea. Tose-stools, too. Brosher."

"He's drunk," said Jennie in a weak voice. Never before had she seen this intense pallor in a drunken man, or such shining, dilated eyes.

The Purple Pileus

OTHER NOVELISTS

1. George Gissing (1857–1903) was born at Wakefield, and concluded his education at Owens College, Manchester. He took to literature, but with little success, and for years lived in dire poverty. In time his books met with a somewhat wider acceptance, though they were never popular; and his scholarship and the high quality of his literary criticism always commanded respect. He died in the Pyrenees, whither failing health had compelled him to go.

His novels are almost entirely devoted to the lives

of the poorer classes: *Workers of the Dawn* (1880), *The Unclassed* (1884), *Demos* (1889), *Grub Street* (1891), and *The Odd Women* (1893) are only a selection from his books. His *Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903) is partly autobiographical, and is an excellent example of his style. He handles his subjects with a depressing fidelity that will always restrict his novels to a narrow circle of readers. He lacks Mr. Hardy's Elizabethan largeness of vision, and will not rank as a really great writer, but he deserves honorable mention as a novelist who in poverty and distress would not bow the knee to false gods, who steadily kept in view the highest ideals, and who died true to his literary faith.

2. George Moore, born in Mayo in the year 1857, is the son of a landowner in that county. He was educated at Oscott, and then for some years studied art in Paris. During those years he imbibed that passion for French art and French fiction that was never to leave him. As an artist he had no success; but as a novelist, after a moderate beginning, he has won the admiration of an important section of the reading public. He is a man of varied but unstable enthusiasms, which are reflected in his novels. In the course of time he was caught up in the Celtic Revival, which he valiantly served with his pen, though he was not backward in candid criticism of it.

Mr. Moore began authorship with two volumes of verse, the first of which was *Flowers of Passion* (1878). Neither of them was of any great merit. He started his career as a novelist as disciple of the great French realist Zola, publishing in this manner *A Mummer's Wife* (1884). This novel, a squalid tale unrelieved by any bright touches, followed the example of Zola with much audacity, and shocked

the more staid opinion in England. Other stories of the same kind followed, the more noteworthy being *A Drama in Muslin* (1886) and *The Confessions of a Young Man* (1888). His more mature works, though they never lacked frankness, were rather more restrained in manner; characteristic specimens were *Esther Waters* (1894) and *Sister Teresa* (1901). Subsequently he wrote some attractive books of reminiscence, of which the best is *Hail and Farewell*, published in three volumes between the years 1911 and 1914.

In his later books Mr. Moore's style is delightfully sweet and clear. The earlier books, in which he followed his model with a devoted fidelity, are devoid of the ornaments of style. In humor he is often whimsical and charming, though his wit seldom lacks the sharp touch of satire.

3. Rudyard Kipling was born (1865) at Bombay, where his father was an official. He was educated in Devonshire, and wished to join the Army, a project that had to be abandoned. Returning to India, he joined the editorial staff of the Lahore *Civil and Military Gazette* and of *The Pioneer*. For these journals he began writing short stories, which very soon attracted an attention that became worldwide. After some years' residence in the United States, Mr. Kipling settled in England. For a time his popularity was immense, and received international recognition in the award of the Nobel Prize for literature (1907). Passing years have dimmed his brightness, and recently his voice has fallen nearly silent.

Mr. Kipling first became known as a writer of short stories, and it is upon the short story that his fame will probably rest. As the writer of such a type of fiction he is very well equipped: he has a genius

for terse narrative, a swift eye for dramatic incident and detail, a capacity for touching off men's characters, and a style which, though it may be cocksure and jerky, is none the less attractive and intensely individual. *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1887) and *Soldiers Three* (1888) are among the most enjoyable of the volumes of short stories. In his longer tales he is less at his ease. *The Light that Failed* (1891) is not a great success; but *Kim* (1901), a kind of picaresque Indian tale, is crammed with a rich abundance of observation and description. The two *Jungle Books* (1894 and 1895) are among the most delightful of books written for children.

As a poet of Army life and of British Imperialism Mr. Kipling was long a notable figure. The climax came during the South African War of 1899–1902; after that the patriotic poem began to suffer eclipse. A good deal of Mr. Kipling's poetry is brazen and commonplace, but it rarely lacks energy and picturesqueness. In such pieces as *Mandalay*, however, he touches the deeper springs of humanity, and becomes a real poet; and in *The Recessional* (1897), a short poem that in essence expresses the negation of all his usual teachings, he has attained to poetical greatness.

4. Arnold Bennett, whose full name is Enoch Arnold Bennett, was born in North Staffordshire in 1867. He was educated at Newcastle, and studied for the law, which he later forsook for journalism (1893). He was on the staff of *Woman* till 1900, when his books claimed all his time.

Mr. Bennett's most notable contribution to the novel is a group of interrelated stories dealing with his native Staffordshire. These stories, very full in detail, are realistic presentations of the squalid life of

the pottery district; the personages introduced are commonplace, and the style, though it does not lack vivacity and humor, is studiously subdued. *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902), *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908), *Clayhanger* (1910), *Hilda Lessways* (1911), and *These Twain* (1916) represent this group. *The Card* (1911) is lighter and more humorous; and *The Pretty Lady* (1918), rather unequal, contains some telling reflections upon modern society.

Like Mr. Hardy, Mr. Bennett has essayed to render with artistic completeness the life of one section of England; unlike Mr. Hardy, however, he tends to become swamped with detail, so that he fails to give his works unity and singleness of purpose. In addition, his style has a certain aridity and a lack of flavor and attraction. On the other hand, he writes with clearness and care, his humor is reticent but keenly penetrating, and his character-drawing able and realistic.

5. Compton Mackenzie may be taken as the latest type of novelist who will claim our attention. Born at West Hartlepool in 1883, he was the son of Mr. Edward Compton, the well-known actor. He was educated at St. Paul's School and at Oxford, and then became associated with literature and the stage. He served in the South African War, and in the Great War he was with the Naval Division in the Dardanelles.

After publishing *Poems* (1907), Mr. Mackenzie produced *The Passionate Elopement* (1911), a novel of much promise, that was realized in *Carnival* (1912), a story dealing partly with theatrical life, and revealing much shrewd insight and satirical humor. Like Thackeray and Mr. Bennett, Mr. Mackenzie developed the novel series, introducing the same

people into several successive stories. *Sinister Street* (1914), *Guy and Pauline* (1915), *Sylvia Scarlett* (1918), and *Sylvia and Michael* (1919), are more or less closely interrelated in theme. *Poor Relations* (1919) revealed a rich and somewhat unexpected vein of light comedy, which Mr. Mackenzie did not improve upon in *Rich Relatives* (1921). Much of Mr. Mackenzie's work is of unnecessary length, and much of it, in comformity with the modern manner, is laboriously and somewhat unpleasantly detailed in its revelation of personal and social relations; but his writing is seldom lacking in competence; it has ease, versatility, and a certain cool urbanity; and at its best it reaches a high level.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

1. His Life. Mr. Shaw, born in Dublin in 1856, is the son of a retired civil servant. His early education was received in Dublin, and at the age of fifteen he was earning his living as a clerk. Coming to London (1876), he tried novel-writing as an alternative to clerking, but with no success at all. He was one of the first members (1884) of the Fabian Society, and took a vigorous part in its socialistic work. A witty and voluble speaker, not without moments of real eloquence, he was much in demand as a lecturer. In 1885 he began his connection with journalism, and was successively on the staff of several London papers, writing on music, painting, and the drama. In music he was a strong advocate of Wagner. The dramatic works of the great Norwegian Ibsen were for long his pet subject. During the years 1895–98 his dramatic articles in *The Saturday Review* attracted much attention owing to the freshness of their opinions and the vitality of their style. About this time he started to write and produce plays of his

own; and with them he began his long verbal contest with the British public over their failure to appreciate the merit of his work. In the end, owing partly to his own voluble persistence, but chiefly to the virtues inherent in his dramas, he won the day; so that a new play by Mr. Shaw, if indeed it does not command a wide acceptance of its views, is at least received as a powerful and stimulating addition to the dramatic literature of our time.

2. His Novels. Mr. Shaw began his career as an author by writing four novels which were rejected by every publisher in London, and subsequently saw the light in obscure periodicals of socialistic sympathies. The best of the four are *The Irrational Knot* (1880) and *Cashel Byron's Profession* (1882). He republished the books in 1901, calling them "Novels of my Nonage." To readers acquainted with the later writings of Mr. Shaw there are several familiar features plainly to be seen: the straight, clean thrust of the style, the bold and dramatic portraiture of the characters, and the irreverent mishandling of treasured institutions. There is even the note typical of the earliest plays—a curious frigidity and barrenness of emotion, as if the novelist had made a vow to cut sentiment clean out of his books. The crude socialism preached in the stories probably scared the publishers; for, though they by no means represent even the average of Mr. Shaw's work, they are always readable and often amusing.

3. His Plays. As a playwright Mr. Shaw began as a disciple of Ibsen. In his early attempts he succeeded in reproducing the cold and intellectual realism of the great Norwegian, but he quite failed to catch the humane and intensely romantic idealism that lies deep within the heart of the Ibsen plays.

Widowers' Houses (1885), a didactic play on the subject of slum-property, was a discouraging beginning to his play-writing. It was hard and repulsive in sentiment; it lacked the later Shavian high spirits and verbal acrobatics; and it appealed only to a small circle of enthusiasts. *The Philanderer* (1893) was much lighter and more attractive, though it did not lack harsher touches, almost callous in their nonchalance; it showed, however, the beginning of that mastery of the technique of the stage that was henceforth to distinguish nearly all Mr. Shaw's plays. *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893), grimmer and abler, was refused a license by the censor of plays; and then with *Arms and the Man* (1894) Mr. Shaw had his first successful bout with the British public. In the play the satiric intention was obvious, for the "glories" of war were freely ridiculed; but the satire was so overlaid with a briskness of action, with a rocketing interchange of witticisms, and with an almost reckless display of high spirits that both the general public and the cautious critics were taken by storm. From this point Mr. Shaw never looked back, and his plays appeared in a steady procession. We can mention only the more important of them: *Candida* (1894), an attempt at the romantic sentimental comedy, only too rare with Mr. Shaw; *You Never Can Tell* (1896), purely and hilariously comic, and masterly from beginning to end; *Cæsar and Cleopatra* (1898), quaintly serio-comic, but picturesque and brilliant; *Man and Superman* (1903), containing many of its author's opinions expressed with startling audacity, but too long and voluble; *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), on the Irish question; *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906), very censorious on the medical profession; and *Androcles and the Lion* (1912). At this point the War intervened,

and the effects of it on Mr. Shaw's acutely sensitive mind, along with the pressure of increasing years, can be seen in the style of the later plays. One can detect a certain waning strength. The energy and gayety are still visible, but they appear fitfully; the high scorn is apt to degenerate into querulousness; and there is a hardening of temper, for which the dramatist tries to atone by fits of puerile burlesque. *Heartbreak House* (1917) is abrupt and even savage in places; and *Back to Methuselah* (1920), in spite of its infinity of range and the brilliance of disconnected passages, is heavy with the weight of mortality.

