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A

COMPENDIOUS HISTORY

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE,

AND OF

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,

FROM

THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

WITH NUMEROUS SPECIMENS.

BY

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PREFACE.

IN the largest or loosest sense of the expression a History of English Literature might be taken to mean an account of everything that has been written in the language. But neither is the literature of a language everything that has been written in it, nor would all that has been written in the language necessarily comprehend all its literature, for much true literature may exist, and has existed, without having been written. Literature is composed of words, of thought reduced to the form of words; but the words need not be written; it is enough that they be spoken or sung, or even only conceived. All that writing does is to record and preserve them. It no more endows them with any new character than money acquires a new character by being locked up in a desk or paid into a bank.

But, besides this, if the history of a national literature is to have any proper unity, it can rarely embrace the language in its entire extent. If it should attempt to do so, it would be really the history not of one but of several literatures. In some cases it might even be made a question when it was that the language properly began, at what point of the unbroken thread—which undoubtedly connects every form of human speech with a succession of preceding forms out of which it has sprung—we are to say that an old

language has died and a new one come into existence; but, at any rate, even when the language is admitted to be the same, it not unfrequently differs almost as much in two of its stages as if it were two languages. We have a conspicuous example of this in our own English. We may be said to have the language before us in complete continuity from the seventh century; but the English of the earliest portion of this long space of time, or what is commonly called Anglo-Saxon, is no more intelligible to an Englishman of the present day who has not made it a special study than is German or Dutch.

The case is even a great deal worse than that. Dutch and German and other foreign tongues are living; our earliest English has been dead and buried for centuries. Nay, for a long time even the fact that it had once existed was all but universally forgotten. And even since it has come to be once more studied we know it only as a fossil—as the dust and dry bones of a language. Of the literature written in it we may indeed acquire such a conception as we might of a living human being from a skeleton; but nothing more.

Of that nocturnal portion of our literature, as it may be called, no critical survey is attempted in the present work. Only the principal compositions of which it consists, and the names of their authors, are rapidly enumerated by way of Introduction, along with the leading particulars of the same kind belonging to the histories of the Latin, the Welsh, and the Irish literatures of the same early period.

The history of any national literature, in fact, naturally divides itself into three portions, all very distinct from one another, and demanding each a treatment of its own. First, there is the portion which, as has just been said, may be named after the night, not perhaps

altogether as being the product of a period of darkness, but as lying now, from distance and change of circumstances, in the dark to us; secondly, there is so much of that produced after what seems to us to have been the rising of the sun as we can look back upon; thirdly, there is what belongs to our own day, and lies not behind us but rather before us or around us. Of the three subjects thus presented, the first offers a field chiefly for philological and antiquarian erudition; even the third, not being yet past, does not come properly within the domain of history; the only one that perfectly admits of being treated historically is the daylight or middle division. But that is always both by far the most extensive and also in every other respect the most important.

The survey which is taken in the present work of so much of our English literature as is thus properly historical is no doubt far from complete. Still it will be found to include not only, of course, all our writers of the first class, but also, I believe, all those, without exception, who can be regarded as of any considerable distinction. If that be so, it will, whatever its defects of execution, present a view of the whole subject of which it professes to treat; for it is only great names and great works that make a literature. An account of the writings of Chaucer, of Spenser, of Shakspeare, of Bacon, of Milton, of Dryden, of Pope, of Swift, of Burke, of Burns, of Cowper, would sufficiently unfold the course and revolutions of our English literature from its commencement down to the beginning of the present century. Many names, however, have also been noticed in these volumes which have no pretensions to be considered as even of second-rate importance, but yet some information in regard to which, if it were no more than the date to which each of them belongs,

might, it was thought, add to the serviceableness of the work as a book of reference.

Such brief notices are rather for being turned to by means of the Index than for straightforward perusal. The history of our literature, in so far as it is of universal interest, is all contained in the longer and fuller accounts;—the space allotted to which, however, it will be obvious, is not in all cases proportioned to the eminence of the writers. On the contrary, several writers of the first class whose works are in the hands of everybody, as, for example, Shakspeare and Milton, are disposed of without the critical remarks on them being illustrated by any specimens; of others, again, who are less read in the present day, such as Chaucer and Spenser of earlier, Swift and Burke of later, date, the poetry and eloquence are amply exemplified from what they have left us that is most characteristic and remarkable. Any one who will take the trouble to ascertain the fact will find how completely even our great poets and other writers of the last generation have already faded from the view of the present with the most numerous class of the educated and reading public. Scarcely anything is generally read except the publications of the day. Yet nothing is more certain than that no true cultivation can be so acquired. This is the extreme case of that entire ignorance of history or of what had been done in the world before we ourselves came into it, which has been affirmed, not with more point than truth, to leave a person always a child.

Having already gone over the greater part of the present subject in a work entitled *Sketches of the History of Literature and Learning in England*, which was published in 1844–5, I have only revised and retouched here, and not sought to rewrite, whatever as it there

stood still sufficiently expressed what I had to say. The present work, therefore, it will be understood, comprehends and incorporates all of the former one (now out of print) which it has been considered desirable to preserve. It is, in truth, in the main a republication of that, though with many alterations and some curtailments, as well as considerable additions and enlargements. I have even retained, though hardly coming under the new title, the summaries of the progress of Scientific Discovery in successive periods, as not taking up very much room, and supplying a good many dates and other facts which even in following the history of Literature it is sometimes convenient to have at hand.

The present work, on the other hand, professes to combine the history of the Literature with the history of the Language. The scheme of the course and revolutions of the Language which is followed here, and also in the later editions of my Sketches of the History of the English Language, was first announced by me in an article published in the Dublin University Magazine for July, 1857. It is extremely simple, and, resting not upon arbitrary but upon natural or real distinctions, gives us the only view of the subject that can claim to be regarded as of a scientific character. In the earliest state in which it is known to us the English is both a *homogeneous* and a *synthetic* language,—homogeneous in its vocabulary, synthetic in its grammatical structure. It has since, though of course always operated upon, like everything human, by the law of gradual change, undergone only two decided revolutions; the first of which destroyed its synthetic, the second its homogeneous, character. Thus, in its second form it is still a homogeneous, but no longer a synthetic, language; in its third, it is neither synthetic

nor homogeneous, but has become both analytic in its grammar and composite in its vocabulary. The three forms may be conveniently designated:—the First, that of Pure or Simple English; the Second, that of Broken or Semi-English; the Third, that of Mixed, or Compound, or Composite English. The first of the three stages through which the language has thus passed may be considered to have come to an end in the eleventh century; the second, in the thirteenth century; the third is that in which it still is.

In another paper, published in the *Dublin University Magazine* for October, 1857, I applied this view to the explanation of the action upon the language of the Norman Conquest; the immediate effect of which was to produce the first of the two revolutions, its ultimate effect to produce the second. I there, also, gave an account of the examination of the vocabulary of our existing English instituted by Dr. J. P. Thommerel, in his *Recherches sur la Fusion du Franco-Normand et de l'Anglo-Saxon*, published at Paris in 1841, in which he showed, in opposition to all previous estimates, that, of the words collected in our common dictionaries, instead of two thirds being of native origin, as usually assumed, and only one third of Latin or French extraction. the fact is just the other way;—two thirds are foreign and only one third native. I proceeded to remark, however, that of the words in common use both in speaking and in writing, which may be taken as about 10,000 in number, probably full a half are pure English; and that of those in common colloquial use, which may be about 5000 in all, probably four fifths are of native stock. “And the 4000 or 5000 non-Roman words,” I added, “that are in general use (4000 in our common speech. 5000 in literary composition), compose all the fundamental framework of the language,

all that may be called its skeleton or bony structure, and also perhaps the better part of its muscular tissue."

The portion of our literature to which the present work is properly speaking devoted is that of the Third Form of the Language, and may be regarded as commencing with the poetry of Chaucer in the middle of the fourteenth century.

G. L. C.

P. S. Upon more careful consideration, I find that the simile in the 6th Iliad is not fairly represented in the translation given vol. ii. p. 546. Nothing turns upon it; but I ought not to have supposed it possible that Homer could have been in anything inconsistent with truth and nature.

Queen's College, Belfast,

September, 1861.

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HISTORY
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE.

LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE.

IN tracing, as it is our purpose to do in the present work, the history of English Literature and of the English Language together, we shall be obliged to look at the language principally, or almost exclusively, as we find it employed in the service of the literature. But in its proper nature language is independent of writing. Writing is only a visible representation of language, which in itself consists, not of strokes drawn by the pen, or marks made in any other way, but of sounds uttered by the voice and the organs of articulation. It addresses itself not to the eye but to the ear. There are many languages that have never been written, or visibly represented in any form. Every language that has come to be written has also existed in an unwritten state. No language has been born a written language, any more than it was ever heard tell of that a boy had been born with breeches on. It has been common to talk of language, which is really thought itself, as the dress of thought; with much more truth might writing be called the dress of language. It is an artificial or non-natural addition which language assumes as it grows up and gets civilized, — something that perhaps would not have been needed or thought of in a state of innocence. As matters stand, this contrivance may be necessary for the perfect training of language, for turning it to its full use and developing all its capabilities; but still it is in some sort what his trappings are to the war-horse, — a sign and seal of its conquest and bondage. Letters are the fetters of language, even if they are its golden fetters.

It would be convenient if we had distinctive names for language spoken and language written. In the want of such, perhaps the

best thing that could be done in a precisely scientific treatment of the subject would be to understand the common terms *language* and *speech* when used absolutely, or without qualification, as meaning always only language proper or spoken language, — which is what these words, and the only corresponding ones probably in all languages, do mean etymologically, — and to distinguish written language as language representative. But for ordinary purposes this is not necessary; as in other cases, the context makes the sense clear, notwithstanding the insufficiency of the expression.

What is never to be forgotten, however, is, that, while writing is unquestionably and by universal admission artificial, language proper is essentially a natural product. It is simply to man what neighing is to the horse or lowing to the bullock. A race or community of human beings without a language would be as extraordinary a phenomenon as a race without hands or without heads. Human beings formed as they ordinarily are, there is every reason to believe, could no more grow up, at least in a state of association, without speech than they could without eating or without breathing. It is the natural, the spontaneous, the inevitable result of their organization. Language, that is, not merely the utterance of articulate sounds, but the employment of words for the expression of thought, or what we may call the conversion of thought into words, is probably as much a necessity of the organization, physical and mental, of the human being as it is an impossibility for that of any of the inferior animals.

As for literature, it is not the synonyme even of written language. It is not either coextensive with that, or limited to that. For want of a better term, we call artistic composition in words, or thought artistically so expressed, literature; but, on the one hand, there is abundance of writing, and of printing too, which is not literature in this proper sense, and, on the other, it is not a necessity of artistic composition that it should be in a written form. Literature, therefore, whatever the etymology of the term may seem to indicate, has no essential connection with letters.

And its connection even with language, which is essential, is still no more than such a connection as is created by the fact that literature consists necessarily of words. It is of thought and emotion transformed into or manifested in language that the fabric of literature is woven. But literature is not, like language, a necessary product of our humanity. Man has been nowhere found

without a language: there have been and are many nations and races without a literature. A language is to a people a necessary of existence; a literature is only a luxury. Hence it sometimes happens that the origin of a nation's literature, and the influences which have inspired and moulded it, have been more or less distinct from the sources whence the language has taken its beginning and the inner operating spirit or external circumstances which have modified its shape and character. The literature will generally be acted upon by the language, and the language by the literature; but each may have also had fountains of its own at which the other has not drunk. Thus, for example, it may be affirmed that even those nations of modern Europe which owe their language mostly to the Romans have derived their literature and fine art of every other form, as well as their spirit of philosophical speculation, to a much greater extent from the Greeks. Here too the modern world has inherited from Rome the useful and necessary, from Greece the refined and ornamental;—from the one, language, along with law and government, the art of war offensive and defensive, and the common arts of life; from the other, that which, although not the feeding fruit of the tree or plant, but only its crowning flower, yet alone constitutes true civilization.



THE LANGUAGES OF MODERN EUROPE.

THERE have in every age been some populations which, for one reason or another, have deemed it necessary or expedient to have each more than one language. Both in ancient and in modern times this has been usual with the inhabitants of border districts. Herodotus mentions some northern races of his day who were all familiar with Greek as well as with their own barbaric speech. In some countries, in addition to the common tongue, there has been another known only to the priesthood: in some the men have had a language of their own, which the women were not permitted to speak or to learn. It is perhaps to be regretted that the use of two languages has not been universal in civilized countries; it might probably be almost as easily acquired as the ordinary power of speaking one language. Possibly this may be one of the educational, or rather social, reforms of another era.

Some of the existing European nations or races are distributed under several governments: there are still several political communities, for instance, both of Germans and of Italians, and that although Germany and Italy form each geographically only one region. But in other cases a community occupying only one country, and living under one and the same government, consists of several races each having a language of its own. In this way it happens that, without including what are called dialects, the number of distinct languages in Europe, though it falls short of the number of political communities, exceeds the number of what we can properly call nations. Some languages, again, such as the Welsh, the Irish, and the Basque, are no longer national forms of speech.

The existing European languages may be nearly all comprehended under five divisions. First, there are the Celtic tongues of Ireland and Wales, and their subordinate varieties. Secondly, there are the tongues founded upon the Latin spoken by the old Romans, and thence called the Romance or the Neo-Latin, that is, the New Latin, tongues; of these the principal are the Italian, the Spanish, and the French; the Romaic, or Modern Greek, may be included under the same head. Thirdly, there are what have been variously designated the Germanic, Teutonic, or Gothic tongues, being those which were originally spoken by the various barbarian races by whom the Roman empire of the West was overthrown and overwhelmed (or at the least subjugated, revolutionized, and broken up) in the fifth and sixth centuries. Fourthly, there are the Slavonic tongues, of which the Russian and the Polish are the most distinguished. Fifthly, there are the Tschudic tongues, as they have been denominated, or those spoken by the Finnic and Laponic races. Almost the only language which this enumeration leaves out is that still preserved by the French and Spanish Biscayans, and known as the Basque, or among those who speak it as the Euskarian, which seems to stand alone among the tongues not only of Europe but of the world. It is supposed to be a remnant of the ancient Iberian or original language of Spain.

The order in which the five sets or classes of languages have been named may be regarded as that of their probable introduction into Europe from Asia or the East, or at any rate of their establishment in the localities of which they are now severally in possession. First, apparently, came the Celtic, now driven on to the farthest west; — after which followed in succession the Latin,

the Gothic, the Slavonic, and the Tschudic, pressing upon and urging forward one another like so many waves.

Their present geographical position may also be set forth in few words. Those of the Celtic type are found, as just mentioned, in the West, the Latin generally in the South, the Slavonic in the East, the Tschudic in the North, and the Gothic over the whole of the central region. The chief exception is, that one Tschudic language, the Madgyar, is spoken in Hungary, at the south-eastern extremity of Europe.

The English is essentially or fundamentally a Gothic tongue. That is to say, it is to be classed among those which were spoken by the main division of the barbaric invaders and conquerors of the Roman empire, and which are now spread over the whole of the central portion of the European continent, or what we may call the body of Europe as distinguished from its head and limbs. These Gothic tongues have been subdivided into the High-Germanic, the Low-Germanic, and the Scandinavian; and each of these subordinate groups or clusters has a certain character of its own in addition to the common character by which they are all allied and discriminated from those belonging to quite other stocks. They may be said to present different shades of the same color. And even in their geographical distribution they lie as it were in so many successive ridges; — the High-Germanic languages farthest south; next to them, the Low-Germanic, in the middle; and then, farthest north, the Scandinavian. The High-Germanic may be considered to be principally represented by the modern classic German; the Low-Germanic by the language of the people of Holland, or what we call the Low Dutch, or simply the Dutch; the Scandinavian, by the Swedish, Danish, or Icelandic.

It may be remarked, too, that the gradation of character among the three sets of languages corresponds to their geographical position. That is to say, their resemblance is in proportion to their proximity. Thus, the High-Germanic and the Scandinavian groups are both nearer in character, as well as in position, to the Low-Germanic than they are to each other; and the Low-Germanic tongues, lying in the middle, form as it were a sort of link, or bridge, between the other two extreme groups. Climate, and the relative elevation of the three regions, may have something to do with this. The rough and full-mouthed pronunciation of the High-Germanic tongues, with their broad vowels and guttural combina-

tions, may be the natural product of the bracing mountain-air of the south; the clearer and neater articulation of the Low-Germanic ones, that of the milder influences of the plain; the thinner and sharper sounds of the Scandinavian group, that of the more chill and pinching hyperborean atmosphere in which they have grown up and been formed.

EARLY LATIN LITERATURE IN BRITAIN.