We have still to mention Mr. Shaw's prefaces, which are remarkable features of his plays. As the plays successively appeared, the prefaces increased in length, till they began to rival in importance the plays themselves. Each of them is a tractate on some question that for the time engrossed the attention of the playwright. For example, the preface to *Cæsar and Cleopatra* deals in Shavian fashion with Shakespeare, that to *Androcles and the Lion* with early Christianity, and that to *Back to Methuselah* with what he calls Creative Evolution. The prefaces are diffuse, paradoxical, and egotistical; but they are brilliant and incisive, and they represent the best of Mr. Shaw's non-dramatic prose.

4. Features of his Plays. (*a*) *Their Wit.* The distinction between wit and humor is commonly expressed by saying that humor appeals to the emotions, whereas wit touches only the intellect: humor deals with incidents and actions, wit with words and phrases. Mr. Shaw ranks among the greatest wits in the language. He delights in the quick cut and thrust of verbal sword-play, in the clever distortion of a phrase, and in the brilliant

paradoxical sally of the intellect. It is this wittiness that has given him his commanding position in foreign countries. It is not that Mr. Shaw is inhumanly devoid of emotion and sympathy, but he is afraid of such emotions, and often deliberately stifles them. In *Candida* he attains to a high level of delicate sentimentality, but in *How He lied to Her Husband* he jeers at the admirers of his own handiwork. In his later plays he wearies a little over this exuberant play of wit. In *Back to Methuselah*, for example, perhaps the most attractive feature is a mood of sere romantic melancholy.

(*b*) *His Contribution to the Drama.* Mr. Shaw's long experience as a dramatic critic taught him at least what he was to avoid. When he began his career as a dramatist the theater was given up to the production of frivolous and even immoral pieces. Mr. Shaw vitalized this stuffy atmosphere, gave to play-writing a strong and vigorous tone, and added to it a spirit of broad comedy. From the purely formal point of view, he employed all the devices of stagecraft to give his plays an attractive and realistic setting. As regards the literary side of his plays, he marks in his work a great increase in the importance given to the stage-directions. Like Ibsen, he elaborates this feature of his plays till on the printed page they are almost as important as the dialogue. He is reverting to the precepts of Aristotle, who maintained that the drama is an affair of *action*, not of speech. Consequently Mr. Shaw's plays often read like an interesting hybrid between the novel and the drama. We add an extract to illustrate this combination of speech and action:

> *Behind the Emperor's box at the Coliseum, where the performers assemble before entering the arena. In the middle a wide passage leading to the arena descends from the floor level under the imperial box.*

On both sides of this passage steps ascend to a landing at the back entrance to the box. The landing forms a bridge across the passage. At the entrance to the passage are two bronze mirrors, one on each side.

On the west side of this passage, on the right hand of anyone coming from the box and standing on the bridge, the martyrs are sitting on the steps. Lavinia is seated half-way up, thoughtfully trying to look death in the face. On her left Androcles consoles himself by nursing a cat. Ferrovious stands behind them, his eyes blazing, his figure stiff with intense resolution. At the foot of the steps crouches Spintho, with his head clutched in his hands, full of horror at the approach of martyrdom.

On the east side of the passage the gladiators are standing and sitting at ease, waiting, like the Christians, for their turn in the arena. One (Retiarius) is a nearly naked man with a net and trident. Another (Secutor) is in armour with a sword. He carries a helmet with a barred visor. The Editor of the gladiators sits on a chair a little apart from them.

The Call Boy enters from the passage.

The Call Boy. Number six. Retiarius *versus* Secutor.

> *The gladiator with the net picks it up. The gladiator with the helmet puts it on; and the two go into the arena, the net-thrower taking out a little brush and arranging his hair as he goes, the other tightening his straps and shaking his shoulders loose. Both look at themselves in the mirrors before they enter the passage.*

Lavinia. Will they really kill one another?

Spintho. Yes, if the people turn down their thumbs.

The Editor. You know nothing about it. The

people indeed! Do you suppose we would kill a man worth perhaps fifty talents to please the riff-raff? I should like to catch any of my men at it.

Spintho. I thought——

The Editor [*contemptuously*]. You thought! Who cares what *you* think? *You'll* be killed all right enough.

Spintho [*groans and again hides his face*].!!!...

Lavinia. Does the Emperor ever interfere?

The Editor. Oh yes; he turns his thumb up fast enough if the vestal virgins want to have one of his pet fighting men killed.

Androcles and the Lion

(*c*) *His Defects.* As a dramatist Mr. Shaw has many faults. When he is anxious to expound one of his opinions he subordinates the dramatic interest and permits his characters to become merely the mouthpieces of his views. Jack Tanner, the chief character in *Man and Superman*, is the stock example of such a personage. Nearly all his characters, moreover, though they are galvanically active, hardly impress the reader as being actually alive. Like Dickens, Mr. Shaw is skillful in the creation of freaks and oddities, but he is weak in the presentation of living and ordinary people.

(*d*) *His Opinions.* Like Mr. Wells, Mr. Shaw holds decided views on many subjects, from phonetics to the construction of the universe, and he is not backward in expressing them. More than once he has declared that he would never have written a word if he had not some message to convey. He has, however, a curious method of exposition, which he has purposely developed in order to shock his opponents into attention: a jesting, paradoxical

mishandling of the truth, often glaringly personal, and stated with almost brutal clearness. As a result Mr. Shaw rarely finds himself taken seriously by the superficial reader, though the deep underlying seriousness of his opinions is nearly always perceptible to the attentive mind. It has often been urged that his opinions are purely destructive; and his efforts to provide alternatives to the institutions he condemns are not always of the happiest.

(*e*) *His Style.* Like his great fellow-countryman Swift, Mr. Shaw has a powerful and logical mind, with the same fierce satiric purpose and (it may be added) the same type of Irish nationalism. His prose is more amusing, less destructive, more diffuse, and less simple than that of the great Dean. In his dramatic dialogue, however, Mr. Shaw is pithy, direct, and absolutely clear. The example already given shows its character.

We add a brief specimen of his expository prose. It is the peroration to a long preface, and therefore somewhat more elevated in style than the average. It contains a characteristic mock-serious personal reference which sheds light on Mr. Shaw's own opinion of his work.

> I now find myself inspired to make a second legend of Creative Evolution without distractions and embellishments. My sands are running out; the exuberance of 1901 has aged into the garrulity of 1920; and the war has been a stern intimation that the matter is not one to be trifled with. I abandon the legend of Don Juan with its erotic associations, and go back to the legend of the Garden of Eden. I exploit the eternal interest of the philosopher's stone which enables men to live for ever. I am not, I hope, under more illusion than is humanly inevitable as to the crudity of this

> my beginning of a Bible for Creative Evolution. I am doing the best I can at my age. My powers are waning; but so much the better for those who found me unbearably brilliant when I was in my prime. It is my hope that a hundred apter and more elegant parables by younger hands will soon leave mine as far behind as the religious pictures of the fifteenth century left behind the first attempts of the early Christians at inconography. In that hope I withdraw and ring up the curtain.
>
> *Preface to "Back to Methuselah"*

OTHER DRAMATISTS

1. Oscar O. W. Wilde (1856–1900) was the son of a famous Irish surgeon, and was educated at Dublin and Oxford. At Oxford he distinguished himself both as a scholar and as an eccentric. In the latter capacity he posed as an "æsthete" in opposition to the common type of "athlete," wearing fantastic garments, and behaving with an extraordinary combination of folly, extravagance, and presumption. On leaving the university he dabbled in literature in an amateurish fashion, writing poems, novels, and plays, and contributing to magazines and reviews. His opinions—he held that "morality" does not exist in "art"—led to much heated discussion, and to many charges being made against his moral character. Wilde instituted proceedings for libel, which in turn brought to light many unpleasant facts against him, and in the end landed him in jail (1895). On regaining his liberty (1897) he lived a wandering life on the Continent, and died miserably in Paris.

Wilde's early poems and novels, an example of which latter is *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), are sumptuous in detail, cynically phrased, and richly

ornamented in style;[237] but over them all is a curious taint, a faint malodorous corruption, that repels the healthy-minded reader. His plays, however, almost escape this infection. In tone they are hard and cynical, and in the portrayal of character they are exceedingly weak, but they are brilliant with epigram and telling phrase, are ingeniously contrived, and have many clever situations. They are the cleverest society comedies since the days of Wilde's great fellow-country-man Sheridan. The best of them are *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895).

2. John Galsworthy (born in 1867) in drama takes the place occupied in the novel by Gissing. In sincerity, in his close scrutiny of the vexed problems of to-day, and in his deep sympathy for the poor and wretched Mr. Galsworthy much resembles the earlier novelist. As a playwright, however, he is too deeply engrossed with his problems to do complete justice to his talents. He is too serious, his humor is wan and meager, and the severe detachment of his plays makes them rather cold and depressing. *The Silver Box* (1906) deals with the inequality of "justice" as it is administered in the police courts; *Joy* (1907), *Strife* (1909), and *Justice* (1910) discuss various social and domestic problems; and *The Skin Game* (1920) deals with the post-war profiteer.

Mr. Galsworthy has written a considerable number of novels, which culminate in *The Forsyte Saga* (1922). This immense work includes three longish novels and two shorter tales, all of which had previously been published individually. In its breadth and power of comprehension, and in its keen and destructive vision into social and personal

weaknesses, the book takes rank as one of the most noteworthy of the present day.

3. Sir James Barrie was born in 1860 at Kirriemuir, a small town in Forfarshire. Educated at Dumfries and at Edinburgh University, he became a journalist, settling ultimately in London. His early sketches and novels, such as *Auld Licht Idylls* (1888), *A Window in Thrums* (1889), and *Sentimental Tommy* (1896), squared with the average Englishman's notions of Scotland, and were exceedingly successful. The element of pathos was heavily drawn upon, and their quaint and attractive humor—a delicate compound of fancy, pathos, and whimsical sentiment —was something quite new of its kind.

His plays strongly resemble the novels. In them he displays a sweet ethereal fancy that adds to the humor and pathos. *The Admirable Crichton* (1903) is fresh and delightful; *Peter Pan*, a golden venture into unashamed nonsense, is to the stage what *Alice in Wonderland* is to literature—a children's classic; and *Quality Street* (1901), *What Every Woman Knows* (1908), *A Kiss for Cinderella* (1916), *Dear Brutus* (1917), and *Mary Rose* (1920) have the sweetly sensitive tears-in-laughter that make the Barrie plays quite different from all others.

4. John M. Synge (1871–1909) deserves mention as being the most important playwright of the purely Celtic school. He was always in delicate health, and his period of play-writing was very brief. During the years of his literary output he lived in close association with Irish peasantry, especially that of the Aran Islands, where the Celtic spirit is least affected by modern movements.

The Shadow of the Glen (1903) and *Riders to the Sea* (1904) are short plays of one act; and with the

longer plays called *The Well of the Saints* (1905), *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), *The Tinker's Wedding* (1909), and *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1910), they represent his published works. All portray the life of the Irish peasant; but it is the peasant as viewed from the outside by the cultured literary man. The observation is often keen, and the satiric intention apparent; but the peasant remains an idealized literary figure, and his language is idealized language. As acting plays, moreover, they are heavy and lifeless, for Synge was little skilled in stage technique. Their real importance lies in their style: a slow-moving, wonderful prose, rich in poetic embellishment and sonorous rhythms, and full of the typical Celtic mysticism. Consequently Synge's plays will be read far more than they will be acted. A specimen of his style will be found on p. 568.

WRITERS OF MISCELLANEOUS PROSE

1. Gilbert K. Chesterton was born in London in the year 1874. He was educated at St. Paul's School, then studied art, but ultimately became a journalist. He wrote much literary and miscellaneous prose for journals, and distinguished himself as a writer of much ingenuity, topsy-turvy humor, and a robust, rampageous style. His books of verse, such as *Gray-beards at Play* (1900), *The Wild Knight* (1900), and *Wine, Water, and Song* (1915), are quite excellent in their way: clever and vigorous, skillfully constructed, and genuinely funny. His novels are fine-spun webs of ingenious nonsense, and include *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905) and *The Man Who was Thursday* (1908). His literary and miscellaneous work, often apparently willful and inconsequent, is usually sane and substantial at bottom. His critical work is well represented by his books on Dickens and Browning,

and his miscellaneous writing, gloriously Chestertonian, by *Tremendous Trifles* (1909) and *A Shilling for my Thoughts* (1916).

2. Hilaire Belloc, the son of a Frenchman, was born in France in 1870. He was educated in England, served two years with the French Artillery, and finished his education at Oxford University. Mr. Belloc has contributed to most kinds of literature. His serious verses are noteworthy for their ease and vigor, and his nonsense verses, such as *A Bad Child's Book of Beasts*, are excellent fooling. As a humorist Mr. Belloc specializes in a super-solemnity of manner while he is stating the most ridiculous problems. His humor, however, rarely lacks the sharp stab of satire. His novels, like those of Disraeli, are a shrewd commentary upon our political life. They have an unwinkingly solemn humor, biting scorn scarcely concealed, and a clear and incisive style. *Mr. Clutterbuck's Election* (1908) and *A Change in the Cabinet* (1909) come high in the thin ranks of the first-rate political novel. His miscellaneous work is often clever, whimsically learned, and often distinguished by the same parade of grave nonsense. *On Nothing* (1908) sets him high among modern essayists. His two travel volumes, *The Path to Rome* (1902) and *The Pyrenees* (1909), in spite of their somewhat labored mannerisms, deserve to become classical.

3. Lord Morley (1838–1923) is the sole writer of serious miscellaneous prose that we have space to mention. He was born at Blackburn, took his degree at Oxford, and became a journalist of a Radical and philosophical type. He was in turn editor of more than one important review, entered Parliament (1883), and was closely associated with Mr.

Gladstone during the struggles over the Irish Home Rule Bills. He held high offices under the Liberal Government, was created Viscount Morley of Blackburn (1908), and on the outbreak of war in 1914 retired from public life.

Lord Morley wrote a great deal of literary, philosophical, and miscellaneous work, distinguished by its scholarly care and accuracy, by a deep but placable seriousness, and by a strong and flexible style. His monographs on *Voltaire* (1872), *Burke* (1879), and *Walpole* (1889) are models of what such brief works ought to be; his *Life of Cromwell* (1900) is a sane and scholarly treatment of a difficult subject; and his monumental *Life of Gladstone* (1903), though it lacks proportion in some respects, is a well-filled storehouse of historical fact, and, on this side of idolatry, a reverent tribute to a great man.

THE POETS

In the section that follows we have made a careful selection from the poets of the period. Many more names might have been included, of a value and interest little inferior to those given a place. In any case, a selection such as this must be in the nature of an experiment, for time alone will sift out the poems of permanent value.

1. Sir William Watson was born in 1858, the son of a Yorkshire farmer, and was educated privately. His life has been devoted to letters: a devotion that was recognized by Mr. Gladstone, who transferred to him (1893) the Civil List pension that had been granted to Tennyson. He was knighted in 1917.

His fairly abundant poetry includes *The Prince's Quest* (1880), after the manner of Tennyson; *Wordsworth's Grave* (1890), the style of which

suggests the meditative poetry of Matthew Arnold; *Lacrymæ Musarum* (1893), which contains a fine elegy on the death of Tennyson; *The Muse in Exile* (1913); and *The Superhuman Antagonists* (1919). Sir William Watson is at his best as an elegiac poet, when, though he is apt to become diffusely meditative, he writes with sincerity and a scholarly enthusiasm. In the heroic vein, such as he attempted in the last poem mentioned above, he is merely violent, without being impressive. His political poetry, such as *The Year of Shame* (1897), is strong rhetorical verse, palpably sincere, but of no high poetical merit.

2. Francis Thompson (1859–1907) had a career suggestive of that of the poets of the eighteenth century. He was born in Lancashire, and was dedicated to the profession of medicine. He abandoned medicine, and went to London as a friendless literary adventurer. Then followed the tragically familiar tale of loneliness, poverty, opium, and disease. After a time (1893) his poems drew a little attention to himself, and he was rescued just in time from the fate of Chatterton. His health, however, was never fully restored, and finally he died of consumption.

In style and temper Thompson is a strange blend of the poets of past epochs. He has the rapt religious enthusiasm and the soaring imagination of the Metaphysical poets, as can be clearly seen in his truly magnificent *Hound of Heaven*; or again, as in *The Daisy*, he is the inspired babbler of the type of William Blake. In one sense he wrote too much, when he marred his splendid lyrical energy with too abundant detail; in another sense he wrote too little, for the fire that was within him was extinguished

before it could burn clear. He is not quite another Coleridge, hag-ridden with opium, but at least he is a lyrical poet far above mediocrity.

3. John Masefield (born 1874) has contributed much poetry to modern literature. Quite a budget of long descriptive-narrative poems has come from him, including *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912), a grimly realistic tale; *Dauber* (1913), full of the splendor and terror of the sea; and *Reynard the Fox* (1920), a bustling tale of the foxhunt. These long poems are well informed and masterfully narrated, with many purple passages of description, and in the grimmer incidents a strong fidelity to fact that does not stop short of strong language. Mr. Masefield's shorter poems, though they do not include any great lyrics, are dignified, reticent, and tuneful. He is undoubtedly at his best when he writes of the sea, a subject that was never far from the hearts of his great poetical predecessors.

4. William H. Davies was born at Newport, Monmouthshire, in 1870. In his youth he emigrated to America, where he became a tramp, and then served as a cattleman on a steamer. An accident in which he lost a foot made him incapable of hard physical work, so for a living he sang in the streets and lived in common lodging-houses. His first volume of verse, *The Soul's Destroyer* (1906), rescued him from penury. His *Collected Poems* (1916) and *Forty New Pieces* (1918) contain his best work.

Like Burns, Mr. Davies is the natural, untaught lyrical genius. His capacity is neither so deep nor so intense as that of Burns, but within his limits he can write poems of great beauty. When he writes of nature he almost recreates the spirit of Wordsworth, he shows such insight, freshness, and ease. His

artless simplicity is at times almost grotesque, yet the reader cannot help admitting that it is in keeping with his subject. This marked naïveté, however, is often given a queer metaphysical twist; or it sometimes rises, with a mighty rhythm, into passages of noble harmony. At least half a dozen of his shorter pieces—the expressive *Thunderstorms*; the exquisite *Moon*, so old in theme and so original in expression; the dainty *Sweet Stay-at-Home*, with its haunting Caroline meter and phrasing; the absolutely perfect *The White Cascade*, eight lines long; the provokingly beautiful *Dreams of the Sea*, that one cries out upon as being too wonderful to be merely imitative of the grand Marlowe manner; and the amazing verses, Elizabethan to the core, beginning *When I Am Old*—are stamped with immortality. The temptation to quote is irresistible:

(1) When I am old, and it is spring,
And joy leaps dancing, wild and free,
Clear out of every living thing,
While I command no ecstasy;
And to translate the songs of birds
Will be beyond my power in words:

*****

For when these little songs shall fail,
These happy notes that to the world
Are puny mole-hills, nothing more,
That unto me are Alps of gold—
That toad's dark life must be my own,
Buried alive inside a stone.

(2) Thou knowest the way to tame the wildest life,
Thou knowest the way to bend the great and proud:
I think of that Armada whose puffed sails,
Greedy and large, came swallowing every cloud.

But I have seen the sea-boy young and drowned,
Lying on shore, and, by thy cruel hand,
A seaweed beard was on his tender chin,

His heaven-blue eyes were filled with common
sand.

And yet, for all, I yearn for thee again,
To sail once more upon thy fickle flood:
I'll hear thy waves wash under my death-bed,
Thy salt is lodged for ever in my blood.