WHEN the South of Britain became a part of the Roman empire, the inhabitants, at least of the towns, seem to have adopted generally the Latin language and applied themselves to the study of the Latin literature. The diffusion among them of this new taste was one of the first means employed by their politic conquerors, as soon as they had fairly established themselves in the island, to rivet their dominion. A more efficacious they could not have devised; and, happily, it was also the best fitted to turn their subjugation into a blessing to the conquered people. Agricola, having spent the first year of his administration in establishing in the province the order and tranquillity which is the first necessity of the social condition, and the indispensable basis of all civilization, did not allow another winter to pass without beginning the work of thus training up the national mind to a Roman character. Tacitus informs us that he took measures for having the sons of the chiefs educated in the liberal arts, exciting them at the same time by professing to prefer the natural genius of the Britons to the studied acquirements of the Gauls; the effect of which was, that those who lately had disdained to use the Roman tongue now became ambitious of excelling in eloquence. In later times, schools were no doubt established and maintained in all the principal towns of Roman Britain, as they were throughout the empire in general. There are still extant many imperial edicts relating to these public seminaries, in which privileges are conferred upon the teachers, and regulations laid down as to the manner in which they were to be appointed, the salaries they were to receive, and the branches of learning they were to teach. But no account of the British schools in particular has been preserved. It would appear, however, that, for some time at least, the older schools of Gaul were resorted to by the

Britons who pursued the study of the law : Juvenal, who lived in the end of the first and the beginning of the second century, speaks, in one of his Satires, of eloquent Gaul instructing the pleaders of Britain. But even already forensic acquirements must have become very general in the latter country and the surrounding regions, if we may place any reliance on the assertion which he makes in the next line, that in Thule itself people now talked of hiring rhetoricians to manage their causes. Thule, whatever may have been the particular island or country to which that name was given, was the most northern land known to the ancients.

It is somewhat remarkable that, while a good many names of natives of Gaul are recorded in connection with the last age of Roman literature, scarcely a British name of that period of any literary reputation has been preserved, if we except a few which figure in the history of the Christian Church. The poet Ausonius, who flourished in the fourth century, makes frequent mention of a contemporary British writer whom he calls Sylvius Bonus, and whose native name is supposed to have been Coil the Good ; but of his works, or even of their titles or subjects, we know nothing. Ausonius, who seems to have entertained strong prejudices against the Britons, speaks of Sylvius with the same animosity as of the rest of his countrymen. Of ecclesiastical writers in Latin belonging to the sixth century, the heresiarch Pelagius and his disciple Celestius, St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, with his friend Bishop Secundinus, and the poet Sedulius, are generally regarded as having been natives of the British islands.

Gildas, our earliest historian of whom anything remains, also wrote in Latin. St. Gildas the Wise, as he is styled, was a son of Caw, Prince of Strathclyde, in the capital of which kingdom, the town of Alcluyd, now Dunbarton, he is supposed to have been born about the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century. Caw was also father of the famous bard Aneurin : one theory, indeed, is that Aneurin and Gildas were the same person. In his youth Gildas is said to have gone over to Ireland, and to have studied in the schools of the old national learning that still flourished there ; and, like his brother Aneurin, (if Aneurin was his brother,) he also commenced his career as a bard, or composer of poetry in his native tongue. He was eventually, however, converted to Christianity, and became a zealous preacher of his new religion. The greater part of his life appears to have been spent

in his native island; but at last he retired to Armorica, or Little Britain, on the Continent, and died there. He is said to lie buried in the Cathedral of Vannes. Gildas is the author of two declamatory effusions, the one commonly known as his History (*De Excidiis Britanniae Liber Querulus*), the other as his Epistle (*De Excidio Britanniae et Britonum Exultatione*), which have been often printed. The latest edition is that contained in the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, 1848; and there is also an edition prepared by Mr. Joseph Stevenson for the English Historical Society, 8vo. London: 1834. A translation of the Epistle was published in 1638; and both works are included in Dr. Giles's *Six Old English Chronicles*, 1848. They consist principally of violent invectives directed against his own countrymen as well as their continental invaders and conquerors; and throw but little light upon the obscure period to which they relate.

Our next historical writer is Nennius, said to have been a monk of Bangor, and to have escaped from the massacre of his brethren in 613. He too, like Gildas, is held to have been of Welsh or Cumbrian origin: his native name is conjectured to have been Ninian. But there is much obscurity and confusion in the accounts we have of Nennius: it appears to be probable that there were at least two early historical writers of that name. The author of a late ingenious work supposes that the true narrative of the ancient Nennius only came down to the invasion of Julius Cæsar, and is now lost, although we probably have an abridgment of it in the *British History* (*Eulogium Britanniae, sive Historia Britonum*), published by Gale in his *Scriptores Quindecim*, Oxon. 1691, which, however, is expressly stated in the preface by the author himself to have been drawn up in 858.¹ A very valuable edition of "The *Historia Britonum*, commonly attributed to Nennius, from a MS. lately discovered in the Library of the Vatican Palace at Rome," was published in 8vo. at London, in 1819, by the Rev. W. Gumm, B.D., rector of Irstead, Norfolk; and his greatly improved text has been chiefly followed in the subsequent edition prepared by Mr. Stevenson for the Historical Society (8vo. London, 1838). The most complete text, however, is probably that given in the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, from a collation

¹ "Britannia after the Romans, being an Attempt to illustrate the Religious and Political Revolutions of that Province in the Fifth and succeeding Centuries [By the late Hon. Algernon Herbert]; vol. i. 4to. 1835, pp. 21, 22."

of no fewer than twenty-six manuscripts. An English version, originally published by Mr. Gunn in his edition of the Vatican text, is reprinted by Dr. Giles in his *Six Old English Chronicles*. But the most curious and important volume connected with Nennius is that published in 1847 by the Irish Archæological Society, containing an Irish version of his History executed in the fourteenth century, with a translation and Notes by Dr. Todd, together with a large mass of Additional Notes, and an Introduction, by the Hon. Algernon Herbert, who has here discussed nearly all the leading questions in the obscure region of early British antiquities with profuse learning, and at the same time, whatever may be thought of some of his conclusions, with an ingenuity and freshness still more rare and valuable.

Of the Latin writers among the Angles and Saxons any of whose works remain, the most ancient is Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury, and afterwards the first bishop of Sherborn, who died in 709. Aldhelm was of the stock of the kings of Wessex, and was initiated in Greek and Latin learning at the school in Kent presided over by the Abbot Adrian, who, like his friend Archbishop Theodore, appears to have been a native of Asia Minor, so that Greek was his native tongue. We are assured by one of his biographers that Aldhelm could write and speak Greek like a native of Greece. He also early associated himself with the monastic brotherhood of Malmesbury, or Meildulfesbyrig, that is, burgh or town of Meildulf, Maildulf, or Meldun, an Irish exile, by whom the monastery had been founded about half a century before the birth of Aldhelm. Among the studies of Aldhelm's after-life are mentioned the Roman law, the rules of Latin prosody, arithmetic, astronomy, and astrology. He is said to have written a tract on the great scientific question of the age, the proper method of computing Easter. Aldhelm's favorite subject, however, would seem to have been the virtue of virginity, in praise of which he wrote first a copious treatise in prose and then a long poem. Both of these performances are preserved, and have been printed. Aldhelm long enjoyed the highest reputation for learning; but his writings are chiefly remarkable for their elaborately unnatural and fantastic rhetoric. His Latin style bears some resemblance to the pedantic English, full of alliteration and all sorts of barbarous quaintness, that was fashionable among our theological writers in the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First.

But the English name of the times before the Norman Conquest that is most distinguished in literature is that of Bēda, or Bede, upon whom the epithet of "The Venerable" has been justly bestowed by the respect and gratitude of posterity. All that we have written by Bede is in the Latin language. He was born some time between the years 672 and 677, at Jarrow, a village near the mouth of the Tyne, in the county of Durham, and was educated in the neighboring monastery of Wearmouth under its successive abbots Benedict and Ceolfrid. He resided here, as he tells us himself, from the age of seven to that of twelve, during which time he applied himself with all diligence, he says, to the meditation of the Scriptures, the observance of regular discipline, and the daily practice of singing in the church. "It was always sweet to me," he adds, "to learn, to teach, and to write." In his nineteenth year he took deacon's orders, and in his thirtieth he was ordained priest. From this date till his death, in 735, he remained in his monastery, giving up his whole time to study and writing. His principal task was the composition of his celebrated Ecclesiastical History of England, which he brought to a close in his fifty-ninth year. It is our chief original authority for the earlier portion even of the civil history of the English nation. But Bede also wrote many other works, among which he has himself enumerated, in the brief account he gives of his life at the end of his Ecclesiastical History, Commentaries on most of the books of the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha, two books of Homilies, a Martyrology, a chronological treatise entitled *On the Six Ages*, a book on orthography, a book on the metrical art, and various other theological and biographical treatises. He likewise composed a book of hymns and another of epigrams. Most of these writings have been preserved, and have been repeatedly printed. The first edition of the Ecclesiastical History is without date, but it probably appeared at Eslingen, in Germany, between 1471 and 1475. Three other continental editions followed before the end of the fifteenth century; and no fewer than nine more in the course of the sixteenth. The first edition printed in England was that of Abraham Wheloc, folio, Cambridge, 1644, accompanied by the old vernacular translation attributed to King Alfred, then also for the first time given to the world through the press; this was followed by the Jesuit Chifflet's edition, 4to. Paris, 1681; then came Dr. Smith's greatly improved edition both of the original Latin and of Alfred's trans-

lation, folio, Cambridge, 1722; and this remained the standard edition till the appearance of that of Mr. Stevenson (containing also the *Minor Historical Works*), under the auspices of the English Historical Society, in 2 vols. 8vo. 1838-41, and of that of Mr. Petrie, in the *Monumenta*, folio, 1848. There are three continental editions of the entire works of Bede, each in eight volumes folio, the latest of which was published at Cologne in 1688. Some additional pieces were published at London in a quarto volume, by Henry Wharton, in 1693; and an edition of the complete works of Bede in the original Latin, accompanied with a translation, was produced by Dr. Giles, in 12 vols. 8vo. London, 1843-44. It appears, from an interesting account of Bede's last hours by his pupil St. Cuthbert, that he was engaged at the time of his death in translating St. John's Gospel into his native tongue. Among his last utterances to his affectionate disciples watching around his bed were some recitations in the English language: "For," says the account, "he was very learned in our songs; and, putting his thoughts into English verse, he spoke it with compunction."

Beside King Alfred's version in the earlier form of the language, there are translations of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* into modern English by Thomas Stapleton (1565), by John Stevens (1723), and by W. Hurst (1814). Stevens's translation, altered and corrected, was reproduced by Dr. Giles in 1840, and again in 1842; and it is given also both in his edition of the complete works of Bede, and, along with his translation of the *Chronicle*, in one of the volumes of Bohn's *Antiquarian Library*, 1849. Finally, a new translation of all Bede's *Historical Works* by the Rev. Joseph Stevenson forms the second part of volume first of the collection entitled *The Church Historians of England*, London, 1853-54.

Another celebrated English churchman of this age was St. Boniface, originally named Winfrith, who was born in Devonshire about the year 680. Boniface is acknowledged as the Apostle of Germany, in which country he founded various monasteries, and was greatly instrumental in the diffusion both of Christianity and of civilization. He eventually became archbishop of Mentz, and was killed in East Friesland by a band of heathens in 755. Many of his letters to the popes, to the English bishops, to the kings of France, and to the kings of the various states of his native country, still remain, and are printed in the collections entitled *Bibliothecæ Patrum*. We may here also mention another contemporary of Bede's, Ed

dus, surnamed Stephanus, the author of a Latin life of Bishop Wilfrid. Bede mentions him as the first person who taught singing in the churches of Northumberland.

THE CELTIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES.

No other branch of what is called the Indo-European family of languages is of higher interest in certain points of view than the Celtic. The various known forms of the Celtic are now regarded as coming under two great divisions, the Gaelic and the Cymric; Ireland being the head seat of the Gaelic (which may therefore also be called Irish), Wales being the head seat of the Cymric (which accordingly is by the English commonly called Welsh). Subordinate varieties of the Irish are the Gaelic of Scotland (often called Erse, or Ersh, that is, Irish), and the Manks, or Isle of Man tongue (now fast dying out): other Cymric dialects are the Cornish (now extinct as a spoken language), and the Armorican, or that still spoken in some parts of Bretagne.

The probability is, that the various races inhabiting the British islands when they first became known to the civilized world were mostly, if not all, of Celtic speech. Even in the parts of the country that were occupied by the Caledonians, the Picts, and the Belgian colonists, the oldest topographical names, the surest evidence that we have in all cases, and in this case almost our only evidence, are all, so far as can be ascertained, Celtic, either of the Cymric or of the Gaelic form. And then there are the great standing facts of the existence to this day of a large Cymric population in South Britain, and of a still larger Gaelic-speaking population in North Britain and in Ireland. No other account of these Celtic populations, or at least of the Welsh, has been attempted to be given, than that, as their own traditions and records are unanimous in asserting, they are the remnants of the races by which the two islands were occupied when they first attracted the attention of the Romans about half a century before the commencement of the Christian era.

And both the Welsh and the Irish possess a large mass of literature in their native tongues, much of which has been printed, in

great part no doubt of comparatively modern production, but claiming some of it, in its substance if not exactly in the very form in which it now presents itself, an antiquity transcending any other native literature of which the country can boast.

Neither the Welsh nor the Irish language and literature, however, can with any propriety be included in a history of English literature and of the English language. The relationship of English to any Celtic tongue is more remote than its relationship not only to German or Icelandic or French or Italian or Latin, but even to Russian or Polish, or to Persian or Sanscrit. Irish and Welsh are opposed in their entire genius and structure to English. It has indeed been sometimes asserted that the Welsh is one of the fountains of the English. One school of last-century philologists maintained that full a third of our existing English was Welsh. No doubt, in the course of the fourteen centuries that the two languages have been spoken alongside of each other in the same country, a considerable number of vocables can hardly fail to have been borrowed by each from the other; the same thing would have happened if it had been a dialect of Chinese that had maintained itself all that time among the Welsh mountains. If, too, as is probable, a portion of the previous Celtic population chose or were suffered to remain even upon that part of the soil which came to be generally occupied after the departure of the Romans by the Angles, Saxons, and other Teutonic or Gothic tribes, the importers of the English language and founders of the English nation, something of Celtic may in that way have intermingled and grown up with the new national speech. But the English language cannot therefore be regarded as of Celtic parentage. The Celtic words, or words of Celtic extraction, that are found in it, be they some hundreds in number, or be they one or two thousands, are still only something foreign. They are products of another seed that have shot up here and there with the proper crop from the imperfectly cleared soil; or they are fragments of another mass which have chanced to come in contact with the body of the language, pressed upon by its weight, or blown upon it by the wind, and so have adhered to it or become imbedded in it. It would perhaps be going farther than known facts warrant us if we were to say that a Gothic tongue and a Celtic tongue are incapable of a true amalgamation. But undoubtedly it would require no common pressure to overcome so strong an opposition of nature and genius. The Gothic tongues, and the

Latin or Romance tongues also, indeed, belong to distinct branches of what is called the Indo-European family; but the Celtic branch, though admitted to be of the same tree, has much more of a character of its own than any of the others. Probably any other two languages of the entire multitude held to be of this general stock would unite more readily than two of which only one was Celtic. It would be nearly the same case with that of the intermixture of an Indo-European with a Semitic language. It has been suggested that the Celtic branch must in all probability have diverged from the common stem at a much earlier date than any of the others. At any rate, in point of fact the English can at most be said to have been powdered or sprinkled with a little Celtic. Whatever may be the number of words which it has adopted, whether from the ancient Britons or from their descendants the Welsh, they are only single scattered words. No considerable department of the English dictionary is Welsh. No stream of words has flowed into the language from that source. The two languages have in no sense met and become one. They have not mingled as two rivers do when they join and fall into the same channel. There has been no chemical combination between the Gothic and the Celtic elements, but only more or less of a mechanical intermixture.

We shall limit ourselves to the briefest notice of the remains of the ancient vernacular literature of Ireland and of Wales. The earliest literature of which any remains still exist in any of the native languages of the British Islands must be held to be the Irish. The Irish were probably possessed of the knowledge of letters from a very remote antiquity. Although the forms of their present alphabetical characters are Roman, and are supposed to have been introduced by St. Patrick in the fifth century, it is very remarkable that the alphabet, in the number and powers of its elements, exactly corresponds with that which Cadmus is recorded to have brought to Greece from Phœnicia. If we may believe the national traditions, and the most ancient existing chronicles, the Irish also possessed a succession of bards from their first settlement in the country, and the names of some of those that are said to have flourished so early as in the first century of our era are still remembered; but the oldest bardic compositions that have been preserved claim to be of the fifth century. Some fragments of metrical productions to which this date is attributed are found in the old annalists, and more abundant specimens occur in the same

records under each of the succeeding centuries. The oldest existing Irish manuscript, however, is believed to be the Psalter of Cashel, a collection of bardic legends, compiled about the end of the ninth century, by Cormac MacCulinan, bishop of Cashel and king of Munster. But the most valuable remains of ancient Irish literature that have come down to us are the various historical records in prose, called the Annals of Tigernach, of the Four Masters, of Ulster, and others. Portions of these were first published in the original, accompanied with Latin translations, in Dr. O'Connor's *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores Veteres*, 4 vols. 4to., Buckingham, 1814–1826; a splendid monument of the munificence of his Grace the late Duke of Buckingham, at whose expense the work was prepared and printed, and from the treasures of whose library its contents were principally derived. Tigernach, the oldest of these Irish annalists, lived in the latter part of the eleventh century; but both his and the other annals profess, and are believed, to have been compiled from authentic records of much greater antiquity. They form undoubtedly a collection of materials in the highest degree precious for the information they supply with regard to the history both of Ireland and of the various early British kingdoms. These Annals differ wholly in character from the metrical legends of Irish history found in the Book of Cashel and in the other later compositions of the bards. They consist of accounts of events related for the most part both with sobriety and precision, and with the careful notation of dates that might be expected from a contemporary and official recorder. They are in all probability, indeed, copies of, or compilations from, public records. A much more satisfactory edition in all respects of the Annals of the Four Masters, which were compiled in the seventeenth century, and of which only the portion ending with the year 1171 is in Dr. O'Connor's work, has since been produced under the auspices of the Irish Archaeological Society, by Dr. O'Donovan, Professor of the Celtic Languages in Queen's College, Belfast. This edition (which was originally brought out in 5 vols. 4to. in 1848–51, and reprinted in 7 vols. 4to. in 1856) contains the Annals from their commencement at the Creation down to their termination in A. D. 1616, and, besides, a translation of the whole in English presents a mass of learned annotation, making it almost a cyclopædia both of Irish history and of Irish topography.¹ To the Archaeological

¹ There is also an English translation of the Annals of the Four Masters, by Owen Connellan, Esq., in one volume, 4to., 1846.