Dreams of the Sea

5. John Drinkwater (born 1882) was educated at Oxford High School, and for a time worked in insurance offices. He has done much to revive the modern drama, helping to found the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. As a poet he is representative of the work of his day: meditative rather than passionate, descriptive rather than narrative, and always clear, competent, and precise. He is one of the best of modern blank-verse writers. His shorter poems will be found in his *Poems of 1908–1914* (1914) and *Swords and Ploughshares* (1915).

6. Rupert C. Brooke (1887–1915) was educated at Rugby and Cambridge, and for a time traveled in America. In 1914 he enlisted in the Royal Naval Division, took part in the fighting at Antwerp, and died of fever while on active service in the Dardanelles.

Brooke's lamentably early death gave rise to a quite natural tendency to overpraise his poetry. The exaggerated estimates made at his death must be revised, and real justice done to his name. As a poet he is not consistently great, but he is always readable, often delightfully mannered and humorous (as in the poem called *Heaven*), and on at least one occasion, in the splendid sonnet called *The Soldier*, touches greatness. His sonnets are perhaps his best achievement. In this very difficult species of composition he has the requisite technical skill and delicate ear for rhythm, and he can catch the

unmistakable surge and swell that mark the successful sonnet.

We quote from his piece called *Heaven*. In felicity of phrasing and aptness of humor it is of the best Metaphysical tradition.

> But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,
> Is wetter water, slimier slime!
> And there (they trust) there swimmeth One
> Who swam ere rivers were begun,
> Immense, of fishy form and mind,
> Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;
> And under that Almighty Fin,
> The littlest fish may enter in.
> Oh! never fly conceals a hook,
> Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
> But more than mundane weeds are there,
> And mud, celestially fair;
> Fat caterpillars drift around,
> And Paradisal grubs are found;
> Unfading moths, immortal flies,
> And the worm that never dies.
> And in that Heaven of all their wish,
> There shall be no more land, say fish.

7. William B. Yeats was born in Dublin in 1865, and was educated both in London and in his native city. He studied art, but his real bent was literary. He was one of the chief supporters of the Celtic Revival, helped to found the Irish Literary Theatre (1899), wrote plays for it, and discovered other literary talent, including that of Mr. Synge.

Mr. Yeats's poetry was published in several volumes, and was issued in a collected edition in 1908. *The Wanderings of Oisin* (1889) was his first volume, and among the rest we may mention *The Countess Cathleen* (1892), a romantic drama, *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899), containing some of his best lyrics, and *The Wild Swans of Coole* (1917). Of his poetical plays *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894) is

perhaps the best, and of the prose dramas *Cathleen ni Hoolihan* (1902) is a fine example.

Mr. Yeats is a fastidious poet, writing little and revising often. As a consequence the average merit of his poetry is very high; and sometimes, as in the often-quoted *Lake Isle of Innisfree*, he breathes the pathos and longing that are generally regarded as typical of the Celtic spirit. His style has the usual Celtic peculiarities: a meditative and melancholy beauty, a misty idealism, and a sweet and dignified diction. Mr. Yeats is the most important of the modern Irish poets.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY FORMS

1. The Novel. In mass of production the novel easily outdoes all other species of literature; in general workmanship it has advanced exceedingly; and in importance it probably deserves to take the first place. We shall comment briefly upon a few of the outstanding lines of development.

(*a*) *The Novel as Propaganda.* The "purpose novel" has long been a feature of our literature, but was never so prominent as it is to-day. It seems as if the novel were swallowing up the duties of the sermon, the pamphlet, and the text-book. Of all the subjects that are discussed social and religious questions are the most popular.

(*b*) *The Realism of the Novel.* This will probably be regarded as typical of the age. The realistic novel certainly forms a large proportion of the whole. In subject it deals with modern life in all its complexity; in detail it seeks to reflect faithfully the world we live in; and in style it is studiously subdued. How much this modern development makes for the

improvement of the novel is a question still unsolved. In the hands of a novelist of the caliber of Mr. Hardy realism becomes actual beauty, and George Gissing and Mr. Galsworthy are able to make it artistically important. In lesser hands, however, realism is apt to degenerate into squalor and ugliness, and the studious simplicity of style becomes a dreary burden.

(*c*) *The Romantic Novel.* Along with the flood of realistic novels, there is a steady stream of the romantic kind. Mr. Kipling, who seems to delight in such mundane things as machinery, is concerned with showing the intense romantic beauty behind them. Other writers, such as **Maurice Hewlett** and **Kenneth Grahame**, are openly absorbed in things that are remote and beautiful—the essential qualities of the romance. On the other hand, it is unfortunately true that the historical novel shows hardly a flicker of life.

(*d*) *The Commercializing of the Novel.* It is a common habit to decry the age one lives in, and the present age is no exception. It is freely declared that, in spite of the importance attained by the novel, there are few great novelists, and that the level of merit, such as it is, will rapidly fall. The decline, moreover, is (it is declared) due to the stress that is being laid upon the commercial value of fiction. Novels are now expensive things to publish; to make each one of them worth publishing a large circulation must be assured; to ensure this circulation the novel must appeal to the vulgar taste, and must avoid originality and teasing literary devices—these are the charges levelled against the modern novel. Such assertions are exaggerated, but there is no doubt that the persistent desire to turn the novel into

a commercial chattel will lead to its decline as literature.

2. The Short Story. This type of fiction has become so important that it is here necessary to give a very brief sketch of its development.

(*a*) *Definition.* To define a "short" story, we must clearly come to some conclusion as to length. We can approximately define this length by saying that a short story should be capable of being read at one brief sitting.

(*b*) *Medium of Publication.* At the very outset a difficulty met the writer of the short story: how was he to get his work published? The short story is not long enough to appear as a book by itself. There were two ways of overcoming the difficulty: by inserting (or interpolating) the short story in the midst of a long one, or by using it as an item in a magazine. We shall trace the development of both these methods. The publication of collections of short stories in volume form is a comparatively modern practice.

(*c*) *The Interpolated Story.* This was the earliest form of the short story. As early as the romance of *Don Quixote* we have one or more of the characters of the main story relating some short tale that acts as a foil to the principal narrative. The interpolated story is a common device in the picaresque novel, and it is freely employed by Defoe, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne. Scott, in his famous *Wandering Willie's Tale*, which is introduced in *Redgauntlet*, continues the practice; and as late as Dickens we have the common use of short stories, some of them of very inferior quality, in *The Pickwick Papers*. At this point the interpolated story becomes quite rare in good fiction, for the magazine has appeared on the scene and has

provided the natural medium for the genuine short story. In many cases the interpolated tale is of great merit, but it spoils the unity of the main story, and so it is better out of the way.

(*d*) *The Magazine Short Story*. The development of the popular magazine led to the establishment of this class of tale. In English its history can be said to begin with Addison, whose Coverley papers are really a collection of short stories; the record continued through the eighteenth century in the miscellaneous work of Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson. During the first half of the nineteenth century there was a decline in the production of the short story. The lighter type of magazine was not yet in favor, and the more ponderous journals, like *The Quarterly Review* and *The Edinburgh Review*, which specialized in literary and political articles, held the stage. *Blackwood's Magazine* and *The London Magazine* encouraged the more popular kinds of fiction. Among their contributors were James Hogg, De Quincey, and Charles Lamb. Some of the essays of these writers, such as Lamb's famous tale of roast pig, are short stories thinly disguised. Another contributor of the same kind was **Douglas Jerrold (1803–57)**, whose *Cakes and Ale* (1842) is one of the first collections of short stories and sketches. After the middle of the century there was a rapid increase in part-fiction magazines, such as Dickens's *All the Year Round* (1859) and Thackeray's *Cornhill Magazine* (1860). As the century drew near its close the number of lighter magazines largely increased, until nowadays we have a large proportion entirely given over to the supply of fiction. Nearly all the writers of the modern epoch have taken to the short story, and most of them have issued this class of their work in volume form. To the names already mentioned in

this chapter we may add those of **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** (born 1859) and **W. W. Jacobs** (born 1863). The former struck a rich vein in the popular detective story, and the latter specialized in the humorous presentation of the longshoreman.

3. The Drama. (*a*) *The Poetical Drama.* In this class of drama there is little to set on record. The blank-verse tragedy is still written with skill and enthusiasm, but there is little of outstanding merit, and nothing of originality. The poetical dramas of Mr. Yeats—for example, *The Countess Cathleen* (1892) and *The Shadowy Waters* (1900)—have all his mystical beauty, and are the most original of their class. **Stephen Phillips (1868–1915)** achieved some distinction, and even considerable stage success, with his smooth and Tennysonian blank-verse tragedies, such as *Paolo and Francesca* (1899), *Ulysses* (1902), and *The Virgin Goddess* (1910). Mr. Hardy's *Dynasts* is dramatic only in form; it is rather a philosophical poem with a dramatic setting.

(*b*) *The Prose Drama.* In this age the activity of the prose drama is second only to that of the novel. The mood of the time is essentially critical, and the prose drama is an excellent medium for expressing such a mood. Among the earliest of the modern dramatists is **Sir Arthur Pinero** (born 1855), and we can trace the development through the work of Mr. Galsworthy, already mentioned, and of **St. John Hankin (1869–1909)** and **Granville Barker** (born 1877). Their plays have the note of the realistic novel in the emphasis they lay upon common life and common speech. The plays of Mr. Shaw, by reason of their wit and high spirits, stand rather apart from this class; and the brilliance of the Wilde comedies is that of a past age.

4. Poetry. (*a*) The main poetical tendency of the time is toward the *lyric*, especially toward a chastened and rather tepid form of it. Of this class, the lyrics of Sir William Watson are fairly typical. Mr. Davies's best pieces, and some of Mr. Hardy's, are good examples of the simple and direct lyric, and Francis Thompson excels in the descriptive style.

(*b*) In the class of *descriptive-narrative poetry* we have the sea-pieces of Mr. Masefield and the rustic poetry of Mr. Drinkwater. To these we must add the work of **Ralph Hodgson** (born 1871), several of whose poems, in particular *The Bull* and *The Song of Honour*, have some of the ecstatic energy of the young Coleridge.

(*c*) In addition to what we may call the standard types of poetry, there are experiments in *vers libre*, or *free verse* (that is, rhymeless verse of the type of Matthew Arnold's *The Strayed Reveller*), and the more daring efforts of others who defy the conventions of rhyme, meter, and even intelligibility. Experiments such as these are all for the good of poetry, which, if it is to live at all, must live by progressing. So far, the attempts of the innovators have produced nothing that is really noteworthy; and with that we must leave them.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY STYLE

1. Poetry. As can easily be understood, in such a troubled age there is little uniformity in style. The average verse is distinguished by a correct and scholarly diction, somewhat ornate, but clear and ably used. Of the highly ornate style there is little to mention, except the more elaborate compositions of Francis Thompson; but from the scholarly elegance of **Dr. Bridges** (born 1844) we may run down the

scale of simplicity through the mannered graces of Mr. Kipling, the crabbed satiric verses of Mr. Hardy, the high simplicity of Mr. Davies, to the sweet child-verse of **Walter de la Mare** (born 1873), whose *Songs of Childhood* (1902), *Peacock Pie* (1913), and other volumes are the almost perfect expression of artless youth. When we arrive here we cannot allow to pass unnoticed the lyrics of **James Stephens** (born 1882), whose poems of country life are simplicity itself, but full of the deepest sympathy. His short poem called *The Snare* is a little masterpiece.

When simplicity develops further it becomes realism, and in poetry the prevailing taste is revealed. The European War, as was natural, produced a crop of realistic poems. Of this kind are the verses of **Siegfried Sassoon** (born 1886), whose war-poems are distinguished by a passionate desire to get to grips with reality.

2. Prose. In this age, as in most other ages, there is much lamentation over the decay of English prose. There is probably a great deal of truth in the charge that our prose is lapsing into slovenly ways, and there is no doubt that the stress of modern methods leads to haphazard and makeshift production. On the other hand, we have but to glance at the names that have a place in this chapter to find exponents of prose styles who represent the best traditions: the reverent respect shown for English in the ornate prose of Mr. Conrad; the massive middle prose of Mr. Hardy; the sonorous and poetical mannerisms of the Celts; the eighteenth-century grace and precision of Lord Morley; the swift, clean swoop of the Shavian manner; and the quick ease of Mr. Wells. Surely such an age is not unblessed. With regard to the future none dare dogmatize; but, with a confidence born of

the knowledge of nineteen centuries, one can look forward undismayed.

GENERAL QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

NOTE.—*In answering some of the following questions the General Tables (Appendix I) will be of use.*

1. With the aid of the following and other quotations, give an account of the origin and development of English blank verse. Compare and contrast the styles of the given extracts.

(1) Now came still evening on, and twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied, for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale—
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleased. Now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires; Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

MILTON, *Paradise Lost*

(2) At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up—the clouds are split
Asunder,—and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not!—the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent;—still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,

Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.
WORDSWORTH, *The Prelude*

(3) And from the reading, and that slab I leant
My elbow on, the while I read and read
I turned, to free myself and find the world,
And stepped out on the narrow terrace, built
Over the street and opposite the church,
And paced its lozenge brickwork sprinkled cool;
Because Felice-church-side stretched, a-glow
Through each square window fringed for festival,
Whence came the clear voice of the cloistered ones
Chanting a chant made for midsummer nights—
I know not what particular praise of God,
It always came and went with June. Beneath
I' the street, quick shown by openings of the sky
When flame fell silently from cloud to cloud,
Richer than that gold snow Jove rained on Rhodes,
The townsmen walked by twos and threes, and talked,
Drinking the blackness in default of air—
A busy human sense beneath my feet:
While in and out the terrace-plants, and round
One branch of tall datura, waxed and waned
The lamp-fly lured there, wanting the white flower.
Over the roof o' the lighted church I looked
A bowshot to the street's end, north away
Out of the Roman gate to the Roman road
By the river, till I felt the Apennine.
BROWNING, *The Ring and the Book*

2. Point out the features of each of the following extracts that are typical of the author or his period. Write a brief critique of the style of each.

(1) Although there be none so ignorant that doth not know, neither any so impudent that will not confess, friendship to be the jewel of human joy: yet whosoever shall see this amity grounded upon a little affection, will soon conjecture that it shall be dissolved upon a light occasion: as in the sequel of Euphues and Philautus you shall soon see, whose hot love waxed soon cold: for as the best wine doth make the sharpest vinegar, so the deepest love turneth to the deadliest hate. Who

deserved the most blame, in mine opinion, it is doubtful and so difficult, that I dare not presume to give verdict. For love being the cause for which so many mischiefs have been attempted, I am not yet persuaded whether of them was most to be blamed, but certainly neither of them was blameless.

LYLY, *Euphues and his England*

(2) A doubtful truce restored the appearances of concord, till the death of Abu Taleb abandoned Mahomet to the power of his enemies, at the moment when he was deprived of his domestic comforts by the loss of his faithful and generous Cadijah. Abu Sophian, the chief of the branch of Ommiyah, succeeded to the principality of the republic of Mecca. A zealous votary of the idols, a mortal foe of the line of Hashem, he convened an assembly of the Koreishites and their allies, to decide the fate of the apostle. His imprisonment might provoke the despair of his enthusiasm; and the exile of an eloquent and popular fanatic would diffuse the mischief through the provinces of Arabia. His death was resolved; and they agreed that a sword from each tribe should be buried in his heart, to divide the guilt of the blood, and baffle the vengeance of the Hashemites. An angel or a spy revealed their conspiracy; and flight was the only resource of Mahomet. At the dead of night, accompanied by his friend Abubeker, he silently escaped from his house: the assassins watched at the door; but they were deceived by the figure of Ali, who reposed on the bed, and was covered with the green vestment of the apostle.

GIBBON, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

(3) There was no sleeping in the daytime on the planter's clearing: the wages were too high to risk. Deesa sat on Moti Guj's neck and gave him

orders, while Moti Guj rooted up the stumps—for he owned a magnificent pair of tusks; or pulled at the end of a rope—for he had a magnificent pair of shoulders; while Deesa kicked behind the ears and said he was the king of elephants. At evening time Moti Guj would wash down his three hundred pounds' weight of green food with a quart of arrack, and Deesa would take a share and sing songs between Moti Guj's legs till it was time to go to bed. Once a week Deesa led Moti Guj down to the river, and Moti Guj lay on his side luxuriously in the shallows, while Deesa went over him with a coir-swab and a brick.... Then Deesa would look at his feet, and examine his eyes, and turn up the fringes of his mighty ears in case of sores or budding ophthalmia. After inspection, the two would "come up with a song from the sea,"

Moti Guj all black and shining, waving a torn tree branch twelve feet long in his trunk, and Deesa knotting up his own long wet hair.

KIPLING, *Moti Guj—Mutineer*

(4) As the dawn was just breaking he found himself close to Covent Garden. The darkness lifted, and, flushed with faint fires, the sky hollowed itself into a perfect pearl. Huge carts filled with nodding lilies rumbled slowly down the polished empty street. The air was heavy with the perfume of the flowers, and their beauty seemed to bring him an anodyne for his pain. He followed into the market, and watched the men unloading their waggons. A white-smocked carter offered him some cherries. He thanked him, and wondered why he refused to accept any money for them, and began to eat them listlessly. They had been plucked at midnight, and the coldness of the moon had entered into them. A long line of boys carrying crates of striped tulips, and of yellow and red roses, defiled in front of him,

threading their way through the huge jade-green piles of vegetables. Under the portico, with its grey sun-bleached pillars, loitered a group of draggled, bareheaded girls, waiting for the auction to be over. Others crowded round the swinging doors of the coffee-house in the Piazza. The heavy cart-horses slipped and stamped upon the rough stones, shaking their bells and trappings. Some of the drivers were lying asleep on a pile of sacks. Iris-necked and pink-footed, the pigeons ran about picking up seeds.

WILDE, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

3. With the aid of the following extracts, and of others known to you, say what subjects are best suited to the simple style in poetry. State the merits of the style, and its limitations. Write a critical note upon each of the given extracts.

(1) Dreamers, mark the honey bee;
Mark the tree
Where the blue cap "*tootle tee*"
Sings a glee,
Sung to Adam and to Eve—
Here they be.
When floods covered every bough,
Noah's ark
Heard that ballad singing now;
Hark, hark,

"*Tootle, tootle, tootle tee*"—
Can it be
Pride and fame must shadows be?
Come and see—
Every season owns her own;
Bird and bee
Sing creation's music on;
Nature's glee
Is in every mood and tone
Eternity

CLARE, *The Blue Tit*

(2) Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,

For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle Reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O Reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle Reader! you would find
A tale in every thing.
What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it:
It is no tale; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

WORDSWORTH, *Simon Lee*

(3) Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again!"
So I piped; he went to hear.

*****

"Piper, sit thee down, and write
In a book that all may read."
So he vanished from my sight;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

BLAKE, *Songs of Innocence*

4. Sketch the history of the prose drama from the Restoration to modern times. The following extracts are fairly typical of the style and formal features of the drama:

(1)(*To them*) Lady WISHFORT *and* FAINALL

Lady Wishfort. Nephew, you are welcome.

Sir Wilfull Witwoud. Aunt, your servant.

Fainall. Sir Wilfull, your most faithful servant.

Sir Wilfull. Cousin Fainall, give me your hand.

Lady Wishfort. Cousin Witwoud, your servant; Mr. Petulant, your servant—nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink anything after your journey, nephew, before you eat? Dinner's almost ready.

Sir Wilfull. I'm very well I thank you, aunt—however, I thank you for your courteous offer. 'Sheart, I was afraid you would have been in the fashion too, and have remembered to have forgot your relations. Here's your cousin Tony, belike, I mayn't call him brother for fear of offence.

Lady Wishfort. O he's a rallier, nephew—my cousin's a wit; and your great wits always choose to rally their best friends. When you have been abroad, nephew, you'll understand raillery better. [FAINALL *and* Mrs. MARWOOD *talk apart.*

Sir Wilfull. Why then let him hold his tongue in the meantime; and rail when that day comes.

CONGREVE, *The Way of the World*

(2) *Mrs. Candour.* What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir Benjamin Backbite. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

Lady Teazle. Yes, and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on a jar, as it were—thus—[*Shows her teeth.*

Mrs. Candour. How can you be so ill-natured?