Society, founded in 1840, and now united with the Celtic Society, we owe also many other important publications. And on one which will be perhaps the most important of all that have yet appeared in illustration of the ancient civilization of the country, and to a considerable extent too of the earlier forms of the language, that of the remains of what are called the Brehon Laws, Dr. O'Donovan is understood to have been for some years engaged.

Not of such historic importance, but perhaps still more curious and interesting in other points of view, are the remains we still possess of the early Welsh literature. The Welsh have no national annals to be compared in value with those of the Irish; but some of their Chronicles, fabulous as they evidently are in great part, are undoubtedly of considerable antiquity. It is now almost universally admitted that the famous Latin Chronicle of the Britons, published by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century, is really what it professes to be, at least in the main, a translation from a much older Welsh original. The Laws of Howel Dha, who reigned in South Wales in the early part of the tenth century, have been printed with a Latin translation, by Wotton, in his *Leges Wallicæ*, fol. 1730; and again in the late Record Commission edition of the Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales, by Anewrin Owen, Esq., fol. 1841. They develop a state of society in which many primitive features are strangely mixed up with a general aspect of considerable civilization, and all the order of a well-established political system. Then there are the singular compositions called the Triads, which are enumerations of events or other particulars, bound together in knots of three, by means of some title or general observation, — sometimes, it must be confessed, forced and far-fetched enough, — under which it is conceived that they may all be included. Of the Triads, some are moral, and others historical. The historical are certainly not all ancient; for they contain allusions to events that took place in the reign of our Edward I.; but it appears most probable that the form of composition which they exemplify was long in use; and, if so, the comparatively modern character of some of them does not disprove the antiquity of others. A late writer, who considers them to be a compilation of the thirteenth century, admits that they “reflect, in a small and moderately faithful mirror, various passages of Bardic composition which are lost.”¹ Then there is the collection of

¹ The Hon. Algernon Herbert, in *Britannia after the Romans*, p. xiv.

romantic prose tales known as the Mabinogion, preserved in a MS. of the fourteenth century, which has now been published, with an English translation and notes, by Lady Charlotte Guest, in three sumptuous volumes, 8vo., London, 1838-1850, — one of the most remarkable feats of the female authorship of our day. The most voluminous of the ancient Welsh remains, however, are the poems of the Bards. The authenticity of these compositions had till recently been regarded as having been established, beyond dispute, by various investigators, and especially by Mr. Sharon Turner's elaborate Vindication.¹ But now again the judgment of the most advanced Celtic scholarship seems to be tending the other way.² The poems professing to be the most ancient are those ascribed to the four bards, Aneurin, Taliesin, Llywarch Hen, and Merdhin, or Merlin, the Caledonian, who all appear to have belonged to the sixth century. A few additional pieces have also been preserved of the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, which are printed along with these in the first volume of the Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales, 3 vols. 8vo., Lond. 1801. Much of this early Welsh poetry is in a strangely mystical style; its general spirit being, according to one theory, much more Druidical than Christian. The author of *Britannia after the Romans* has endeavored to show that a partial revival of Druidism was effected in Wales in the sixth century, principally through the efforts of the Bards, whose order had formerly composed so distinguished a part of the Druidical system; and much in the character of this ancient poetry would seem to favor that supposition, which does not, however, rest upon this evidence alone. No existing manuscript of these poems, we may observe, nor any other Welsh manuscript appears to be much older than the twelfth century.

As the forms of the original English alphabetical characters are the same with those of the Irish, it is probable that it was from Ireland the English derived their first knowledge of letters. There

¹ First published separately in 1803, and since, much enlarged, at the end of the third and subsequent editions of his *History of the Anglo-Saxons*. See also the Rev E. Davies's *Celtic Researches*, Mr. Probert's Preface to his edition of *Aneurin*, and Mr. Herbert's *Britannia after the Romans*, pp. i-vi.

² See an important work entitled *Taliesin; or, the Bards and Druids of Britain. A translation of the Remains of the earliest Welsh Bards, and an Examination of the Bardic Mysteries*. By D. W. Nash, Member of the Royal Society of Literature. 8vo., London, 1858.

was certainly, however, very little literature in the country before the arrival of Augustine, in the end of the sixth century. Augustine is supposed to have established schools at Canterbury; and, about a quarter of a century afterwards, Sigebert, king of the East Angles, who had spent part of his early life in France, is stated by Bede to have, upon his coming to the throne, founded an institution for the instruction of the youth of his dominions similar to those he had seen abroad. The schools planted by Augustine at Canterbury were afterwards greatly extended and improved by his successor, Archbishop Theodore, who obtained the see in 668. Theodore and his learned friend Adrian, Bede informs us, delivered instructions to crowds of pupils, not only in divinity, but also in astronomy, medicine, arithmetic, and the Greek and Latin languages. Bede states that some of the scholars of these accomplished foreigners were alive in his time, to whom the Greek and Latin were as familiar as their mother tongue. Schools now began to multiply in other parts, and were generally to be found in all the monasteries and at the bishops' seats. Of these episcopal and monastic schools, that founded by Bishop Benedict in his abbey at Wearmouth, where Bede was educated, and that which Archbishop Egbert established at York, were among the most famous. But others of great reputation at a somewhat later date were superintended by learned teachers from Ireland. One was that of Maildulf at Malmesbury. At Glastonbury, also, it is related in one of the ancient lives of St. Dunstan, some Irish ecclesiastics had settled, the books belonging to whom Dunstan is recorded to have diligently studied. The northern parts of the kingdom, moreover, were indebted for the first light of learning as well as of religion to the missionaries from Iona, which was an Irish foundation.

For some ages Ireland was the chief seat of learning in Christian Europe; and the most distinguished scholars who appeared in other countries were mostly either Irish by birth or had received their education in Irish schools. We are informed by Bede that in his day, the earlier part of the eighth century, it was customary for his English fellow-countrymen of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, to retire for study and devotion to Ireland, where, he adds, they were all hospitably received, and supplied gratuitously with food, with books, and with instruction.¹ The glory of this

¹ Hist. Eccles. iii. 28.

age of Irish scholarship and genius is the celebrated Joannes Scotus, or Erigena, as he is as frequently designated, — either appellative equally proclaiming his true birth-place. He is supposed to have first made his appearance in France about the year 845, and to have remained in that country till his death, which appears to have taken place before 875. Erigena is the author of a translation from the Greek of certain mystical works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, which he executed at the command of his patron, the French king, Charles the Bald; and also of several original treatises on metaphysics and theology. His productions may be taken as furnishing clear and conclusive evidence that the Greek language was taught at this time in the Irish schools. Mr. Turner has given a short account of his principal work, his Dialogue De Divisione Naturæ (On the Division of Nature), which he characterizes as “distinguished for its Aristotelian acuteness and extensive information.” In one place “he takes occasion,” it is observed, “to give concise and able definitions of the seven liberal arts, and to express his opinion on the composition of things. In another part he inserts a very elaborate discussion on arithmetic, which he says he had learnt from his infancy. He also details a curious conversation on the elements of things, on the motions of the heavenly bodies, and other topics of astronomy and physiology. Among these he even gives the means of calculating the diameters of the lunar and solar circles. Besides the fathers Austin, the two Gregories, Chrysostom, Basil, Epiphanius, Origen, Jerome, and Ambrosius, of whose works, with the Platonizing Dionysius and Maximus, he gives large extracts, he also quotes Virgil, Cicero, Aristotle, Pliny, Plato, and Boethius; he details the opinions of Eratosthenes and of Pythagoras on some astronomical topics; he also cites Martianus Capella. His knowledge of Greek appears almost in every page.”¹ The subtle speculations of Erigena have strongly attracted the notice of the most eminent among the modern inquirers into the history of opinion and of civilization; and the German Tenneman agrees with the French Cousin and Guizot in attributing to them a very extraordinary influence on the philosophy of his own and of succeeding times. To his writings and translations, it is thought, may be traced the introduction into the theology and metaphysics of Europe of the later Platonism of the Alexandrian school. It is

¹ Turner, Anglo-Sax. iii. 393.

remarkable, as Mr. Moore has observed, that the learned Mosheim had previously shown the study of the scholastic or Aristotelian philosophy to have been also of Irish origin. "That the Hibernians," says that writer, "who were called Scots in this [the eighth] century, were lovers of learning, and distinguished themselves in these times of ignorance by the culture of the sciences beyond all the other European nations, travelling through the most distant lands, both with a view to improve and to communicate their knowledge, is a fact with which I have been long acquainted; as we see them in the most authentic records of antiquity discharging, with the highest reputation and applause, the function of doctor in France, Germany, and Italy, both during this and the following century. But that these Hibernians were the first teachers of the scholastic theology in Europe, and so early as the eighth century illustrated the doctrines of religion by the principles of philosophy, I learned but lately."¹ And then he adduces the proofs that establish his position.

Among the earlier productions of Irish scholarship may especially be mentioned the two Latin lives of Columba, the founder of the monastery of Iona, and its abbot from 563 till his death in 597; the first by Cuminius, who succeeded as abbot of Iona in 657; the second, which is of much greater length, by Adamnan, who succeeded to the same office in 679. Both these productions, the second of which in particular is highly curious, have been repeatedly printed.²

¹ Translated in Moore's *Ireland*, i. 302.

² The late edition of Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba* (in which nearly the whole of the other by Cuminius is incorporated), prepared for the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society by Dr. Reeves, 4to, Dublin, 1857, while its typography, and the maps and other plans by which it is adorned, make it one of the handsomest productions of the modern press, is illustrated, in an abundant apparatus of notes and explanatory matter of all kinds, with an extent of research and copiousness of learning which place it on a level with whatever has been recently done best among us in this department of scholarship, if, indeed, any other work has appeared for many years on the subject of the early ecclesiastical history of these islands that deserves to be compared with this admirable edition of a most curious account of the great Scottish missionary of the sixth century, compiled by a writer of the seventh, and preserved to our day in a manuscript of the eighth.

DECAY OF THE EARLIEST ENGLISH SCHOLARSHIP.

It should seem not to be altogether correct to attribute the decline and extinction of the earliest literary civilization of the Angles and Saxons wholly to the Danish invasions. The Northmen did not make their appearance till towards the close of the eighth century, nor did their ravages occasion any considerable public alarm till long after the commencement of the ninth; but for a whole century preceding this date, learning in England appears to have been falling into decay. Bede, who died in 735, exactly ninety-seven years before that landing of the Danes in the Isle of Sheppey, in the reign of Egbert, which was followed by incessant attacks of a similar kind, until the fierce marauders at last won for themselves a settlement in the country, is the last name eminent for scholarship that occurs in this portion of the English annals. The historian William of Malmesbury, indeed, affirms that the death of Bede was fatal to learning in England, and especially to history; "insomuch that it may be said," he adds, writing in the early part of the twelfth century, "that almost all knowledge of past events was buried in the same grave with him, and hath continued in that condition even to our times." "There was not so much as one Englishman," Malmesbury declares, "left behind Bede, who emulated the glory which he had acquired by his studies, imitated his example, or pursued the path to knowledge which he had pointed out. A few, indeed, of his successors were good men, and not unlearned, but they generally spent their lives in an inglorious silence; while the far greater number sunk into sloth and ignorance, until by degrees the love of learning was quite extinguished in this island for a long time."

The devastations of the Danes completed what had probably been begun by the dissensions and confusion that attended the breaking up of the original political system established by the Angles and Saxons, and perhaps also by the natural decay of the national spirit among a race long habituated to a stirring and adventurous life, and now left in undisturbed ease and quiet before the spirit of a new and more intellectual activity had been sufficiently diffused among them. Nearly all the monasteries and the schools connected with them throughout the land were either actually laid in ashes by the northern invaders, or were

deserted in the general terror and distraction occasioned by their attacks. When Alfred was a young man, about the middle of the ninth century, he could find no masters to instruct him in any of the higher branches of learning: there were at that time, according to his biographer Asser,¹ few or none among the West Saxons

¹ The Life of King Alfred, professing to have been written by his contemporary and friend Asser, bishop of Sherborn, afterwards Salisbury, one of the two sees (Winchester being the other) into which the original bishopric of Wessex was divided in the beginning of the eighth century, is in Latin, and was first printed, in folio, at London in 1574, along with Alfred's Preface to his translation of Pope Gregory's Pastoral, at the end of Archbishop Parker's edition of the English and Norman Histories of Thomas Walsingham. This first edition of Asser is remarkable as exhibiting the Latin text in what are called Saxon characters. The second edition is in Camden's collection (*Anglica, Normannica, &c.*), fol. Frankfort, 1602; the third in Gale's *Scriptores Quindecim*, fol. Oxford, 1691. It was first published separately by Francis Wise, in 8vo., at Oxford, in 1722. And a fifth edition, being the latest, is given in the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, 1848. Meanwhile Mr. Thomas Wright, having previously intimated his suspicions in a communication to the Society of Antiquaries, published in their *Transactions*, had, in 1842, in the first volume of his *Biographia Britannica Literaria*, pp. 408-412, stated in full certain reasons which led him to believe that this Life of King Alfred could not have been written before the end of the tenth century, and that "it was probably the work of a monk who, with no great knowledge of history, collected some of the numerous traditions relating to King Alfred which were then current, and joined them with the legends in the life of St. Neot and the historical entries in the Saxon Chronicle; and, to give authenticity to his work, published it under the name of Asser." Mr. Wright, however, does not put forward his objections as depriving the biography of all historical value; "it contains," he admits, "interesting traditions relating to Alfred's life and character, many of which were without doubt true in substance." And, since Mr. Wright's work appeared, the authenticity of the biography has been maintained by the late Dr. Lingard, in an elaborate investigation inserted in the second edition of his *History and Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, 1845, vol. ii. pp. 424-428. The reader may further be referred to what is said on this subject by Mr. Hardy in his Preface to the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, pp. 77-81; and by Dr. Pauli in the Introduction to his *Life of Alfred the Great* (English translation by Thorpe), 1853, pp. 3-11. Mr. Hardy holds that the inconsistencies which are to be found in Asser's narrative as we now have it are explained by the fact "that many passages of the printed text formed no part of Asser's work, but were the insertions of Archbishop Parker," from a spurious work which he found bound up with the MS., still in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, from which he printed his edition. Dr. Pauli, after referring to the continued confidence of the best English and German writers, such as Lappenberg, Pertz, and Kemble, in the general authenticity of the work, adds that he cannot himself altogether avoid considering it in the same light; and, having pointed out various passages which may be suspected, he concludes by stating that he will, nevertheless, frequently refer to it in the course of his own narrative; and, in fact, it is one of his leading authorities. "Lingard," he observes, "brings forward good reasons for differing with Wright." Dr. Giles has given an English translation of Asser in his *Six Old English Chronicles*, 1848.

Along with Asser's work may be noticed the chronicle of Ethelwerd, which in a

who had any scholarship, or could so much as read with propriety and ease. The reading of the Latin language is probably what is here alluded to. Alfred has himself stated, in the preface to his translation of Gregory's *Pastorale*, that, though many of the English at his accession could read their native language well enough, the knowledge of the Latin tongue was so much decayed, that there were very few to the south of the Humber who understood the common prayers of the church, or were capable of translating a single sentence of Latin into English; and to the south of the Thames he could not recollect that there was one possessed of this very moderate amount of learning. Contrasting this lamentable state of things with the better days that had gone before, he exclaims, "I wish thee to know that it comes very often into my mind, what wise men there were in England, both laymen and ecclesiastics, and how happy those times were to England! The sacred profession was diligent both to teach and to learn. Men from abroad sought wisdom and learning in this country, though we must now go out of it to obtain knowledge, if we should wish to have it."