Lady Teazle. Nay, I allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively

resembles the aperture of a poor's-box, and all her words appear to slide out edgewise as it were thus: *How do you do, madam? Yes, madam.* [*Mimics.*

Lady Sneerwell. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

Lady Teazle. In defence of a friend, it is but justice. But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

Enter Sir PETER TEAZLE

Sir Peter. Ladies, your most obedient. [*Aside*] Mercy on me, here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose.

SHERIDAN, *The School for Scandal*

(3) *Sarah* [*tidying herself, in great excitement*]. Let you be sitting here and keeping a great blaze, the way he can look on my face; and let you seem to be working, for it's a great love the like of him have to talk of work.

Michael [*moodily, sitting down and beginning to work at a tin can*]. Great love, surely.

Sarah [*eagerly*]. Make a great blaze now, Michael Byrne.

[*The* Priest *comes in on right; she comes forward in front of him.*

Sarah [*in a very plausible voice*]. Good evening, your reverence. It's a grand fine night, by the grace of God.

Priest. The Lord have mercy on us! What kind of living woman is it that you are at all?

Sarah. It's Sarah Casey I am, your reverence, the Beauty of Ballinacree, and it's Michael Byrne is below in the ditch.

Priest. A holy pair, surely! Let you get out of my way.

[*He tries to pass by.*

Sarah [*keeping in front of him*]. We are wanting a little word with your reverence.

SYNGE, *The Tinker's Wedding*

(4) HORNBLOWER *enters—a man of medium height, thoroughly broadened, blown out, as it were, with success. He has thick, coarse hair, just grizzled, very bushy eyebrows, a wide mouth. He wears quite ordinary clothes, as if that department were in charge of someone who knew about such things. He has a small rose in his buttonhole, and carries a Homburg hat, which one suspects will look too small on his head.*

Hornblower. Good morning! good morning! How are ye, Dawker? Fine morning! Lovely weather!

[*His voice has a curious blend in its tone of brass and oil, and an accent not quite Scotch nor quite North country.*

Haven't seen ye for a long time Hillcrist.

Hillcrist [*who has risen*]. Not since I sold you Longmeadow and those cottages, I believe.

Hornblower. Dear me, now! that's what I came about.

Hillcrist [*subsiding again into his chair*]. Forgive me! Won't you sit down?

Hornblower [*not sitting*]. Have ye got gout? That's unfortunate. I never get it. I've no disposition that way. Had no ancestors, you see. Just me own drinking to answer for.

Hillcrist. You're lucky.

GALSWORTHY, *The Skin Game*

5. What do you understand by "Romanticism" in

poetry? Point out any Romantic features in the following extracts. Does Romanticism take any other forms than those apparent in the given passages? Give an account of what is commonly known as the Romantic Revival. Are there any other periods in our literature in which Romanticism flourished?

(1) Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Hark! now I hear them—ding-dong, bell.
SHAKESPEARE, *The Tempest*

(2) And they are gone: aye, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.
KEATS, *The Eve of St. Agnes*

(3) *At the Gate of the Sun, Bagdad, in olden time.*

THE MERCHANTS (*together*)

Away, for we are ready to a man!
Our camels sniff the evening and are glad.
Lead on, O Master of the Caravan:
Lead on the Merchant-Princes of Bagdad.

THE CHIEF DRAPER

Have we not Indian carpets dark as wine,
Turbans and sashes, gowns and bows and veils,
And broideries of intricate design,
And printed hangings in enormous bales?

THE CHIEF GROCER

We have rose-candy, we have spikenard,
Mastic and terebinth and oil and spice,
And such sweet jams meticulously jarred
As God's own Prophet eats in Paradise.

THE PRINCIPAL JEWS

And we have manuscripts in peacock styles
By Ali of Damascus; we have swords
Engraved with storks and apes and crocodiles,
And heavy beaten necklaces, for Lords.

J. E. FLECKER (1885–1915),
The Golden Journey to Samarkand

6. In what respects are the following passages realistic? What are the chief aspects of realism in poetry? Are there any periods in our literature when realism was a prominent feature?

(1)Tam was able
To note upon the haly table
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;[238]
Twa span-lang, wee unchristened bairns;
A thief new-cutted frae a rape,[239]
Wi' his last gasp his gab[240] did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted;
Five scimitars wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled,
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft.

BURNS, *Tam o' Shanter*

(2) Here is a thing that happened. Like wild beasts whelped, for den,
In a wild part of North England, there lived once two wild men
Inhabiting one homestead, neither a hovel nor hut,
Time out of mind their birthright: father and son, these—but—
Such a son, such a father! Most wildness by degrees
Softens away: yet, last of their line, the wildest and worst were these.

*****

Thus were they found by the few sparse folk of the countryside;
But how fared each with other? E'en beasts couch, hide by hide,
In a growling, grudged agreement: so, father and son aye curled
The closelier up in their den because the last of their kind in the world.

BROWNING, *Halbert and Hob*

(3) (*A newcomer overhears some men discussing his wife.*)

"And he knows nothing of her past;
I am glad the girl's in luck at last;
Such ones, though stale to native eyes,
Newcomers snatch at as a prize."

"Yes, being a stranger he sees her blent
Of all that's fresh and innocent,
Nor dreams how many a love-campaign
She had enjoyed before his reign!"

That night there was the splash of a fall
Over the slimy harbour-wall:
They searched, and at the deepest place
Found him with crabs upon his face.

HARDY, *Satires of Circumstance*

(4) Some ancient man with silver locks
Will lift his weary face to say:
"War was a fiend who stopped our clocks
Although we met him grim and gay."
And then he'll speak of Haig's last drive,
Marvelling that any came alive
Out of the shambles that men built
And smashed, to cleanse the world of guilt.
But the boys, with grin and sidelong glance,
Will think, "Poor grandad's day is done."
And dream of those who fought in France
And lived in time to share the fun.

SASSOON, *Songbooks of the War*

7. Trace the presence of realistic elements in the English novel from Fielding to Thomas Hardy.

8. The following extracts illustrate the history of

the ballad. What features have they in common, and in what respects do they differ? Trace the history of the ballad in English literature.

(1) The lady she walked in yon wild wood,
Aneath the hollin tree,
And she was aware of two bonny bairns
Were running at her knee.

"Now why pull ye the red rose, fair bairns,
And why the white lilie?"
"O we sue wi' them at the seat of grace
For the soul of thee, ladie."

She heard a voice, a sweet, low voice,
Say, "Weans, ye tarry lang"—
She stretched her hand to the youngest bairn,
"Kiss me before ye gang."

She sought to take a lily hand,
And kiss a rosy chin—
"Oh nought sae pure can abide the touch
Of a hand red-wet wi' sin!"

"O! where dwell ye, my ain sweet bairns,
I'm woe and weary grown!"
"O! lady, we live where woe never is,
In a land to flesh unknown."

There came a shape that seemed to her
As a rainbow 'mang the rain;
And sair these sweet babes pled for her,
And they pled and pled in vain.

"And O! and O!" said the youngest babe,
"My mother maun come in."
"And O! and O!" said the eldest babe,
"Wash her twa hands frae sin."

"And O! and O!" said the youngest babe,
"She nursed me on her knee."
"And O! and O!" said the eldest babe,
"She's a mither yet to me."

ANONYMOUS

(2) Good people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song;

And if you find it wondrous short,
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man
Of whom the world might say,
That still a goodly race he ran
When'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes;
The naked every day he clad
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends;
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets
The wondering neighbours ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits,
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seem'd both sore and sad
To every Christian eye;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
That showed the rogues they lied:
The man recover'd of the bite,
The dog it was that died.

GOLDSMITH, *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog*

(3) Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border-side,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride:
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,
And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away.

KIPLING, *The Ballad of East and West*

9. What effects had Milton's politics and public work upon his prose and verse? In this respect compare him with Dryden. Write a general essay upon "The Influence of Contemporary Events upon the Poet and the Man of Letters."

10. Observe the style and subject of each of the following extracts, and name the author of each. Write a critical comparison of the extracts. In what respects is each typical of its period?

(1) Then said Christian, "You make me afraid, but whither shall I fly to be safe? If I go back to mine own country, that is prepared for fire and brimstone; and I shall certainly perish there. If I can get to the celestial city, I am sure to be in safety there. I must venture. To go back is nothing but death; to go forward is fear of death, and life everlasting beyond it. I will yet go forward." So Mistrust and Timorous ran down the hill; and Christian went on his way. But thinking again of what he heard from the men, he felt in his bosom for his roll, that he might read therein and be comforted; but he felt and found it not.

(2) His prose is the model of the middle style: on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not grovelling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious

ornaments and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour.

(3) Two men I honour, and no third. First, the toilworn Craftsman that with earth-made Implement laboriously conquers the Earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard Hand; crooked, coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the Sceptre of this Planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a Man living manlike. O, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee! Hardly-entreated Brother! For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed: thou wert our Conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred.

11. Compare Shakespeare's methods of description and characterization with those of Chaucer. Wherein lies the difference, and wherein the resemblance?

12. Give a historical account of the sonnet in English, from its inception to the death of Tennyson. Who were the most successful writers in this type of poetry, and why were they so successful?

13. Distinguish between wit and humor. In which class would you place the works of Chaucer, Bernard Shaw, Swift, Thackeray, Charles Lamb, Wilde, Goldsmith, and Shakespeare? Give reasons for your classification.

14. In what respects is Burns a national poet? Try to explain why in this respect he is unique in British literature.

15. It has been said that Shakespeare's women characters are more important in his comedies than

they are in his tragedies. Quote the examples of some of his plays in support of this statement, and try to account for it.

16. Compare any one of Shakespeare's comedies with one by Goldsmith or Sheridan.

17. Trace the Celtic (Irish and Scottish) influence in English literature. Can you account for the comparative poverty of the Welsh influence in English?

18. Mention some of the great English nature-poets. What is their outlook upon nature? What aspects of nature particularly appealed to them? State your preference among the poets you mention, quote from his works, and give reasons for your choice.

19. Discuss the statement that "Wycliff, Langland, and Chaucer are the three great figures of English literature in the Middle Ages." Would you place any of their contemporaries along with them?

20. What is Chaucer's attitude to chivalry and to the Church? Compare his Knight (in *The Prologue*) with a similar character of Spenser and Tennyson.

21. Give a historical account of the English essay (*a*) from its origin to the death of Addison; (*b*) from the death of Addison to the death of Charles Lamb; (*c*) from the time of Lamb to modern times. Then give a brief summary of the history of the essay, indicating its periods of progress and decay.

22. What are the chief merits of the literary essay? Mention some English essayists who approach the ideal essay-manner.

23. Distinguish between the tale and the novel.

Show how the one developed into the other. Give some account of one medieval and one modern prose tale-teller.

24. Mention five books of exploration and travel. Give a more detailed account of the one that appeals most strongly to you. What are the ideals to which in your opinion the travel-book ought to aspire?

25. Compare Milton's *Samson Agonistes* with any tragedy by Shakespeare.

26. Account for the late appearance of historical literature, and sketch its subsequent development.

27. In the light of your knowledge of the English lyric criticize Shelley's statement that "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

28. Give an account of the verse-tale (*a*) from Chaucer to Dryden and (*b*) from Crabbe to William Morris. What style and meter are best adapted to the verse-tale? Illustrate by means of extracts.

29. Estimate the importance of journalism as an aid to literature; give a short account of its rise; and add a note upon the literary attainments of modern journalism.

30. What effect had the attitude of the Church upon the early drama? Has the Church exerted any influence, good or bad, on any other kind of literature?

31. Mention some of the earliest literary critics in English; and continue with a brief history of literary criticism up to modern times.

32. Mention three important biographies in English. In what respects do they conform to the ideal biography?

33. Consider the works of Dickens, Wordsworth (especially his sonnets), Samuel Butler (1835–1902), Milton (both prose and verse), Gibbon, Bunyan, and Shelley as political, religious, or social propaganda. Write a general essay on the use and abuse of propaganda in works of literature.

34. Estimate the value of the work of the female novelist and the poetess. In which of these two departments of literature is woman's achievement the higher? Does the level of her accomplishment show any signs of rising?

35. Discuss Charles Lamb, Meredith, Walter Pater, John Ruskin, and R. L. Stevenson as prose stylists. Write an account of prose style during the nineteenth century.

36. What are the qualities of good poetical satire? Trace the course of the satire in English from Dryden to Byron.

37. Compare Scott and Byron as poetical tale-tellers, as lyrical writers, and as men. Comment upon the history of their respective reputations.

38. What is meant by an "ode"? What are the requirements of a good ode? Mention the chief odes in English, from those of Spenser to those of Tennyson.

39. Compare *Lycidas*, *Adonais*, and *The Scholar-Gipsy* as elegies. Add to this an account of other important English elegies, and sketch the growth of this type of poem.

40. Give a short account of six heroines in standard English novels; add an account of six heroines of poems; and conclude with a description of six of Shakespeare's heroines.

41. What was Scott's contribution to the historical novel? How far has the historical novel advanced since his death?

42. Mention some patriotic poems in English. What are the merits and chief weaknesses of this particular kind of poetry?

43. In Irish and Scottish literature are there any literary peculiarities that are essentially Irish and Scottish? Discuss the general question of nationality in literature.

44. Taking Lamb, Scott, George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, and Junius as the chief examples, consider the use of the *nom de plume* or of anonymity in literature. To what extent is anonymity a feature of modern journalism?

45. What novels dealing with life in India or British colonial life are known to you? Have they any features in common?

46. Has the spread of modern education affected the standard of literature? What species of literature has it encouraged, and which has it depressed?

47. Discuss the statement that "the English epic began and ended with Milton." Trace the course of the epic in English.

48. Justify the statement that "English poetry is full of the color and odor of the sea." Who are the chief sea-poets in English?

49. Is the cinematograph likely to affect the literature of the future? Is it likely to affect in any way the literature of the past?

50. (*a*) Write a paragraph of description and criticism upon each of the following works:

Gulliver's Travels, *Sesame and Lilies*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Ancren Riwle*, *Henry Esmond*, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Absalom and Achitophel*, *Euphues and his England*, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, *Locksley Hall*, *Jude the Obscure*, *Il Penseroso*, *The Pickwick Papers*, *Abt Vogler*, *Urne Buriall*, *Northanger Abbey*, *The Blessed Damozel*, *To a Mouse*, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, *The Egoist*, *Paradise Regained*, *Satires of Circumstance*, *The Woman in White*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *The Dance of the Sevin Deidlie Sins*, *Old Mortality*, *Tono-Bungay*, *Plays for Puritans*.

(*b*) Write a paragraph on each of the following characters. Mention the work in which each appears, and write a critical estimate:

Jeanie Deans, Prospero, Sir Charles Grandison, Michael Fane, Delilah, Sir Galahad, Mr. Collins, Jos Sedley, Mrs. Proudie, Falstaff, Roderick Random, Major Barbara, Enoch Arden, Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Arthur Kipps, Maggie Tulliver, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Childe Harold, Hilda Lessways, Marmion, Angel Clare, Archimago, Sairey Gamp, Alan Breck, Peter Pan, Dr. Primrose, Amyas Leigh, the Wife of Bath, Mrs. Battle, Lord Jim.

(*c*) Mention works in which the following types or professions are depicted. Estimate the degree of success attained in each character.

Miser; hypocrite; jester; soldier of fortune; adventuress; undergraduate; surgeon; country parson; detective; Puritan; peasant-farmer; artist; cook; innkeeper; magician; statesman; religious fanatic; garrulous woman; dominie; shepherd; dunce; usurer; boaster; murderer; fisherman; tramp; carpenter; naval officer; conspirator; antiquary.

APPENDIX I

GENERAL TABLES

(1) Authors' names appear in roman type; the titles of books are given in *italics*.

(2) Every author and book that is mentioned in the tables has already found a place earlier in this history. Reference to the index at the end will lead to further information.

(3) The chief use of each table is to provide a clear view of some aspect of English literature. To effect this a certain amount of **rigidity** is unavoidable in the classification. The reader should clearly understand that a greater elasticity of opinion is possible than appears in the tables. Caution, therefore, is necessary in the use of them.

I. PROSE FORMS

DATE	TALE AND ROMANCE	ESSAY	NOVEL	MISCELLANEOUS
1500	Malory			Pecock
			Utopi Nash	Ascham

1600	*Arcadia* Ford	Bacon	*Arcadia*	Hooker
		Overbury		
				Bacon
				Burton
				Browne
	Boyle			Clarendon
		Dryden		Milton
1700		Temple	Behn	Dryden
		Addison		
	Defoe	Steele	Defoe	Swift
			Richardson	
		Johnson	Fielding	
	Johnson	Goldsmith	Smollett	Burke
			Sterne	
1800		Coleridge	Goldsmith Austen	Gibbon
				Southey
		Hazlitt	Scott	
		Lamb		Lockhart
	Marryat		Dickens	
	Lever		Thackeray	Ruskin

	Borrow	Thackeray		
1900		Stevenson	Meredith Hardy	Stevenson

II. THE NOVEL

Date	Picaresque	Society and Domestic	Historical	Didactic
1500				
1600	*The Unfortunate Traveller*			*Utopia* *Arcadia*
1700	Head Behn			
1800	Defoe Smollett Sterne	Addison Richardson Fielding Burney Austen		Johnson
	Marryat	Edgeworth Dickens	Porter Scott Bulwer-Lytton	

	Borrow	Thackeray	G. P. R. James	
1900		Meredith Hardy	Thackeray Stevenson	Pater

III. THE ESSAY

Date	Scientific and Didactic	Literary Criticism	Miscellaneous
1500			
1600		*Apologie for Poetrie*	Bacon
	Milton		Cowley
		Dryden	Howell
1700	Locke	Temple	
		Addison	Addison
		Steele	Steele
	Bolingbroke		Swift
	Hume	Johnson	Johnson
1800		Goldsmith	Goldsmith
	Cobbett	Jeffrey	Hazlitt
		Coleridge	Lamb
		Hazlitt	Thackeray
		Carlyle	Froude

		Macaulay	Stevenson
1900		Symonds	

IV. PROSE STYLE

N.B.—*In this table the classification is often only approximate.*

DATE	PLAIN	MIDDLE	ORNATE	POETIC
	Mandeville (*d.* 1372)			
	Malory			
1500				
		More		
			Fisher	
	Ascham			
	Nash			
		Hooker	Lyly	
1600		Bacon		
	Overbury			The Bible
		Burton	Milton	
			Browne	
	Walton	Hobbes	Jeremy Taylor	
	Bunyan	Dryden		
	Locke	Temple		
1700				
		Addison		

	Swift			
	Fielding	Goldsmith	Johnson	
			Burke	Macpherson
1800		Cowper	Gibbon	
	Cobbett	Southey		De Quincey
			Lamb	Wilson
		Macaulay	Ruskin	Carlyle
		Thackeray	Meredith	W. Morris
1900	G. B. Shaw			

V. THE DRAMA

N.B.—*Some cross-classification is unavoidable in this table.*

DATE	TRAGEDY	COMEDY	HISTORICAL AND PASTORAL
1500			
		Ralph Roister Doister	
	Gorboduc		
	Kyd		*The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*
	Marlowe	J. Heywood	
	Greene	Lyly	

1600	Nash	Shakespeare	Shakespeare
	Shakespeare	Jonson	Jonson
	Jonson	Massinger	Fletcher
	Webster		
	Ford		
	Milton	Dryden	
	Dryden		
1700	Lee	Congreve	
	Addison	Steele	
	Johnson		
		Goldsmith	Home
		Sheridan	
1800			Baillie
	Byron		Byron
	Shelley		
	Browning		
	Swinburne		
	Tennyson	Wilde	Tennyson
1900		G. B. Shaw	Swinburne

VI. POETICAL FORMS

Date	Epic	Lyric and Ode	Narrative-Descriptive	Didactic
		The Nut-brown Maid	Chaucer (*d.* 1400)	

			James I of Scotland	Lydgate
1500			Hawes	Hawes
		Wyat	Sackville	
		Surrey		
1600		Shakespeare	Spenser	Drayton
		Donne	P. and G. Fletcher	
	Cowley	Herbert		
	Davenant	Carew		
	Milton			
1700		Dryden	Dryden Butler	Dryden
	Blackmore	Prior	Pope	
				Pope
		Collins		
		Gray		Johnson
			Cowper	
1800		Burns Wordsworth	Crabbe Coleridge	
		Keats	Scott	Shelley
		Shelley	Byron	Byron
		Tennyson	Tennyson	