It was not till he was nearly forty years of age that Alfred himself commenced his study of the Latin language. Before this, however, and as soon as he had rescued his dominions from the hands of the Danes, and reduced these foreign disturbers to subjection, he had exerted himself with his characteristic activity in bringing about the restoration of letters as well as of peace and order. He had invited to his court all the most learned men he could discover anywhere in his native land, and had even brought over instructors for himself and his people from other countries. Werfrith, the bishop of Worcester; Ethelstan and Werwulf, two Mercian priests; and Plegmund, also a Mercian, who afterwards became archbishop of Canterbury, were some of the English of whose superior acquirements he thus took advan-

few pages of affected, and, in some places, nearly or altogether unintelligible, Latin, gives a summary of the course of human affairs from the creation to the year 975. Ethelwerd—or, as he styles himself, *Patricius Consul Fabius Quæstor Ethelwerdus*—appears from his Prologue, or dedication, to have been a member of the royal family, a descendant of King Alfred. His work is little more than a dry abstract from the national Chronicle. It is contained in Savile's Collection, 1596, and also in the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*. There is an English translation of it in Dr. Giles's *Six Old English Chronicles*, Bohn, 1848, and another by Mr. Stevenson in vol. ii. part 2d of the *Church Historians of England*, 1854.

tage. Asser he brought from the western extremity of Wales. Grimbold he obtained from France, having sent an embassy of bishops, presbyters, deacons, and religious laymen, bearing valuable presents to his ecclesiastical superior Fulco, the archbishop of Rheims, to ask permission for the great scholar to be allowed to come to reside in England. And so in other instances, like the bee, looking everywhere for honey, to quote the similitude of his biographer, this admirable prince sought abroad in all directions for the treasure which his own kingdom did not afford.

His labors in translating the various works that have been mentioned above from the Latin, after he had acquired that language, he seems himself to have been half inclined to regard as to be justified only by the low state into which all learning had fallen among his countrymen in his time, and as likely perhaps to be rather of disservice than otherwise to the cause of real scholarship. Reflecting on the erudition which had existed in the country at a former period, and which had made those volumes in the learned languages useful that now lay unopened, "I wondered greatly," he says in the Preface to his translation of the Pastoral, "that of those good wise men who were formerly in our nation, and who had all learned fully these books, none would translate any part into their own language; but I soon answered myself, and said, they never thought that men could be so reckless, and that learning would be so fallen. They intentionally omitted it, and wished that there should be more wisdom in the land, by many languages being known." He then called to recollection, however, what benefit had been derived by all nations from the translation of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, first into Latin, and then into the various modern tongues; and, "therefore," he concludes, "I think it better, if you think so, (he is addressing Wulfsig, the bishop of London,) that we also translate some books, the most necessary for all men to know, that we all may know them; and we may do this, with God's help, very easily, if we have peace; so that all the youth that are now in England, who are freemen, and possess sufficient wealth, may for a time apply to no other task till they first well know how to read English. Let those learn Latin afterwards, who will know more, and advance to a higher condition." In this wise and benevolent spirit he acted. The old writers seem to state that, besides the transla-

tions that have come down to us, he executed many others that are now lost.

It is probable, though there is no sufficient authority for the statement, that Alfred reëstablished many of the old monastic and episcopal schools in the various parts of the kingdom. Asser expressly mentions that he founded a seminary for the sons of the nobility, to the support of which he devoted no less than an eighth part of his whole revenue. Hither even some noblemen repaired who had far outgrown their youth, but nevertheless had scarcely or not at all begun their acquaintance with books. In another place Asser speaks of this school, to which Alfred is stated to have sent his own son Ethelward, as being attended not only by the sons of almost all the nobility of the realm, but also by many of the inferior classes. It was provided with several masters. A notion that has been eagerly maintained by some antiquaries is, that this seminary, instituted by Alfred, is to be considered as the foundation of the University of Oxford.

Up to this time absolute illiteracy seems to have been common even among the highest classes of the English. We have just seen that, when Alfred established his schools, they were as much needed for the nobility who had reached an advanced or mature age as for their children; and, indeed, the scheme of instruction seems to have been intended from the first to embrace the former as well as the latter, for, according to Asser's account, every person of rank or substance who, either from age or want of capacity, was unable to learn to read himself, was compelled to send to school either his son or a kinsman, or, if he had neither, a servant, that he might at least be read to by some one. The royal charters, instead of the names of the kings, sometimes exhibit their marks, used, as it is frankly explained, in consequence of their ignorance of letters.

The measures begun by Alfred for effecting the literary civilization of his subjects were probably pursued under his successors; but the period of the next three quarters of a century, notwithstanding some short intervals of repose, was on the whole too troubled to admit of much attention being given to the carrying out of his plans, or even, it may be apprehended, the maintenance of what he had set up. Dunstan, indeed, during his administration, appears to have exerted himself with zeal in enforcing a higher standard of learning as well as of morals, or of asceticism, among

the clergy. But the renewal of the Danish wars, after the accession of Æthelred, and the state of misery and confusion in which the country was kept from this cause till its conquest by Canute, nearly forty years after, must have again laid in ruins the greater part of its literary as well as ecclesiastical establishments. The concluding portion of the tenth century was thus, probably, a time of as deep intellectual darkness in England as it was throughout most of the rest of Europe. Under Canute, however, who was a wise as well as a powerful sovereign, the schools no doubt rose again and flourished. We have the testimony, so far as it is to be relied upon, of the history attributed to Ingulphus, which professes to be written immediately after the Norman conquest, and the boyhood of the author of which is made to coincide with the early part of the reign of the Confessor, that at that time seminaries of the higher as well as of elementary learning existed in England. Ingulphus, according to this account, having been born in the city of London, was first sent to school at Westminster; and from Westminster he proceeded to Oxford, where he studied the Aristotelian philosophy and the rhetorical writings of Cicero. This is the earliest express mention of the University of Oxford, if a passage in Asser's work in which the name occurs be, as is generally supposed, spurious, and if the History passing under his name was really written by Ingulphus.

The studies that were cultivated in those ages were few in number and of very limited scope. Alcuin, in a letter to his patron Charlemagne, has enumerated, in the fantastic rhetoric of the period, the subjects in which he instructed his pupils in the school of St. Martin at Paris. "To some," says he, "I administer the honey of the sacred writings; others I try to inebriate with the wine of the ancient classics. I begin the nourishment of some with the apples of grammatical subtlety. I strive to illuminate many by the arrangement of the stars, as from the painted roof of a lofty palace." In plain language, his instructions embraced grammar, the Greek and Latin languages, astronomy, and theology. In the poem in which he gives an account of his own education at York, the same writer informs us that the studies there pursued comprehended, besides grammar, rhetoric, and poetry, "the harmony of the sky, the labor of the sun and moon, the five zones, the seven wandering planets; the laws, risings, and settings of the stars, and the ærial motions of the sea; earthquakes; the nature of man,

cattle, birds, and wild beasts, with their various kinds and forms; and the sacred Scriptures."

This poem of Alcuin's is especially interesting for the account it gives us of the contents of the library collected by Archbishop Egbert at York, the benefit of which Alcuin had enjoyed in his early years, and which he seems to speak of in his letter to Charlemagne, already quoted, as far superior to any collection then existing in France. He proposes that some of his pupils should be sent to York to make copies of the manuscripts there for the imperial library at Tours. Among them, he says, were the works of Jerome, Hilary, Ambrose, Austin, Athanasius, Orosius, the Popes Gregory and Leo, Basil, Fulgentius, Cassiodorus, John Chrysostom, Athelmus, Bede, Victorinus, Boethius; the ancient historical writers, as he calls them, Pompeius (most probable Justin, the epitomizer of the lost Trogius Pompeius,) and Pliny; Aristotle, Cicero; the later poets Sedulius and Juvencus; Alcuin himself, Clement, Prosper, Paulinus, Arator, Fortunatus, and Lactantius (writers of various kinds, evidently thus jumbled together to suit the exigencies of the verse); Virgil, Statius, Lucan; the author of the *Ars Grammaticæ*; the grammarians and scholiasts, Probus, Phocas, Donatus, Priscian, and Servius; Eutychius; Pompeius (probably Festus) and Commenianus; besides, he adds, many more whom it would be tedious to enumerate. This was certainly a very extraordinary amount of literary treasure to be amassed in one place, and by one man, at a period when books were everywhere so scarce and necessarily bore so high a price. "Towards the close of the seventh century," says Wharton, in his *Dissertation on the Introduction of Learning into England*, "even in the Papal library at Rome, the number of books were so inconsiderable that Pope St. Martin requested Sanctamand, bishop of Maestricht, if possible, to supply this defect from the remotest parts of Germany. In the year 855, Lupus, abbot of Ferrières in France, sent two of his monks to Pope Benedict the Third, to beg a copy of Cicero *De Oratore* and Quintilian's *Institutes*, and some other books: 'for,' says the abbot, 'although we have part of these books, yet there is no whole or complete copy of them in all France.' Albert, abbot of Gemblours, who with incredible labor and immense expense had collected a hundred volumes on theological and fifty on profane subjects, imagined he had formed a splendid library. About the year 790 Charlemagne granted an unlimited right of hunting to the

abbot and monks of Sithiu, for making their gloves and girdles of the skins of the deer they killed, and covers for their books. We may imagine that these religionists were more fond of hunting than of reading. It is certain that they were obliged to hunt before they could read; and, at least, it is probable that under these circumstances, and of such materials, they did not manufacture many volumes. At the beginning of the tenth century books were so scarce in Spain, that one and the same copy of the Bible, St. Jerome's Epistles, and some volumes of ecclesiastical offices and martyrologies often served several different monasteries."¹ To these instances we may add what Bede relates in his "History of the Abbots of Wearmouth," in which monastery Benedict Biscop, the founder, had, about the end of the seventh century, collected a considerable library, at the cost not only of much money, but also of no little personal exertion, having made five journeys to Rome for the purchase of books, relics, and other furniture and decorations for the establishment. Bede records that Benedict sold one of his volumes, a work on cosmography, to his sovereign, Alfred of Northumberland, for eight hides of land.



THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

THE earliest historically known fact with regard to the English language is, that it was the language generally, if not universally, spoken by the barbaric invaders, apparently for the greater part of one race or blood, though of different tribes, who, upon the breaking up of the empire of the West in the fifth century, came over in successive throngs from the opposite continent, and, after a protracted struggle, acquired the possession and dominion of the principal portion of the province of Britain. They are stated to have consisted chiefly of Angles and Saxons. But, although it is usual to designate them rather by the general denomination of the Saxons, or Anglo-Saxons, it is probable that the Saxons were in reality only a section of the Angles. The *Angles*, of which term our modern *English* is only another form, appears to have been always recognized among themselves as the proper national appella-

¹ History of English Poetry, vol. i. p. cviii. (edit. of 1824).

tion. They both concurred, Angles and Saxons alike, after their establishment in Britain, in calling their common country *Angleland*, or *England*, and their common language *English*, — that is, the language of the Angles, — as there can be little doubt it had been called from the time when it first became known as a distinct form of human speech.

This English language, since become so famous, is ordinarily regarded as belonging to the Low-Germanic, or middle, group of the Gothic tongues. That is to say, it is classed with the Dutch and the Flemish, and the dialects generally of the more northern and low-lying part of what was anciently called Germany, under which name were included the countries that we call Holland and the Netherlands, as well as that to which it is now more especially confined. It appears to have been from this middle region, lying directly opposite to Britain, that the Angles and Saxons and other tribes by whom the English language was brought over to that island chiefly came. At any rate, they certainly did not come from the more elevated region of Southern Germany. Nor does the language present the distinguishing characteristics of a High-Germanic tongue. What is now called the German language, therefore, though of the same Gothic stock, belongs to a different branch from our own. We are only distantly related to the Germans proper, or the race among whom the language and literature now known as the German have originated and grown up. We are, at least in respect of language, more nearly akin to the Dutch and the Flemings than we are to the Germans. It may even be doubted if the English language ought not to be regarded as having more of a Scandinavian than of a purely Germanic character, — as, in other words, more nearly resembling the Danish or Swedish than the modern German. The invading bands by whom it was originally brought over to Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries were in all probability drawn in great part from the Scandinavian countries. At a later date, too, the population of England was directly recruited from Denmark, and the other regions around the Baltic to a large extent. From about the middle of the ninth century the population of all the eastern and northern parts of the country was as much Danish as English. And soon after the beginning of the eleventh century the sovereignty was acquired by the Danes.

The English language, although reckoned among modern lan-

guages, is already of respectable antiquity. In one sense, indeed, all languages may be held to be equally ancient; for we can in no case get at the beginning of a language, any more than we can get at the beginning of a lineage. Each is merely the continuation of a preceding one, from which it cannot be separated in any case except by a purely arbitrary mark of distinction. Take two portions of the line at some distance from one another, and they may be very unlike; yet the change which has transformed the one into the other, or produced the one out of the other, has been, even when most active, so gradual, so perfectly free always from anything that can be called a convulsion or catastrophe, so merely a process of growth, however varying in its rate of rapidity, that there is no precise point at which it can be said to have begun. This is undoubtedly the way in which all languages have come into existence; they have all thus grown out of older forms of speech; none of them have been manufactured or invented. It would seem that human skill could as soon invent a tree as invent a language. The one as well as the other is essentially a natural production.

But, taking a particular language to mean what has always borne the same name, or been spoken by the same nation or race, which is the common or conventional understanding of the matter, the English may claim to be older than the great majority of the tongues now in use throughout Europe. The Basque, perhaps, and the various Celtic dialects might take precedence of it; but hardly any others. No one of the still spoken Germanic or Scandinavian languages could make out a distinct proof of its continuous existence from an equally early date. And the Romance tongues, the Italian, the Spanish, the French, are all, recognized as such, confessedly of much later origin.

The English language is recorded to have been known by that name, and to have been the national speech of the same race, at least since the middle of the fifth century. It was then, as we have seen, that the first settlers by whom it was spoken established themselves in the country of which their descendants have ever since retained possession. Call them either Angles, (that is, English) or Saxons, it makes no difference; it is clear that, whether or no the several divisions of the invaders were all of one blood, all branches of a common stock, they spoke all substantially the same language, the proper name of which, as has been stated, was the *Anglish*, or *English*, as *England*, or *Angle-land* (the land of the

Angles), was the name which the country received from its new occupants. And these names of *England* and *English* the country and the language have each retained ever since.

Nor can it be questioned that the same tongue was spoken by the same race, or races, long before their settlement in Britain. The Angles figure as one of the nations occupying the forest land of Germany in the picture of that country sketched by Tacitus in the first century of our era.

The most distinct and satisfactory record, however, of a language is afforded by what exists of it in a written form. In applying this test or measure of antiquity, the reasonable rule would seem to be, that, wherever we have the clear beginning or end of a distinct body or continuous series of literary remains, there we have the beginning or end of a language. Thus, of what is called the Mœsogothic we have no written remains of later date than the fourth century (or, at any rate, than the sixth, if we reckon from what is probably the true age of the transcripts which we actually possess); and accordingly we hold the Mœsogothic to be a language which has passed away and perished, notwithstanding that there may be some other language or languages still existing of which there is good reason to look upon it as having been the progenitor. But of the English language we have a continuous succession of written remains since the seventh century at least; that is to say, we have an array of specimens of it from that date such as that no two of them standing next to one another in the order of time could possibly be pronounced to belong to different languages, but only at most to two successive stages of the same language. They afford us a record or representation of the language in which there is no gap. This cannot be said of any other existing European tongue for nearly so great a length of time, unless we may except the two principal Celtic tongues, the Welsh and the Irish.

The movement of the language, however, during this extended existence, has been immense. No language ever ceases to move until it becomes what is called dead, which term, although commonly understood to mean merely that the language has ceased to be spoken, really signifies, here as elsewhere, that the life is gone out of it, which is indeed the unfailing accompaniment of its ceasing to be used as an oral medium of communication. It cannot grow after that, even if it should still continue to a certain extent to be used in writing, as has been the case with the Sanscrit in the East

and the Latin in the West,—except perhaps as the hair and the nails are said sometimes to grow after the animal body is dead. It is only speaking that keeps a language alive; writing alone will not do it. That has no more than a conservative function and effect; the progressive power, the element of fermentation and change, in a language is its vocal utterance.

We shall find that the English language, moving now faster, now slower, throughout the twelve or thirteen centuries over which our knowledge of it extends, although it has never been all at once or suddenly converted from one form into another,—which is what the nature of human speech forbids,—has yet within that space undergone at least *two* complete revolutions, or, in other words, presents itself to us in *three* distinct forms.



ORIGINAL ENGLISH:—

COMMONLY CALLED *SAXON*, OR *ANGLO-SAXON*.

THE English which the Angles and Saxons brought over with them from the Continent, when they came and took possession of the greater part of South Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries, differed from the English that we now speak and write in two important respects. It was an unmixed language; and it was what is called a synthetic, in contradistinction to an analytic, language. Its vocables were all of one stock or lineage; and it expressed the relations of nouns and verbs, not by separate words, called auxiliaries and particles, but by terminational or other modifications,—that is, by proper conjugation and declension,—as our present English still does when it says, *I loved* instead of *I did love*, or *The King's throne* instead of *The throne of the King*. These two characteristics are what constitute it a distinct form, or stage, of the language:—its synthetic or generally inflected grammatical structure, and its homogeneous vocabulary.

As a subject of philological study the importance of this earliest known form of the English language cannot be over-estimated; and much of what we possess written in it is also of great value for the matter. But the essential element of a literature is not matter, but manner. Here too, as in everything else, the soul of the

artistic is form ; — beauty of form. Now of that what has come down to us written in this primitive English is, at least for us of the present day, wholly or all but wholly destitute.