		Browning		Tennyson
1900	Tennyson	Arnold D. G. Rossetti	Browning Arnold Swinburne	

VII. MISCELLANEOUS FORMS (PROSE AND POETRY)

DATE	ALLEGORY[241] [242]	SATIRE[241] [242]	ELEGY[241]	LETTERS AND DIARY[242]
1500	Lydgate[241]	Skelton[241]		
1600	Douglas[241] Dunbar[241] Spenser[241]	Barclay[241] Lyndsay[241] Donne[241]	Dunbar[241]	
1700	P. Fletcher[241] Bunyan[242]	Dryden[241]	Milton[241]	Howell[242] Pepys[242] Evelyn[242]
	Addison[242]	Swift[242]		

		Pope[241]		Lady M. W. Montagu[242]
1800	Goldsmith[242]	Johnson[241] Burns[241]	Gray[241]	Gray[242] Cowper[242]
1900	Tennyson[241]	Byron[241] Butler[242]	Shelley[241] Tennyson[241] Arnold[241]	Lamb[242] Scott[242]

VIII. CHIEF METRICAL FORMS: PART I

Date	Heroic Couplet[243] [244]	Octosyllabic Couplet	Ballad Meter	Blank Verse
1500	Chaucer (*d.* 1400)[243] [244]	Chaucer	Numerous ballads *Sir Patrick Spens* *Chevy Chace*	
1600	Spenser[244]	Spenser		Surrey Marlowe Shakespeare

	Wither[243]	P. Fletcher		Jonson
	Cowley[243]	Milton		
	Cooper's Hill[243]			
				Milton
	Dryden[243]	Butler		
1700				Dryden
	Pope[243]	Swift		
				Thomson
			Percy	
	Johnson[243]			
			Chatterton	
1800	Goldsmith[243]	Coleridge	Goldsmith Coleridge	Cowper Wordsworth
	Keats[244]	Scott	Scott	Keats
	Byron[243]	Byron		Shelley
			Tennyson	
	Arnold[244]			Tennyson
	W. Morris[244]	W. Morris	D. G. Rossetti	Browning
1900	Swinburne[244]			Arnold Swinburne

IX. CHIEF METRICAL FORMS: PART II

DATE	SPENSERIAN STANZA	OTTAVA RIMA	RHYME ROYAL	SONNET
1500			Chaucer (*d.* 1400) James I of Scotland Henryson	
1600			Sackville Spenser	Wyat[246] Surrey[245] Spenser[245]
1700		*Britannia's Pastorals*		Shakespeare[245] Drayton[246] Milton[246]
1800	Thomson Shenstone			Wordsworth[246]
	Keats Shelley Byron Tennyson	Byron Keats		Byron[246] Keats[246] Shelley[246] Tennyson[246]

			W. Morris	
1900				D. G. Rossetti[246]

APPENDIX II

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II. BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

NOTES.—1. *Abbreviations*:

E., "English Men of Letters."
S.W., "Studies of Living Writers."
W.D., "Writers of the Day."
P.B., "The People's Books."

2. When the title of a book is not given it is identical with the name of the writer being dealt with. For instance, the title of Courthope's work on Addison is *Joseph Addison.*

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FOOTNOTES:

[1] Coats of mail.
[2] Fire.
[3] king.
[4] rowed.
[5] build.
[6] fine.
[7] birth.
[8] Romans.
[9] loyalty.
[10] peace.
[11] traitor.
[12] hides.
[13] seemliest.
[14] bondage.
[15] lucky.

[16] chance.
[17] I wot, I know.
[18] dirty.
[19] blue.
[20] foaming.
[21] approach.
[22] destroyed.
[23] smell.
[24] cucumbers.
[25] each one.
[26] wonder.
[27] yearned.
[28] Sultan.
[29] any.
[30] raised.
[31] Cheddar.
[32] rain.
[33] suitable.
[34] rocks.
[35] faintness.
[36] seized.
[37] as.
[38] realm.
[39] commenced.
[40] one.
[41] both.
[42] are.
[43] parted.

[44] Dryden wrote before the metrical importance of the final *e* was understood.

[45] inlaid.

[46] gems.

[47] gleaming.

[48] lily.

[49] frosted.

[50] shivered.

[51] eyes.

[52] hollow.

[53] moisture.

[54] blue.

[55] out over.

[56] gray.

[57] tangled.

[58] attire.

[59] withered dress.

[60] sheaf.

[61] arrows.

[62] feathered.

[63] once.

[64] drawn.

[65] wasteful wants.

[66] cassock.

[67] nonce.

[68] deceiver.

[69] grinned.

[70] groans.

[71] broil.

[72] bear.

[73] blood.

[74] arbor.

[75] living person.

[76] play.

[77] blow.

[78] died.

[79] feeding.

[80] tribute.

[81] slime.

[82] prepare.

[83] *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579).

[84] *Polyolbion* (1612).

[85] *Tamburlaine* (1587).

[86] *Love's Labour's Lost* (1594).

[87] *Every Man in his Humour* (1598).

[88] *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593).

[89] *Essays* (1597).

[90] *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).

[91] Mammon.

[92] carving.

[93] ore.

[94] hammered.

[95] ingots.

[96] utterly wasted.

[97] peeled.

[98] The passage containing this reference appears on pp. 142–143.

[99] This piece is sometimes ascribed to

William Browne (1588–1643.)

[100] Peele.

[101] Nash and Marlowe.

[102] *The Induction* (1555).

[103] *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557).

[104] *The Steel Glass* (1576).

[105] *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579).

[106] Plutarch's *Lives* (1579).

[107] *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593).

[108] *Venus and Adonis* (1593).

[109] *Essays* (1597).

[110] *Characters* (1614).

[111] rejoice.

[112] bride.

[113] bulged.

[114] peel.

[115] The Cave of Despair.

[116] *Poetical Blossoms* (1633).

[117] *Noble Numbers* (1647).

[118] *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1629).

[119] *Paradise Lost* (1658).

[120] *Religio Medici* (1642).

[121] *The History of the Great Rebellion* (1646).

[122] *Holy Living* (1650).

[123] *The Leviathan* (1651).

[124] Of St. Theresa.

[125] *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1629).

[126] *Religio Medici* (1642).

[127] *The History of the Great Rebellion* (1646).

[128] *Holy Living* (1650).

[129] *Paradise Lost* (1658).

[130] *Samson Agonistes* (1671).

[131] 1802.

[132] *Astræa Redux* (1660).

[133] *Hudibras* (1663).

[134] *The Old Bachelor* (1693).

[135] *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678).

[136] His dedications, etc.

[137] *Religio Laici* (1682).

[138] *The Hind and the Panther* (1687).

[139] *Don Sebastian* (1690).

[140] *Alexander's Feast* (1697).

[141] *Fables* (1700).

[142] *The Rape of the Lock* (1712).

[143] *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts* (1742).

[144] *Gulliver's Travels* (1726).

[145] *The Spectator* (1711).

[146] *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

[147] Sir Leslie Stephen.

[148] *The Funeral* (1701).

[149] *The Review* (1704).

[150] *The Campaign* (1704).

[151] *The Battle of the Books* (1704).

[152] *Pastorals* (1709).

[153] The Coverley essays.

[154] *The Tatler* (1709).

[155] *An Essay on Criticism* (1711).

[156] *Cato* (1713).

[157] *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

[158] *Gulliver's Travels* (1726).

[159] *The Dunciad* (1728).

[160] Elkanah Settle (see p. 207).

[161] Lord John Hervey.

[162] *The Seasons* (1730).

[163] *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard* (1751).

[164] *Poems* (Kilmarnock edition, 1786).

[165] *Pamela* (1740).

[166] *Tom Jones* (1749).

[167] *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776).

[168] vomited.

[169] Mount Pindus, sacred to the Muses. Hence, a poet's dream.

[170] That is, "the blind one." A reference to Milton's blindness.

[171] share.

[172] rinse.

[173] *London* (1738).

[174] *Pamela* (1740).

[175] *Joseph Andrew* (1742).

[176] *The Castle of Indolence* (1748).

[177] *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749).

[178] *Irene* (1749).

[179] *The Rambler* (1750).

[180] *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard* (1751).

[181] *Rasselas* (1759).

[182] *The Rosciad* (1761).

[183] *The Traveller* (1764).

[184] *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766).

[185] *The Good-natured Man* (1768).

[186] *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776).

[187] *The Task* (1785).

[188] The Devil.

[189] going last.

[190] perhaps.

[191] *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

[192] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812).

[193] *Endymion* (1818).

[194] *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805).

[195] *Waverley* (1814).

[196] *Northanger Abbey* (1798).

[197] *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821).

[198] *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

[199] *Northanger Abbey* (1798).

[200] *The Watchman* (1796).

[201] *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805).

[202] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812).

[203] *Queen Mab* (1813).

[204] *Waverley* (1814).

[205] *Manfred* (1817).

[206] *Endymion* (1818).

[207] *Biographia Literaria* (1817).

[208] *Don Juan* (1819).

[209] *The Cenci* (1819).

[210] *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821).

[211] *The Essays of Elia* (1823).

[212] *The Life of Byron* (1830).

[213] *The Life of Scott* (1837).

[214] *The Borderers* (1842).

[215] *Poems* (1832).

[216] *Pauline* (1833).

[217] *The Pickwick Papers* (1836).

[218] *Vanity Fair* (1847).

[219] *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859).

[220] *Sartor Resartus* (1833).

[221] *Essay on Milton* (1825).

[222] *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849).

[223] Such a passage appears on p. 513.

[224] Coleridge.

[225] *Poems* (1832).

[226] *Poems* (1833).

[227] *Sartor Resartus* (1833).

[228] *Pauline* (1833).

[229] *The Pickwick Papers* (1836).

[230] *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842).

[231] *The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon* (1842).

[232] *Modern Painters* (1843).

[233] *The Return of the Druses* (1843).

[234] *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859).

[235] *Chastelard* (1865).

[236] *Queen Mary* (1875).

[237] An extract will be found on p. 565.

[238] irons.

[239] rope.

[240] mouth.

[241] Poetry

[242] Prose

[243] Stopped.

[244] Loose.

[245] English form.

[246] Italian form.

Transcriber's Notes:

1. Obvious printers', punctuation and spelling errors have been corrected silently.

2. Where hyphenation is in doubt, it has been retained as in the original.

3. Some hyphenated and non-hyphenated versions of the same words have been retained as in the original.

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