There is much writing in forms of human speech now extinct, or no longer in oral use, which is still intelligible to us in a certain sort, but in a certain sort only. It speaks to us as anything that is dead can speak to us, and no otherwise. We can decipher it, rather than read it. We make it out as it were merely by the touch, getting some such notion of it as a blind man might get of a piece of sculpture by passing his hand over it. This, for instance, to take an extreme case, is the position in which we stand in reference to the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the ancient monuments of Egypt. They can be read as the multiplication table can be read. But that is all. There may be nothing more in them than there is in the multiplication table ; but if there were, we could not get at it. M. Champollion, indeed, in his enthusiasm, saw a vision of an amatory or bacchanalian song laughing under the venerable veil of one of them ; but it is plain that this must have been an illusion. A mummy from one of the neighboring tombs, embalmed some three or four thousand years ago, might almost as soon be expected to give forth a living voice.

Even the ancient Assyrian inscriptions, which are in alphabetical characters, will certainly never be made to render up to us more than the dead matters of fact that may be wrapt up in them. If there be any grace in the manner in which the facts are related, any beauty of style in the narrative, it has perished irretrievably. But this is what also appears to happen, in a greater or less degree, in the case even of a language the vocabulary of which we have completely in our possession, and which we are therefore quite able to interpret so far as regards the substance of anything written in it, whenever it has for some time — for a single generation, it may be — ceased both to be spoken and to be written. Something is thus lost, which seems to be irrecoverable. The two great classic tongues, it is to be observed, the old Greek and Latin, although they have both long passed out of popular use, have always continued to be not only studied and read by all cultivated minds throughout Europe, but to be also extensively employed by the learned, at least in writing. And this has proved enough to maintain the modern world in what may be called a living acquaintance with them, — such an acquaintance as we have with a person we

have conversed with, or a place where we have actually been, as distinguished from our dimmer conception of persons and places known to us only by description. The ancient classic literature charms us as well as informs us. It addresses itself to the imagination, and to our sense of the beautiful, as well as to the understanding. It has shape and color and voice for us, as well as mere substance. Every word, and every collocation of words, carries with it a peculiar meaning, or effect, which is still appreciated. The whole, in short, is felt and enjoyed, not simply interpreted. But a language, which has passed from what we may call its natural condition of true and full vitality as a national speech cannot, apparently, be thus far preserved, with something of the pulse of life still beating in it, merely by such a knowledge of it being kept up as enables us to read and translate it. Still less can a language, the very reading of which has been for a time suspended, and consequently all knowledge whatever of it forgotten, ever be restored to even the appearance of life. It has become a fossil, and cannot be resuscitated, but only dug up. A thousand facts warrant us in saying that languages, and even words, are subject to decay and dissolution as well as the human beings of whose combined mental and physical organizations they are the mysterious product; and that, once really dead, nothing can reanimate their dust or reclothe their dry bones with flesh.

The original form of the English language is in this state. It is intelligible, but that is all. What is written in it can in a certain sense be read, but not so as to bring out from the most elaborate compositions in it any artistic element, except of the most dubious and unsatisfactory kind. Either such an element is not present in any considerable degree, or the language is not now intimately enough known for any one to be able to detect it. If it is not literally dumb, its voice has for us of the present day entirely lost its music. Even of the system of measure and arrangement according to which it is ordinarily disposed for the purposes of poetry we have no proper apprehension or feeling. Certain mechanical principles or rules may have been discovered in obedience to which the versification appears to be constructed; but the verse as verse remains not the less for our ears and hearts wholly voiceless. When it can be distinguished from prose at all it is only by certain marks or characteristics which may indeed be perceived by the eye, or counted on the fingers, but which have no expression that excites

in us any mental emotion. It is little better than if the composition merely had the words "This is verse" written over it or under it.

In respect of everything else appertaining to the soul of the language, our understanding of it is about equally imperfect. The consequence is, that, although it can be translated, it cannot be written. The late Mr. Conybeare, indeed, has left us a few specimens of verse in it of his own composition; but his attempts are of the slightest character, and, unadventurous as they are, nobody can undertake to say, except as to palpable points of right or wrong in grammar, whether they are well or ill done. The language, though so far in our hands as to admit of being analyzed in grammars and packed up in dictionaries, is not recoverable in such a degree as to make it possible to pronounce with certainty whether anything written in it is artistically good or bad. As for learning to speak it, that is a thing as little dreamt of as learning to speak the language of Swift's Houyhnhnms.

When the study of this original form of the national speech was revived in England in the middle of the sixteenth century, it had been for wellnigh four hundred years not only what is commonly called a dead language, but a buried and an utterly forgotten one. It may be questioned if at least for three preceding centuries any one had been able to read it. It was first recurred to as a theological weapon. Much in the same manner as the Reformers generally were drawn to the study of the Greek language in maintaining the accordance of their doctrines with those of the New Testament and of the first ages of Christianity, the English Reformers turned to the oldest writings in the vernacular tongue for evidence of the comparatively unromanized condition of the early English church. In the next age history and law began to receive illustration from the same source. It was not till a considerably later date that the recovered language came to be studied with much of a special view to its literary and philological interest. And it is only within the present century that it has either attracted any attention in other countries, or been investigated on what are now held to be sound principles. The specially theological period of its cultivation may be regarded as extending over the latter half of the sixteenth century, the legal and historical period over the whole of the seventeenth, the philological of the old school over the whole of the eighteenth, and the philological of the modern school over the nineteenth, so far as it has gone.

If the English language as it was written a thousand years ago had been left to itself, and no other action from without had interfered with that of its spontaneous growth or inherent principles of change and development, it might not have remained so stationary as some more highly-cultivated languages have done throughout an equal space of time, but its form in the nineteenth century would in all probability have been only a comparatively slight modification of what it was in the ninth. It would have been essentially the same language. As the case stands, the English of the ninth century is one language, and the English of the nineteenth century another. They differ at least as much as the Italian differs from the Latin, or as English differs from German. The most familiar acquaintance with the one leaves the other unintelligible. So much is this so that it has long been customary to distinguish them by different names, and to call the original form of the national speech Saxon, or Anglo-Saxon, as if it were not English at all. If the notion be that the dialect in which most of the ancient English that has come down to us is written is that which was in use among the specially Saxon part of the population, that would have been better indicated by calling it, not Anglo-Saxon, but Saxon English. But even such a designation would be inapplicable to those specimens of the language in which there is unquestionably nothing whatever that is specially Saxon, and which recent investigations have shown to be not inconsiderable in amount, as well as of high philological importance; and it would also leave the limitation of the name *English* to the more modern form of the language without any warrant in the facts of the case. Objectionable, however, as may be the common nomenclature, it is still indisputable that we have here, for all practicable purposes, not one language, but two languages. The one may have grown out of the other, and no doubt has done so at least in part or in the main; but in part also the modern language is of quite a distinct stock from the ancient. Of English Literature, therefore, and the English Language, commonly so called, the language and literature of the Angles and Saxons before the twelfth century make no proper part. The history of the latter can only with propriety be glanced at as introductory to that of the former.

The mass of writing that has been preserved in this earlier English is very considerable, but only a small portion of it can be regarded as coming under the head of literature. Even of what

has been printed, much, and that not the least interesting and valuable part, has no claim to that title; for example, the numerous mere documents that are given by Hickes in his most learned *Thesaurus*, and those that compose the six volumes of Mr. Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticus*. Most of what is of much value or curiosity in the language has now probably been committed to the press, — much of it by scholars still living or only recently deceased, both in our own and other countries. The names of Conybeare, Ingram, Sharon Turner, Price, Kemble, Garnett, Miss Gurney, Thorpe, Guest, Bosworth, Fox, Goodwin, Langley, Norman, Offer, Cardale, Vernon, Barnes, Wright, Barrow, Stevenson, Thorkelin, Rask, Jacob Grimm, Leo, Schmidt, Etmüller, Lappenberg, K. W. Bouterwek, to mention no others, may illustrate the wide diffusion of the interest that in our day has been and still continues to be taken in this field of study.

The epic of *Beowulf* is the most considerable poetical composition of which this primitive English literature has to boast. It exists only in a single manuscript, of the tenth century, one of those in the Cottonian Collection, from which it was first published, with a Latin translation, at Copenhagen, in 1816, by Dr. G. J. Thorkelin, whose transcript had been made so early as in 1786. A far superior text, however, accompanied by an English translation, notes, and a glossary, was afterwards produced by Mr. Kemble, in two volumes, the first published in 1833 (and again in 1835), the second in 1837. Copious extracts from *Beowulf* had previously been given by Mr. Sharon Turner in his *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 1803; and the English reader will find a complete analysis of the poem, with versions of many passages in blank verse, in Professor Conybeare's *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, published in 1826 by his brother, the Rev. W. D. Conybeare. There is likewise an English translation of the whole in rhyme by Professor A. Diedrich Wackerbarth, published in 1849. The only other long work in verse that has been preserved is what is sometimes described as a metrical version of Scripture history by a poet of the name of *Cædmon*, recorded by Bede as having lived in the seventh century, but which is in fact a collection of separate Scriptural narratives, mostly paraphrased from the book of Genesis, possibly by various writers, and certainly of much later date. It was first published from the only known manuscript, which is of the tenth century, and is now in the Bodleian Library, by the

learned Francis Junius, at Amsterdam, in 1655 : but a much more commodious and in every way superior edition, with an English translation, was brought out at London in 1832, under the auspices of the Society of Antiquaries, by Mr. Thorpe. Another, by K. W. Bouterwek, in two volumes octavo, was published at Elberfeld in 1847 and 1848. Some remarkable coincidences have often been noticed between Cædmon's treatment of his first subject, that of the Fall, and the manner in which it is treated by Milton, who may very possibly, it has been thought, have looked into his predecessor's performance, unless we should rather suppose that a common ancient source may have supplied some hints to both. There is also another religious poem, on the subject of Judith, preserved in the same Cottonian volume with Beowulf ; but it is only a fragment. It was first published by Edward Thwaites in a volume entitled *Heptateuchus*, containing the Five Books of Moses and other portions of Scripture, Oxford, 1699 ; and it is reprinted in Thorpe's *Analecta Anglo-Saxonica*, 1834, and again in 1846. Other fragmentary or short pieces are a song attributed to Cædmon (sometimes styled the Elder Cædmon) in King Alfred's translation of Bede, which if genuine must be of the latter part of the seventh century, and would be the oldest specimen of the language that has been preserved ; a small portion of a warlike chant, first printed by Hickes (*Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica*, 192), and styled by Kemble, who has reproduced it in his edition of Beowulf, *The Battle of Finnesburh* ; *The Traveller's Song*, first printed by Conybeare ; several compositions interspersed in the historical record called the *Chronicle*, of which the most famous is that on the victory of King Athelstan over the Scots and Danes at a place called Brunanburg in 938 ; a considerable portion of a poem on the battle of Maldon, fought in 993, originally printed from one of the Cotton manuscripts, in his *Johannis Glastoniensis Chronicon*, 1726, by Hearne, who, however, mistook it for prose, and since reproduced both by Conybeare and by Thorpe (in the *Analecta*) ; and others in the two collections known as the *Exeter* and the *Vercelli Manuscripts*, both which have now been edited in full, the former (which is of the eleventh century) by Thorpe in 1842, the latter (having however been previously printed in an appendix to the Record Commission edition of Rymer's *Fœdera*) by Kemble, for the *Ælfrie Society*, in 1843.

One romance in prose has been discovered, on the mediæval

story of Apollonius of Tyre (the same on which the play of Pericles, attributed to Shakspeare, is founded); of this also an edition by Mr. Thorpe, with a literal translation, appeared in 1834. Of the other prose remains the most important are the fragments of the Laws, among which are some of those of Ethelbert, king of Kent, who reigned in the latter part of the sixth and the early part of the seventh century, but evidently reduced to the language of a later age; the Chronicle, the earlier portion of which is chiefly a compilation from the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Bede, but which may be regarded as a contemporary register of public events from perhaps about the middle of the tenth century, and which terminates at the close of the reign of Stephen in 1154; the various works of King Alfred, which, however, are all in the main only translations from the Latin, though occasionally interspersed with original matter; his Pastoral of Pope Gregory, his *Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiæ* (with the verse in some of the copies metrically paraphrased and expanded), his English Ecclesiastical History of Bede, and his General History of Orosius; and the various theological, grammatical, and other writings of Alfric, or Ælfric, generally supposed to have been the individual of the same name who was archbishop of Canterbury from 995 to 1006. There are also translations of the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospels, and other parts of Scripture; and numerous lives of saints, besides some treatises on medicine and botany, and a great many wills, charters, and other legal instruments. Portions of the Laws were given in William Lambarde's *Archaionomia*, 4to., 1568, and fol., 1643, by Hicke in his *Dissertatio Epistolaris* (in the *Thesaurus*), and in Hearne's *Textus Roffensis*, Oxford, 1720; and there are complete collections by Wilkins, 1721; by Dr. Reinhold Schmidt, Leipzig, 1832; and by Thorpe (for the Record Commission), 1840. Of the Chronicle, of which there are many manuscripts more or less perfect, a portion was appended by Wheloc to his Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, with Alfred's translation, Cambridge, 1643; the earliest edition of the whole was that of Bishop Gibson, with a Latin translation, Oxford, 1692; and there have since appeared that of the Rev. J. Ingram, London, 1823, and that, by the late Richard Price, Esq., contained in the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, 1848 (coming down, however, only to the Norman Conquest), both with translations into English. An English MS. translation by the late Richard Gough, Esq., is preserved,

with the rest of his collection, in the Bodleian Library; and another, printed, but not published, by the late Miss Gurney, of Keswick, Norfolk, in 1819, has been made the basis of that edited by Dr. Giles, along with Bede's Ecclesiastical History, in one of the volumes of Bohn's Antiquarian Library, 1849. The Chronicle "in part translated," by Mr. Stevenson, is contained in the First Part of the Second Volume of *The Church Historians of England*, 1853. Many portions of it are also given in the original in a volume entitled *Ancient History, English and French*, exemplified in a regular dissection of the Saxon Chronicle, 8vo., Lond. 1830. Of the translations from the Latin attributed to Alfred the Great, the preface to the *Pastorale* of Pope Gregory was first printed, with a Latin translation, by Archbishop Parker, along with his edition of Asser's (Latin) *Life of Alfred*, fol., Lond. 1574; from this it was transferred to a scarce octavo volume published at Leyden in 1597, with the title of *De Literis et Lingua Getarum, sive Gothorum*, by a writer calling himself Bonaventura Vulcanius Brugensis, meaning, it has been conjectured, Smidt, or De Smet, of Bruges, and who has been asserted to have really been Antony Morillon, secretary to Cardinal Grandvulle; it is also given along with his reprint of Asser by Camden in his *Collection*, published at Francfort in 1603, and in *Wise's Asser*, 8vo., Oxford, 1722; and Mr. Wright has inserted it, with an English translation, in his *Biographia Britannica Literaria*, 1842, vol. i. pp. 397-400. The version of Boethius *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* was first edited by Christopher Rawlinson, 8vo., Oxford, 1698; and there are modern editions of the prose, with an English translation and notes, by Mr. J. S. Cardale, 8vo., Lond. 1829, and of the verse (Alfred's claim to which, however, is very doubtful), also with an English translation and notes, by the Rev. Samuel Fox, 8vo., Lond. 1835. Alfred's *Orosius* was first edited, "with an English translation from the Anglo-Saxon," by the Hon. Daines Barrington, in 1773; and it has been reproduced, with a new translation by Mr. Thorpe, in a very convenient form, along with Dr. R. Pauli's *Life of Alfred*, in one of the volumes of Bohn's Antiquarian Library, 1853. Alfred's *Bede* was published, in folio, at Cambridge, first by Wheloc in 1643, and again by Dr. John Smith, with large and learned annotations, in 1722. We may mention that a collection, professing to contain "The Whole Works of King Alfred the Great, with Preliminary Essays Illus-

trative of the History, Arts, and Manners of the Ninth Century," and calling itself the Jubilee Edition, was produced at London, by "the Alfred Committee," in 2 vols. (commonly bound in 3), in 1852. It consists, however, only of translations into modern English.

The various treatises passing under the name of Alfric, Ælfric, or Elfric, have recently engaged much attention, and the name has been assumed by a society established some years ago for the publication of literary remains in early English. He is known by the titles of the Grammarian and the Abbot; and the writings attributed to him, which are very numerous, are mostly theological and grammatical. The Ælfric Society has published a collection of his Homilies, edited, with a translation, by Mr. Thorpe, in 2 vols. 8vo., 1854; and a Latin grammar, compiled by him in his native language, first published by Somner in his *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum*, Oxford, 1659, has been reprinted in part, from a different manuscript, at the expense of Sir Thomas Phillipps. For further information respecting Ælfric and his works the reader is referred to the account of him given by Mr. Wright in the first volume of the *Biographia Britannica Literaria*, pp. 480-494. His Homilies, Mr. Wright observes, are "written in very easy Anglo-Saxon, and form on that account the best book for the student who is beginning to study the language."



THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

THE year 1066 is memorable as that of the Norman Conquest, — the conquest of England by the Normans. The conquests of which we read in the history of nations are of three kinds. Sometimes one population has been overwhelmed by or driven before another as it might have been by an inundation of the sea, or at the most a small number of the old inhabitants of the invaded territory have been permitted to remain on it as the bondsmen of their conquerors. This appears to have been the usual mode of proceeding of the barbarous races, as we call them, by which the greater part of Europe was occupied in early times, in their contests with one another. When the Teuton or Goth from the one

side of the Rhine attacked the Celt on the other side, the whole tribe precipitated itself upon what was the object at once of its hostility and of its cupidity. Or even if it was one division of the great Gothic race that made war upon another, as, for instance, the Scandinavian upon any Germanic country, the course that was taken was commonly, or at least frequently, the same. The land was cleared by driving away all who could fly, and the universal massacre of the rest. This primitive kind of invasion and conquest belonged properly to the night of barbarism, but in certain of the extreme parts of the European system something of it survived down to a comparatively late date. Much that we are told of the manner in which Britain was wrested from its previous Celtic occupants by the Angles and Saxons in the fifth and sixth centuries of our era would lead us to think that the enterprise of these invaders was both originally conceived and conducted throughout in this spirit. Nay, for some centuries after this we have the Danes in their descents and inroads upon all parts of the British territories still acting, apparently, in the same style. But, ever from the time of the settlement of the barbarous nations in the more central provinces of the old Roman Empire, another kind of conquest had come into use among them. Corrupted and enfeebled as it was, the advanced civilization which they now encountered seems to have touched them as with a spell, or rather could not but communicate to its assailants something of its own spirit. A policy of mere destruction was evidently not the course to be adopted here. The value of the conquest lay mainly in preserving as far as possible both the stupendous material structures and the other works of art by which the soil was everywhere covered and adorned, and the living intelligence and skill of which all these wonders were the product. Hence the second kind of conquest, in which for the first time the conquerors were contented to share the conquered country, usually according to a strictly defined proportional division, with its previous occupants. But this system too was only transitory. It passed away with the particular crisis which gave birth to it; and then arose the third and last kind of conquest, in which there is no general occupation of the soil of the conquered country by the conquerors, but only its dominion is acquired by them.

The first of the three kinds of conquest, then, has for its object and effect the complete displacement of the ancient inhabitants. It is the kind which is proper to the contests of barbarians with

barbarians. Under the second form of conquest the conquerors, recognizing a superiority to themselves in many other things even in those whom their superior force or ferocity has subdued, feel that they will gain most by foregoing something of their right to the wholesale seizure and appropriation of the soil, and neither wholly destroying or expelling its ancient possessors, nor even reducing them to a state of slavery, but only treating them as a lower caste. This is the form proper and natural to the exceptional and rare case of the conquest of a civilized by a barbarous people. Finally, there is that kind of subjugation of one people or country by another which results simply in the overthrow of the independence of the former, and the substitution in it or over it of a foreign for a native government. This is generally the only kind of conquest which attends upon the wars of civilized nations with one another.

The conquest of England by the Normans in the year 1066 may be regarded as having been professedly a conquest of this last description. The age of both the first and the second kinds of conquest was over, at least everywhere throughout Europe except it may be only along some few portions of its extreme northern boundary. Both the English and the Normans stood indisputably within the pale of civilization, the former boasting the possession both of Christianity and of a national literature for four or five centuries, the latter, if more recently reclaimed from paganism and barbarism, nevertheless already recognized as one of the most brilliantly gifted of European races, and distinguished for their superior aptitude in the arts both of war and of peace, of polity and of song. And the Norman leader, having with him in his enterprise the approval and sanction of the Church, claimed the English crown as his by right; nor were there probably wanting many Englishmen, although no doubt the general national feeling was different, who held his claim to be fully as good in law and justice as that of his native competitor. In taking the style of the Conqueror with respect to England, as he had been wont to take that of the Bastard with reference to his ancestral Normandy, William, as has been often explained, probably meant nothing more than that he had acquired his English sovereignty for himself, by the nomination or bequest of his relation King Edward, or in whatever other way, and had not succeeded to it under the ordinary rule of descent. Such a right of property is still, in the old feudal language, technically described in the law of Scotland as acquired

by conquest, and in that of England by purchase, which is etymologically of the same meaning, — the one word being the Latin *Conquestus*, or *Conquisitio*, the other *Perquisitio*.

And in point of fact the Normans never transferred themselves in a body, or generally, to England. They did not, like the barbarous populations of a preceding age, abandon for this new country the one in which they had previously dwelt. England was never thus taken possession of by the Normans. It was never colonized by these foreigners, or occupied by them in any other than a military sense. The Norman Duke invaded it with an army, raised partly among his own subjects, partly drawn from other regions of the Continent, and so made himself master of it. It received a foreign government, but not at all a new population.

Two causes, however, meeting from opposite points, and working together, soon produced a result which was to some extent the same that would have been produced by a Norman colonization. The first was the natural demand on the part of William's followers or fellow-soldiers for a share in the profits and advantages of their common enterprise, which would probably in any case have compelled him eventually to surrender his new subjects to spoliation; the second was the equally natural restlessness of the latter under the foreign yoke that had been imposed upon them, by which they only facilitated the process of their general reduction to poverty and ruin.

And to the overthrow thus brought about of the native civilization was added, in the present case, the intrusion of another system of social organization, and of another language possessing also its own literature, to take the place of what was passing away. So that here again were two distinct forces harmoniously, though by movements in opposite directions, coöperating to a common end. At the same time that English culture shrunk and faded, Norman culture flourished and advanced. And the two forces were not balanced or in any way connected, but quite independent the one of the other. English culture went down, not under the disastrous influence of the rival light, but from the failure of its own natural aliment, or because the social structure of which it was the product had been smitten with universal disorganization. It was the withering of life throughout the whole frame that made the eye dim.

The difference, then, between the case of England conquered

by the Normans in the eleventh century and that of Italy overrun by the Goths in the fifth, was twofold. First, the Normans did not settle in England, as the barbarous nations of the North did in Italy and other provinces of the subjugated Western Empire; but, secondly, on the other hand, the new power which the Norman invasion and conquest of England established in the country was not a barbarism, but another civilization in most respects at least as advanced as the indigenous one; — if younger, only therefore the stronger and more aspiring, and yet, as it proved, not differing so far from that with which it was brought into competition as to be incapable of coalescing with it, if need were, as well as, in other circumstances, with its advantages of position, outshining it or casting it into the shade.

In this way it came to pass that the final result to both the language and the literature of the conquered people was pretty much the same in the two cases. What the barbaric influence, in its action upon the Latin language and literature, wanted of positive vital force it made up for by its mass and weight; the Norman influence, on the contrary, compensated by quality for its deficiency in quantity. There was considerable difference, however, in the process by which the transformation was effected in the two cases, and in the length of time which it occupied. The Gothic barbarism was in the first instance simply destructive; it was not till after some centuries that it came to be visibly or appreciably anything else. But the Norman influence, in virtue of being that, not of a barbarism, but of a civilization, and especially of a civilization still in all the radiant bloom and buoyant pride of youth, never could have been directly destructive; from the first moment of their actual contact it must have communicated to the native civilization something of new life.

One thing further may be noted. In both the cases that we have been comparing the result was the combination, both in the language and the literature, of the same two elements; namely, the Latin (or Classical) and the Gothic (or Germanic, in the largest sense). But the important difference was, that, the basis of the combination remaining in each case what it originally was, — Latin in Italy, in France, in Spain, but Gothic in England, — while the language and literature that grew up in each of the former countries came to be in general spirit and character what is called Romance, which must be understood to mean modified Roman, the

English language and literature retained their original fundamentally Gothic character, only modified by so much as it has absorbed of a Latin element.

And the remarkable distinction of the English language is, that it is the only one of all the languages of the European world which, thus combining the two elements of the Classic and the Gothic, — that is, as we may say, of ancient and of modern civilization, — is Gothic, or modern, in its skeleton, or bony system, and in its formative principle, and Classic, or antique, only in what of it is comparatively superficial and non-essential. The other living European languages are either without the Classic element altogether, as are all those of the Scandinavian and Teutonic branches, or have it as their principal and governing element, as is the case with the Italian, the French, and the Spanish, which may all be described as only modernized forms of the Latin. Even in the proportion, too, in which the two elements are combined the English has greatly the advantage over these Romance tongues, as they are called, in none of which is there more than a mere sprinkling of the modern element, whereas in English, although here that constitutes the dominant or more active portion of the compound, the counterpoising ingredient is also present in large quantity, and is influential to a very high degree upon the general character of the language.

It should seem to follow from all this, that, both in its inner spirit and in its voice, both in its constructional and in its musical genius, the English language, and, through that, English literature, English civilization or culture generally, and the whole temper of the English mind, ought to have a capacity of sympathizing at once with the Classical and the Gothic, with the antique and the modern, with the past and the present, to an extent not to be matched by any other speech or nation of Europe.

It so happens, too, that the political fortunes of this English tongue have been in singular accord with its constitution and natural adaptation, inasmuch as, at the same time that it stands in this remarkable position in the Old World, its position is still more preëminent in the New World, whether that designation be confined to the continent of America or understood as including the entire field of modern colonization in every quarter of the globe. The English are the only really colonizing people now extant. As we remember Coleridge once expressing it, it is the natural des-

tiny of their country, as an island, to be the mother of nations. Their geographical position, concurring with their peculiar genius, and with all the other favorable circumstances of the case, gives them the command of the readiest access to the most distant parts of the earth, — a universal highway, almost as free as is the air to the swarming bees. And, accordingly, all the greatest communities of the future, whether they be seated beyond the Atlantic or beyond the Pacific, promise to be communities of English blood and English speech.



ARABIC AND OTHER NEW LEARNING.

THE space of about a thousand years, extending from the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire, in the middle of the fifth century, to that of the Eastern, in the middle of the fifteenth, may be divided into two nearly equal parts: the first of which may be considered as that of the gradual decline, the second as that of the gradual revival of letters. The former, reaching to the close of the tenth century, nearly corresponds, in its close as well as in its commencement, with the domination in England of the Angles and Saxons. In Europe generally, throughout this long space of time, the intellectual darkness, notwithstanding some brief and partial revivals, deepens more and more on the whole, in the same manner as in the natural day the gray of evening passes into the gloom of midnight. The Latin learning, properly so called, may be regarded as terminating with Boethius, who wrote in the early part of the sixth century. The Latin language, however, continued to be used in literary compositions, as well as in the services of the Church, both in our own country and in the other parts of Europe that had composed the old empire of Rome.

The Danish conquest of England, as completed by the accession of Canute, preceded the Norman by exactly half a century, and throughout this space, the country had, with little interruption, enjoyed a government which, if not always national, — and it was that too for rather more than half of the fifty years, — was at any rate acknowledged and submitted to by the whole nation. The public tranquillity was scarcely ever disturbed for more than a mo-

ment by any internal commotion, and never at all by attacks from abroad. During this interval, therefore, many of the monastic and other schools that had existed in the days of Alfred, Athelstan, and Edgar, but had been swept away or allowed to fall into decay in the disastrous forty years that succeeded the decease of the last-mentioned monarch, were probably reëstablished. The more frequent communication with the Continent that began in the reign of the Confessor must also have been favorable to the intellectual advancement of the country. The dawn of the revival of letters in England, therefore, may be properly dated from a point about fifty years antecedent to the Norman Conquest, or from not very long after the commencement of the eleventh century.

Still at the date of the Conquest the country was undoubtedly in regard to everything intellectual in a very backward state. Ordericus Vitalis, almost a contemporary writer, and himself a native of England, though educated abroad, describes his countrymen generally as having been found by the Normans a rustic and almost illiterate people (*agrestes et pene illiteratos*). The last epithet may be understood as chiefly intended to characterize the clergy, for the great body of the laity at this time were everywhere illiterate. A few years after the Conquest, the king took advantage of the general illiteracy of the native clergy to deprive great numbers of them of their benefices, and to supply their places with foreigners. His real or his only motive for making this substitution may possibly not have been that which he avowed; but he would scarcely have alleged what was notoriously not the fact, even as a pretence.

The Norman Conquest introduced a new state of things in this as in most other respects. That event made England, as it were, a part of the Continent, where, not long before, a revival of letters had taken place scarcely less remarkable, if we take into consideration the circumstances of the time, than the next great revolution of the same kind in the beginning of the fifteenth century. In France, indeed, the learning that had flourished in the time of Charlemagne had never undergone so great a decay as had befallen that of England since the days of Alfred. The schools planted by Alcuin and the philosophy taught by Erigena had both been perpetuated by a line of the disciples and followers of these distinguished masters, which had never been altogether interrupted. But in the tenth century this learning of the West had met and

been intermixed with a new learning originally from the East, but obtained directly from the Arab conquerors of Spain. The Arabs had first become acquainted with the literature of Greece in the beginning of the eighth century, and it instantly exercised upon their minds an awakening influence of the same powerful kind with that with which it again kindled Europe seven centuries afterwards. One difference, however, between the two cases is very remarkable. The mighty effects that arose out of the second revival of the ancient Greek literature in the modern world were produced almost solely by its eloquence and poetry; but these were precisely the parts of it that were neglected by the Arabs. The Greek books which they sought after with such extraordinary avidity were almost exclusively those that related either to metaphysics and mathematics on the one hand, or to medicine, chemistry, botany, and the other departments of physical knowledge, on the other. All Greek works of these descriptions that they could procure they not only translated into their own language, but in course of time illustrated with voluminous commentaries. The prodigious magnitude to which this Arabic literature eventually grew will stagger the reader who has adopted the common notion with regard to what are called the middle or the dark ages. "The royal library of the Fatimites" (sovereigns of Egypt), says Gibbon, "consisted of 100,000 manuscripts, elegantly transcribed and splendidly bound, which were lent, without jealousy or avarice, to the students of Cairo. Yet this collection must appear moderate, if we can believe that the Omniades of Spain had formed a library of 600,000 volumes, 44 of which were employed in the mere catalogues. Their capital Cordova, with the adjacent towns of Malaga, Almeria, and Murcia, had given birth to more than 300 writers, and above 70 public libraries were opened in the cities of the Andalusian kingdom."¹ The difficulty we have in conceiving the existence of a state of things such as that here described arises in great part from the circumstance of the entire disappearance now, and for so long a period, of all this Arabic power and splendor from the scene of European affairs. But, long extinct as it has been, the dominion of the Arabs in Europe was no mere momentary blaze. It lasted, with little diminution, for nearly five hundred years, a period as long as from the age of Chaucer to the present day, and abundantly sufficient for the growth of a body of literature and science even

¹ Decline and Fall of the Rom. Emp. c. lii.

of the wonderful extent that has been described. In the tenth century Arabic Spain was the fountain-head of learning in Europe. Thither students were accustomed to repair from every other country to study in the Arabic schools; and many of the teachers in the chief towns of France and Italy had finished their education in these seminaries, and were now diffusing among their countrymen the new knowledge which they had thence acquired. The writings of several of the Greek authors, also, and especially those of Aristotle, had been made generally known to scholars by Latin versions of them made from the Arabic.

There is no trace of this new literature having found its way to England before the Norman Conquest. But that revolution immediately brought it in its train. "The Conqueror himself," observes a writer who has illustrated this subject with a profusion of curious learning, "patronized and loved letters. He filled the bishoprics and abbacies of England with the most learned of his countrymen, who had been educated at the University of Paris, at that time the most flourishing school in Europe. He placed Lanfranc, abbot of the monastery of St. Stephen at Caen, in the see of Canterbury, — an eminent master of logic, the subtleties of which he employed with great dexterity in a famous controversy concerning the real presence. Anselm, an acute metaphysician and theologian, his immediate successor in the same see, was called from the government of the abbey of Bec, in Normandy. Herman, a Norman, bishop of Salisbury, founded a noble library in the ancient cathedral of that see. Many of the Norman prelates preferred in England by the Conqueror were polite scholars. Godfrey, prior of St. Swithin's at Winchester, a native of Cambray, was an elegant Latin epigrammatist, and wrote with the smartness and ease of Martial: a circumstance which, by the way, shows that the literature of the monks at this period was of a more liberal cast than that which we commonly annex to their character and profession."¹ Geoffrey, also, another learned Norman, came over from the University of Paris, and established a school at Dunstable, where, according to Matthew Paris, he composed a play, called the play of St. Catharine, which was acted by his scholars, dressed characteristically in copes borrowed from the sacrist of the neighboring abbey of St. Albans, of which Geoffrey afterwards became abbot. "The king

¹ Warton's Dissertation on Introduction of Learning into England, prefixed to History of English Poetry, p. cxii. (edit. of 1840.)

himself," Warton continues, "gave no small countenance to the clergy, in sending his son Henry Beauclerc to the abbey of Abingdon, where he was initiated in the sciences under the care of the abbot Grimbold, and Faritius, a physician of Oxford. Robert d'Oilly, constable of Oxford Castle, was ordered to pay for the board of the young prince in the convent, which the king himself frequently visited. Nor was William wanting in giving ample revenues to learning. He founded the magnificent abbeys of Battle and Selby, with other smaller convents. His nobles and their successors coöperated with this liberal spirit in erecting many monasteries. Herbert de Losinga, a monk of Normandy, bishop of Thetford in Norfolk, instituted and endowed with large possessions a Benedictine abbey at Norwich, consisting of sixty monks. To mention no more instances, such great institutions of persons dedicated to religious and literary leisure, while they diffused an air of civility, and softened the manners of the people in their respective circles, must have afforded powerful incentives to studious pursuits, and have consequently added no small degree of stability to the interests of learning."¹

To this it may be added, that most of the successors of the Conqueror continued to show the same regard for learning of which he had set the example. Nearly all of them had themselves received a learned education. Besides Henry Beauclerc, Henry II., whose father Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl of Anjou, was famous for his literary acquirements, had been carefully educated under the superintendence of his admirable uncle, the Earl of Gloucester; and he appears to have taken care that his children should not want the advantages he had himself enjoyed; for at least the three eldest, Henry, Geoffrey, and Richard, are all noted for their literary as well as their other accomplishments.

What learning existed, however, was still for the most part confined to the clergy. Even the nobility — although it cannot be supposed that they were left altogether without literary instruction — appear to have been very rarely initiated in any of those branches which were considered as properly constituting the scholarship of the times. The familiar knowledge of the Latin language in particular, which was then the key to all other erudition, seems to have been almost exclusively confined to churchmen, and to those

¹ Ibid. Some inaccuracies in Warton's account of Geoffrey and his play are corrected from a note by Mr. Douce.

few of the laity who embraced the profession of schoolmasters, as some, at least on the Continent, were now wont to do. The contemporary writer of a *Life of Becket* relates, that when Henry II., in 1164, sent an embassy to the Pope, in which the Earl of Arundel and three other noblemen were associated with an archbishop, four bishops, and three of the royal chaplains, four of the churchmen, at the audience to which they were admitted, first delivered themselves in as many Latin harangues; and then the Earl of Arundel stood up, and made a speech in English, which he began with the words, "We, who are illiterate laymen, do not understand one word of what the bishops have said to your holiness."

The notion that learning properly belonged exclusively to the clergy, and that it was a possession in which the laity were unworthy to participate, was in some degree the common belief of the age, and by the learned themselves was almost universally held as an article of faith that admitted of no dispute. Nothing can be more strongly marked than the tone of contempt which is expressed for the mass of the community, the unlearned vulgar, by the scholars of this period: in their correspondence with one another especially, they seem to look upon all beyond their own small circle as beings of an inferior species. This pride of theirs, however, worked beneficially upon the whole: in the first place, it was in great part merely a proper estimation of the advantages of knowledge over ignorance; and, secondly, it helped to make the man of the pen a match for him of the sword, — the natural liberator of the human race for its natural oppressor. At the same time, it intimates very forcibly at once the comparative rarity of the highly prized distinction, and the depth of the darkness that still reigned far and wide around the few scattered points of light.



SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES.

SCHOOLS and other seminaries of learning, however, were greatly multiplied in this age, and were also elevated in their character, in England as well as elsewhere. Both Archbishop Lanfranc and his successor Anselm exerted themselves with great zeal in establishing proper schools in connection with the cathedrals and monaste-

ries in all parts of the kingdom; and the object was one which was also patronized and promoted by the general voice of the Church. In 1179 it was ordered by the third general council of Lateran, that in every cathedral there should be appointed and maintained a head teacher, or scholastic, as was the title given to him, who, besides keeping a school of his own, should have authority over all the other schoolmasters of the diocese, and the sole right of granting licenses, without which no one should be entitled to teach. In former times the bishop himself had frequently undertaken the office of scholastic of the diocese; but its duties were rarely efficiently performed under that arrangement, and at length they seem to have come to be generally altogether neglected. After the custom was introduced of maintaining it as a distinct office, it was filled in many cases by the most learned persons of the time. And besides these cathedral schools there were others established in all the religious houses, many of which were also of high reputation. It is reckoned that of religious houses of all kinds there were founded in England no fewer than five hundred and fifty-seven between the Conquest and the death of King John; and, besides these, there still existed many others that had been founded in earlier times. All these cathedral and conventual schools, however, appear to have been intended exclusively for the instruction of persons proposing to make the Church their profession. But mention is also made of others established both in many of the principal cities and even in the villages, which would seem to have been open to the community at large; for it may be presumed that the laity, though generally excluded from the benefits of a learned education, were not left wholly without the means of obtaining some elementary instruction. Some of these city schools, however, were eminent as institutes of the highest departments of learning. One in particular is mentioned in the History ascribed to Matthew Paris as established in the town of St. Albans, which was presided over by Matthew, a physician, who had been educated at the famous school of Salerno, in Italy, and by his nephew, Garinus, who was eminent for his knowledge of the civil and canon laws, and where we may therefore suppose instructions were given both in law and in medicine. According to the account of London by William Stephanides, or Fitz-Stephen, written in the reign of Henry II., there were then three of these schools of a higher order established in London, besides several others that were occasionally

opened by distinguished teachers. The London schools, however, do not seem to have been academies of science and the higher learning, like that of St. Albans: Fitz-Stephen's description would rather lead us to infer that, although they were attended by pupils of different ages and degrees of proficiency, they were merely schools of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics. "On holidays," he says, "it is usual for these schools to hold public assemblies in the churches, in which the scholars engage in demonstrative or logical disputations, some using enthymems, and others perfect syllogisms; some aiming at nothing but to gain the victory, and make an ostentatious display of their acuteness, while others have the investigation of truth in view. Artful sophists on these occasions acquire great applause; some by a prodigious inundation and flow of words, others by their specious but fallacious arguments. After the disputations other scholars deliver rhetorical declamations, in which they observe all the rules of art, and neglect no topic of persuasion. Even the younger boys in the different schools contend against each other, in verse, about the principles of grammar, and the pret-erites and supines of verbs."

The twelfth century may be considered as properly the age of the institution of what we now call Universities in Europe, though many of the establishments that then assumed the regular form of universities had undoubtedly existed long before as schools or *studia*. This was the case with the oldest of the European universities, with Bologna and Paris, and also, in all probability, with Oxford and Cambridge. But it may be questioned if even Bologna, the mother of all the rest, was entitled by any organization or constitution it had received to take a higher name than a school or *studium* before the latter part of this century. It is admitted that it was not till about the year 1200 that the school out of which the University of Paris arose had come to subsist as an incorporation, divided into nations, and presided over by a rector.¹ The University of Oxford, properly so called, is probably of nearly the same antiquity. It seems to have been patronized and fostered by Richard I., as that of Paris was by his great rival, Philip Augustus. Both Oxford and Cambridge had undoubtedly been eminent seats of learning long before this time, as London, St. Albans, and other cities had also been; but there is no evidence that either the one or the other had at an earlier date become anything more than a

¹ See Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris*, i. 255.

great school, or even that it was distinguished by any assigned rank or privileges above the other great schools of the kingdom. In the reign of Richard I. we find the University of Oxford recognized as an establishment of the same kind with the University of Paris, and as the rival of that seminary.

We have the following account of what is commonly deemed the origin of the University of Cambridge in the continuation of the history of Ingulphus, attributed to Peter of Blois, under the year 1109: — “Joffrid, abbot of Croyland, sent to his manor of Cottenham, near Cambridge, Master Gislebert, his fellow-monk, and professor of theology, with three other monks who had followed him into England; who, being very well instructed in philosophical theorems and other primitive sciences, went every day to Cambridge, and, having hired a certain public barn, taught the sciences openly, and in a little time collected a great concourse of scholars; for, in the very second year after their arrival, the number of their scholars from the town and country increased so much that there was no house, barn, nor church capable of containing them. For this reason they separated into different parts of the town, and, imitating the plan of the Studium of Orleans, brother Odo, who was eminent as a grammarian and satirical poet, read grammar, according to the doctrine of Priscian and of his commentator Remigius, to the boys and younger students, that were assigned to him, early in the morning. At one o'clock, brother Terricus, a most acute sophist, read the Logic of Aristotle, according to the Introductions and Commentaries of Porphyry and Averroes,¹ to those who were further advanced. At three, brother William read lectures on Tully's Rhetoric and Quintilian's Institutions. But Master Gislebert, being ignorant of the English, but very expert in the Latin and French languages, preached in the several churches to the people on Sundays and holidays.”² The history in which this passage occurs is, as will presently be shown, as apocryphal as that of which it professes to be the continuation; but even if we waive the question of its authenticity, there is here no hint of any sort of incorporation or public establishment whatever;

¹ The works of Averroes, however, who died in 1198, were certainly not in existence at the time here referred to. Either Peter of Blois must have been ignorant of this, or — if he was really the author of the statement — the name must have been the insertion of some later transcriber of his text.

² *Petri Blesensis Continuatio ad Historiam Ingulphi*; in *Rerum Anglicarum Script. Vet.*: Oxon. 1684, p. 114. The translation is that given by Henry in his *History of Britain*.

the description is merely that of a school set on foot and conducted by an association of private individuals. And even this private school would seem to have been first opened only in the year 1109, although there may possibly have been other schools taught in the place before. It may be gathered from what is added, that at the time when the account, if it was written by Peter of Blois, must have been drawn up (the latter part of the same century), the school founded by Gislebert and his companions had attained to great celebrity; but there is nothing to lead us to suppose that it had even then become more than a very distinguished school. "From this little fountain," he says, "which hath swelled into a great river, we now behold the city of God made glad, and all England rendered fruitful, by many teachers and doctors issuing from Cambridge, after the likeness of the holy Paradise."

Notwithstanding, however, the rising reputation of Oxford and Cambridge, the most ambitious of the English students continued to resort for part of their education to the more distinguished foreign schools during the whole of the twelfth century. Thus, it is recorded that several volumes of the Arabian philosophy were brought into England by Daniel Merlac, who, in the year 1185, had gone to Toledo to study mathematics. Salerno was still the chief school of medicine, and Bologna of law, although Oxford was also becoming famous for the latter study. But, as a place of general instruction, the University of Paris stood at the head of all others. Paris was then wont to be styled, by way of preëminence, the City of Letters. So many Englishmen, or, to speak more strictly, subjects of the English crown, were constantly found among the students at this great seminary, that they formed one of the four nations into which the members of the university were divided. The English students are described by their countryman, the poet Nigellus Wireker, in the latter part of the twelfth century, in such a manner as to show that they were already noted for that spirit of display and expense which still makes so prominent a part of our continental reputation:—

Moribus egregii, verbo vultuque venusti,
 Ingenio pollent, consilioque vident;
 Dona pluunt populis, et detestantur avaros,
 Fereula multiplicant, et sine lege bibunt.¹

¹ These verses are quoted by A. Wood, *Antiq. Oxon.*, p. 55. The poem in which they occur is entitled *Speculum Stultorum*, or sometimes *Brunellus* (from its principal personage). It has been repeatedly printed.

Of noble manners, gracious look and speech,
Strong sense, with genius brightened, shines in each.
Their free hand still rains largess ; when they dine
Course follows course, in rivers flows the wine.

Among the students at the University of Paris in the twelfth century are to be found nearly all the most distinguished names among the learned of every country. One of the teachers, the celebrated Abelard, is said to have alone had as pupils twenty persons who afterwards became cardinals, and more than fifty who rose to be bishops and archbishops. Thomas à Becket received part of his education here. Several of the most eminent teachers were Englishmen. Among these may be particularly mentioned Robert of Melun (so called from having first taught in that city), and Robert White, or Pullus, as he is called in Latin. Robert of Melun, who afterwards became bishop of Hereford, distinguished himself by the zeal and ability with which he opposed the novel views which the rising sect of the Nominalists were then introducing both into philosophy and theology. He is the author of several theological treatises, none of which, however, have been printed. Robert White, after teaching some years at Paris, where he was attended by crowded audiences, was induced to return to his own country, where he is said to have read lectures on theology at Oxford for five years, which greatly contributed to spread the renown of that rising seminary. After having declined a bishopric offered to him by Henry I., he went to reside at Rome in 1143, on the invitation of Celestine II., and was soon after made a cardinal and chancellor of the holy see. One work written by him has been printed, a summary of theology, under the then common title of *The Book of Sentences*, which has the reputation of being distinguished by the superior correctness of its style and the lucidness of its method.

Another celebrated name among the Englishmen who are recorded to have studied at Paris in those days is that of Nicolas Breakspear, who afterwards became pope by the title of Adrian IV. But, above all others, John of Salisbury deserves to be here mentioned. It is in his writings that we find the most complete account that has reached us not only of the mode of study followed at Paris, but of the entire learning of the age.

RISE OF THE SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY.

AT this time those branches of literary and scientific knowledge which were specially denominated the arts were considered as divided into two great classes,—the first or more elementary of which, comprehending Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic, was called the Trivium; the second, comprehending Music, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy, the Quadrivium. The seven arts, so classified, used to be thus enumerated in a Latin hexameter:—

Lingua, Tropus, Ratio, Numerus, Tonus, Angulus, Astra;

or, with definitions subjoined, in two still more singularly constructed verses,—

Gram. loquitur, *Dia.* vera docet, *Rhet.* verba colorat,
Mus. cadit, *Ar.* numerat, *Geo.* ponderat, *Ast.* colit astra.

John of Salisbury speaks of this system of the sciences as an ancient one in his day. “The Trivium and Quadrivium,” he says, in his work entitled *Metalogicus*, “were so much admired by our ancestors in former ages, that they imagined they comprehended all wisdom and learning, and were sufficient for the solution of all questions and the removing of all difficulties; for whoever understood the Trivium could explain all manner of books without a teacher; but he who was farther advanced, and was master also of the Quadrivium, could answer all questions and unfold all the secrets of nature.” The present age, however, had outgrown the simplicity of this arrangement; and various new studies had been added to the ancient seven, as necessary to complete the circle of the sciences and the curriculum of a liberal education.

It was now, in particular, that Theology first came to be ranked as a science. This was the age of St. Bernard, the last of the Fathers, and of Peter Lombard, the first of the Schoolmen. The distinction between these two classes of writers is, that the latter do, and the former do not, treat their subject in a systematizing spirit. The change was the consequence of the cultivation of the Aristotelian logic and metaphysics. When these stud-

ies were first introduced into the schools of the West, they were wholly unconnected with theology. But, especially at a time when all the learned were churchmen, it was impossible that the great instrument of thought and reasoning could long remain unapplied to the most important of all the subjects of thought, — the subject of religion. It has already been remarked that John Erigena and other Irish divines introduced philosophy and metaphysics into the discussion of questions of religion as early as the ninth century; and they are consequently entitled to be regarded as having first set the example of the method afterwards pursued by the schoolmen. But, although the influence of their writings may probably be traced in preparing the way for the introduction of the scholastic system, and also, afterwards, perhaps, in modifying its spirit, that system was derived immediately, in the shape in which it appeared in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, from another source. Erigena was a Platonist: the spirit of his philosophy was that of the school of Alexandria. But the first schoolmen, properly so called, were Aristotelians: they drew their logic and metaphysics originally from the Latin translations of the works of Aristotle made from the Arabic. And they may also have been indebted for some of their views to the commentaries of the Arabic doctors. But, whether they took their method of philosophy entirely from the ancient heathen sage, or in part from his modern Mahomedan interpreters and illustrators, it could in neither case have had at first any necessary or natural alliance with Christianity. Yet it very soon, as we have said, formed this alliance. Both Lanfranc and Anselm, although not commonly reckoned among the schoolmen, were imbued with the spirit of the new learning, and it is infused throughout their theological writings. Abelard soon after, before he was yet a churchman, may almost be considered to have wielded it as a weapon of scepticism. Even so used, however, religion was still the subject to which it was applied. At last came Peter Lombard, who, by the publication, about the middle of the twelfth century, of his celebrated Four Books of Sentences, properly founded the system of what is called the Scholastic Theology. The schoolmen, from the Master of the Sentences, as Lombard was designated, down to Francis Suarez, who died after the commencement of the seventeenth century, were all theologians. Although, however, religious speculation was the field of thought upon which the spirit of the Aristotelian philosophy chiefly ex

pended itself, there was scarcely any one of the arts or sciences upon which it did not in some degree seize. The scholastic logic became the universal instrument of thought and study: every branch of human learning was attempted to be pursued by its assistance; and most branches were more or less affected by its influence in regard to the forms which they assumed.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. — PETER OF BLOIS.

JOHN of Salisbury went to complete his education at Paris in the year 1136. "When I beheld," he writes in a letter to his friend Becket, "the reverence paid to the clergy, the majesty and glory of the whole Church, and the various occupations of those who applied themselves to philosophy in that city, it raised my admiration as if I had seen the ladder of Jacob, the top of which reached to Heaven, while the steps were crowded with angels ascending and descending." The first master whose lectures he attended was the renowned Abelard, still, after all the vicissitudes of his life, teaching with undiminished glory, in the midst of a vast confluence of admiring disciples, on the Mount of St. Geneviève. "I drank in," says his English pupil, "with incredible avidity, every word that fell from his lips; but he soon, to my infinite regret, retired." Abelard lived only a few years after this date, which he spent in devotion and entire seclusion from the world. John of Salisbury then studied dialectics for two years under two other masters, one of whom was his countryman, Robert de Melun, mentioned above. After this he returned to the study of grammar and rhetoric, which he pursued for three years under William de Conches, of whose method of teaching he has left a particular account. It appears to have embraced a critical exposition both of the style and the matter of the writers commented upon, and to have been well calculated to nourish both the understanding and the taste. After this he spent seven years under other masters, partly in the further prosecution of his acquaintance with the writers of antiquity and the practice of Latin composition, partly in the study of the mathematics and theology. The entire course thus occupied twelve years; but some, it would

appear, devoted the whole of this time to the study of dialectics, or logic, alone. John of Salisbury's treatise entitled *Metalogicus* is intended principally to expose the absurdity and injurious effects of this exclusive devotion to the art of wrangling; and, although it must be considered as written with some degree of satirical license, the representation which it gives of the state of things produced by the new spirit that had gone abroad over the realms of learning is very curious and interesting. The turn of the writer's own genius was decidedly to the rhetorical rather than the metaphysical, and he was not very well qualified, perhaps, to perceive certain of the uses or recommendations of the study against which he directs his attack; but the extravagances of its devotees, it may be admitted, fairly exposed them to his ridicule and castigation. "I wish," he says in one place, "to behold the light of truth, which these logicians say is only revealed to them. I approach them, — I beseech them to instruct me, that, if possible, I may become as wise as one of them. They consent, — they promise great things, — and at first they command me to observe a Pythagorean silence, that I may be admitted into all the secrets of wisdom which they pretend are in their possession. But by and by they permit, and even command me, to prattle and quibble with them. This they call disputing; this they say is logic; but I am no wiser." He accuses them of wasting their ingenuity in the discussion of such puerile puzzles as whether a person in buying a whole cloak also bought the cowl; or whether, when a hog was carried to market with a rope tied about its neck, and held at the other end by a man, the hog was really carried to market by the man or by the rope. It must be confessed that, if their logic had been worth much, it ought to have made short work with these questions, supposing them to be worth settling at all. Our author adds, however, that they were declared to be questions which could not be solved, the arguments on both sides exactly balancing each other. But his quarrel with the dialecticians was chiefly on the ground of the disregard and aversion they manifested, in their method of exercising the intellectual powers, to all polite literature, to all that was merely graceful and ornamental. And there can be no question that the ascendancy of the scholastic philosophy was fatal for the time to the cultivation of polite literature in Europe. So long as it reigned supreme in the schools, learning was wholly divorced from taste. The useful utterly rejected all connection with the

beautiful. The head looked down with contempt upon the heart. Poetry and fiction, and whatever else belonged to the imaginative part of our nature, were abandoned altogether to the unlearned, to the makers of songs and lays for the people. It was probably fortunate for poetry, and the kindred forms of literature, in the end, that they were thus left solely to the popular cultivation for a time: they drew nourishment and new life from the new soil into which they were transplanted; and their produce has been the richer and the racier for it ever since. The revival of polite literature probably came at a better time in the fifteenth than if it had come in the twelfth century. Yet it was not to be expected that, when it was threatened with blight and extinction at the earlier era, its friends should either have been able to foresee its resurrection two or three centuries later, or should have been greatly consoled by that prospect if they had.

John of Salisbury's chief work is his *Polycraticon*, or, as he further entitles it, *A Treatise in eight books, on the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footsteps of Philosophers* (*De Nugis Curialium et Vestigiis Philosophorum*). "It is," says Warton, "an extremely pleasant miscellany, replete with erudition, and a judgment of men and things which properly belongs to a more sensible and reflecting period. His familiar acquaintance with the classics appears not only from the happy facility of his language, but from the many citations of the purest Roman authors with which his works are perpetually interspersed."¹ He also wrote Latin verses with extreme elegance. John of Salisbury died bishop of Chartres in 1182. Peter of Blois (or Petrus Blesensis), a native of the town in France from which he takes his name, was another distinguished cultivator of polite literature in the same age. Among the writings he has left us, his Letters collected by himself to the number of 134, are especially interesting, abounding as they do in graphic descriptions of the manners and characters of the time. But neither in elegance of taste and style, nor in general literary accomplishment, is the Frenchman to be compared with his English contemporary.

¹ *Introd. of Learning into Eng.* p. cxx. (ed. 1840).

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CLASSICAL LEARNING. — MATHEMATICS. — MEDICINE. —
LAW. — BOOKS.

THE classical knowledge of this period, however, was almost confined to the Roman authors, and some of the most eminent of these were as yet unstudied and unknown. Even John of Salisbury, though a few Greek words are to be found in his compositions, seems to have had only the slightest possible acquaintance with that language. Both it and the Hebrew, nevertheless, were known to Abelard and Eloisa; and it is probable that there were both in England and other European countries a few students of the Oriental tongues, for the acquisition of which inducements and facilities must have been presented, not only by the custom of resorting to the Arabic colleges in Spain, and the constant intercourse with the East kept up by the pilgrimages and the crusades, but also by the numbers of learned Jews that were everywhere to be found. In England the Jews had schools in London, York, Lincoln, Lynn, Norwich, Oxford, Cambridge, and other towns, which appear to have been attended by Christians as well as by those of their own persuasion. Some of these seminaries, indeed, were rather colleges than schools. Besides the Hebrew and Arabic languages, arithmetic and medicine are mentioned among the branches of knowledge that were taught in them; and the masters were generally the most distinguished of the rabbis. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the age of Sarchi, the Kimchis, Maïmonides, and other distinguished names, rabbinical learning was in an eminently flourishing state.

There is no certain evidence that the Arabic numerals were yet known in Europe: they certainly were not in general use. Although the Elements of Euclid and other geometrical works had been translated into Latin from the Arabic, the mathematical sciences appear to have been but little studied. "The science of demonstration," says John of Salisbury, in his *Metalogicus*, "is of all others the most difficult, and alas! is almost quite neglected, except by a very few who apply to the study of the mathematics, and particularly of geometry. But this last is at present very little attended to amongst us, and is only studied by some persons in Spain, Egypt, and Arabia, for the sake of astronomy. One reason of this is, that those parts of the works of Aristotle that relate to

the demonstrative sciences are so ill translated, and so incorrectly transcribed, that we meet with insurmountable difficulties in every chapter." The name of the mathematics at this time, indeed, was chiefly given to the science of astrology. "Mathematicians," says Peter of Blois, "are those who, from the position of the stars, the aspect of the firmament, and the motions of the planets, discover things that are to come." Astronomy, however, or the true science of the stars, which was zealously cultivated by the Arabs in the East and in Spain, seems also to have had some cultivators among the learned of Christian Europe. Latin translations existed of several Greek and Arabic astronomical works. In the History attributed to Ingulphus, is the following curious description of a sort of scheme or representation of the planetary system called the Nadir, which is stated to have been destroyed when the abbey of Croyland was burnt in 1091: "We then lost a most beautiful and precious table, fabricated of different kinds of metals, according to the variety of the stars and heavenly signs. Saturn was of copper, Jupiter of gold, Mars of iron, the sun of latten, Mercury of amber. Venus of tin, the Moon of silver. The eyes were charmed, as well as the mind instructed, by beholding the colure circles, with the zodiac and all its signs, formed with wonderful art, of metals and precious stones, according to their several natures, forms, figures, and colors. It was the most admired and celebrated Nadir in all England." These last words would seem to imply that such tables were then not uncommon. This one, it is stated, had been presented to a former abbot of Croyland by a king of France.

John of Salisbury, in his account of his studies at Paris, makes no mention either of medicine or of law. With regard to the former, indeed, he elsewhere expressly tells us that the Parisians themselves used to go to study it at Salerno and Montpellier. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, however, we find a school of medicine established at Paris, which soon became very celebrated. Of course there were, at an earlier date, persons who practised the medical art in that city. The physicians in all the countries of Europe at this period were generally churchmen. Many of the Arabic medical works were early translated into Latin; but the Parisian professors soon began to publish treatises on the art of their own. The science of the physicians of this age, besides comprehending whatever was to be learned respecting the diagnostics and treatment of diseases from Hippocrates, Galen,

and the other ancient writers, embraced a considerable body of botanical and chemical knowledge. Chemistry in particular the Arabs had carried far beyond the point at which it had been left by the ancients. Of anatomy little could as yet be accurately known, while the dissection of the human subject was not practised. Yet it would appear that physicians and surgeons were already beginning to be distinguished from each other. Both the canon and civil laws were also introduced into the routine of study at the University of Paris soon after the time when John of Salisbury studied there. The canon law was originally considered to be a part of theology, and only took the form of a separate study after the publication of the systematic compilation of it called the *Decretum* of Gratian, in 1151. Gratian was a monk of Bologna, and his work, not the first collection of the kind, but the most complete and the best arranged that had yet been compiled, was immediately introduced as a text-book in that university. It may be regarded as having laid the foundation of the science of the canon law, in the same manner as the system of the scholastic philosophy was founded by Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences*. Regular lecturers upon it very soon appeared at Orleans, at Paris, at Oxford, and all the other chief seats of learning in western Christendom; and before the end of the twelfth century no other study was more eagerly pursued, or attracted greater crowds of students, than that of the canon law. One of its first and most celebrated teachers at Paris was Girard la Pucelle, an Englishman, who afterwards became bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. Girard taught the canon law in Paris from 1160 to 1177; and, in consideration of his distinguished merits and what was deemed the great importance of his instructions, he received from Pope Alexander III. letters exempting him from the obligation of residing on his preferments in England while he was so engaged; this being, it is said, the first known example of such a privilege being granted to any professor.¹ The same professors who taught the canon law taught also, along with it, the civil law, the systematic study of which, likewise, took its rise in this century, and at the University of Bologna, where the *Pandects* of Justinian — of which a more perfect copy than had before been known is said to have been found in 1137 at Amalfi² — were arranged

¹ Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris*, i. 244.

² "The discovery of the *Pandects* at Amalfi," says Gibbon, "is first noticed (in 1501) by Ludovicus Bologninus, on the faith of a Pisan Chronicle, without a name or date. The whole story, though unknown to the twelfth century, embellished by

and first lectured upon by the German Irnerins, — the Lamp of the Law, as he was called, — about the year 1150. Both the canon and the civil law, however, are said to have been taught a few years before this time at Oxford by Roger, surnamed the Bachelor, a monk of Bec, in Normandy. The study was, from the first, vehemently opposed by the practitioners of the common law ; but, sustained by the influence of the Church, and eventually also favored by the government, it rose above all attempts to put it down. John of Salisbury affirms that, by the blessing of God, the more it was persecuted the more it flourished. Peter of Blois, in one of his letters, gives us the following curious account of the ardor with which it was pursued under the superintendence of Archbishop Theobald: — “In the house of my master, the Archbishop of Canterbury, there are several very learned men, famous for their knowledge of law and politics, who spend the time between prayers and dinner in lecturing, disputing, and debating causes. To us all the knotty questions of the kingdom are referred, which are produced in the common hall, and every one in his order, having first prepared himself, declares, with all the eloquence and acuteness of which he is capable, but without wrangling, what is wisest and safest to be done. If God suggests the soundest opinion to the youngest amongst us, we all agree to it without envy or detraction.”¹

Study in every department must have been still greatly impeded by the scarcity and high price of books ; but their multiplication now went on much more rapidly than it had formerly done. We have already noticed the immense libraries said to have been accumulated by the Arabs, both in their Oriental and European seats of empire. No collections to be compared with these existed anywhere in Christian Europe ; but, of the numerous monasteries that were planted in every country, few were without libraries of greater or less extent. A convent without a library, it used to be proverbially said, was like a castle without an armory. When the monastery of Croyland was burnt in 1091, its library, according to Ingulphus, consisted of 900 volumes, of which 300 were very large. “In every great abbey,” says Warton, “there was an apartment called the Scriptorium ; where many writers were constantly busied in transcribing not only the service-books for the choir, but books

ignorant ages, and suspected by rigid criticism, is not however destitute of much internal probability.”

¹ Ep. vi., as translated in Henry's History of Britain.

for the library. The Scriptorium of St. Albans abbey was built by Abbot Paulin, a Norman, who ordered many volumes to be written there, about the year 1080. Archbishop Lanfranc furnished the copies. Estates were often granted for the support of the Scriptorium. . . . I find some of the classics written in the English monasteries very early. Henry, a Benedictine monk of Hyde Abbey, near Winchester, transcribed in the year 1178 Terence, Boethius, Suetonius, and Claudian. Of these he formed one book, illuminating the initials, and forming the brazen bosses of the covers with his own hands." Other instances of the same kind are added. The monks were much accustomed both to illuminate and to bind books, as well as to transcribe them. "The scarcity of parchment," it is afterwards observed, "undoubtedly prevented the transcription of many other books in these societies. About the year 1120, one Master Hugh, being appointed by the convent of St. Edmondsbury, in Suffolk, to write and illuminate a grand copy of the Bible for their library, could procure no parchment for this purpose in England."¹ Paper made of cotton, however, was certainly in common use in the twelfth century, though no evidence exists that that manufactured from linen rags was known till about the middle of the thirteenth.



THE LATIN LANGUAGE.

DURING the whole of the Anglo-Norman period, and down to a much later date, in England as in the other countries of Christendom, the common language of literary composition, in all works intended for the perusal of the educated classes, was still the Latin, the language of religion throughout the western world, as it had been from the first ages of the Church. Christianity had not only, through its monastic institutions, saved from destruction, in the breaking up of the Roman Empire, whatever we still possess of ancient literature, but had also, by its priesthood and its ritual, preserved the language of Rome in some sort still a living and spoken tongue,—corrupted indeed by the introduction of many new and barbarous terms, and illegitimate acceptations, and by much bad taste in style

¹ Introd. of Learning into England, p. cxvi.

and phraseology, but still wholly unchanged in its grammatical forms, and even in its vocabulary much less altered than it probably would have been if it had continued all the while to be spoken and written by an unmixed Roman population. It would almost seem as if, even in the Teutonic countries, such as England, the services of the church, uninterruptedly repeated in the same words since the first ages, had kept up in the general mind something of a dim traditional understanding of the old imperial tongue. We read of some foreign ecclesiastics, who could not speak English, being accustomed to preach to the people in Latin. A passage quoted above from the Croyland History seems to imply that Gislebert, or Gilbert, one of the founders of the University of Cambridge, used to employ Latin as well as French on such occasions. So, Giraldus Cambrensis tells us that, in a progress which he made through Wales in 1186, to assist Archbishop Baldwin in preaching a new crusade for the delivery of the Holy Land, he was always most successful when he appealed to the people in a Latin sermon; he asserts, indeed, that they did not understand a word of it, although it never failed to melt them into tears, and to make them come in crowds to take the cross. No doubt they were acted upon chiefly through their ears and their imaginations, and for the most part only supposed that they comprehended what they were listening to; but it is probable that their self-deception was assisted by their catching a word or phrase here and there the meaning of which they really understood. The Latin tongue must in those days have been heard in common life on a thousand occasions from which it has now passed away. It was the language of all the learned professions, of law and physic as well as of divinity, in all their grades. It was in Latin that the teachers at the Universities (many of whom, as well as of the ecclesiastics, were foreigners) delivered their prelections in all the sciences, and that all the disputations and other exercises among the students were carried on. It was the same at all the monastic schools and other seminaries of learning. The number of persons by whom these various institutions were attended was very great: they were of all ages from boyhood to advanced manhood; and poor scholars must have been found in every village, mingling with every class of the people, in some one or other of the avocations which they followed in the intervals of their attendance at the Universities, or after they had finished their education, from parish priests down to wandering beggars.

LATIN POETS.—MAPES, ETC.

MUCH Latin poetry was written in this age by Englishmen, some of it of a popular character. Warton enumerates Joannes Grammaticus,¹ Lawrence, prior of Durham, Robert Dunstable,² the historians Henry of Huntingdon, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Eadmer, William of Malmesbury, Giraldus Cambrensis, and Geoffrey de Vinsauf (*Galfridus de Vinosalvo*), John Hauvill,³ Alexander Neckam, Walter Mapes, archdeacon of Oxford, and above all Joseph Iscanus, or Joseph of Exeter, whom he characterizes as “a miracle in classical composition;” adding, in regard to one of his works, an epic on the subject of the Trojan war, “The diction of this poem is generally pure, the periods round, and the numbers harmonious; and on the whole the structure of the versification approaches nearly to that of polished Latin poetry.”⁴ Walter Mapes, or rather Map, who was archdeacon of Oxford, has the credit of having been the author of most of the pieces of Latin poetry belonging to the latter part of the twelfth century, which from their form and character may be supposed to have acquired anything like general popularity. In particular the famous drinking song, in rhyming or Leonine verse, beginning —

“Meum est propositum in taberna mori,”

is attributed to this “genial archdeacon.”⁵

¹ Mr. Wright (*Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 48) denies the existence of this writer, supposed by Tanner and others to have belonged to the latter part of the eleventh century. The works attributed to him, he says, were certainly written by other persons.

² His name appears to have been, not *Robert*, but *Radulph* (or *Ralph*). See Wright's *Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 212.

³ Mr. Wright has shown that the name is not *Hauvill* (as given by Warton), but *Hawill*, or *Hauteville*, in Latin *De Alta Vitra*. See his note on Warton, p. cxxi., and *Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 250, &c.

⁴ Dissertation on the Introd. of Learning into England, cxvii.—cxxxiv.

⁵ The expression is Warton's (*Diss. on Introd. of Learning*, p. cxxvi.). The Latin Poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes have been printed by the Camden Society, as collected and edited by Thomas Wright, Esq., M. A., F. S. A., &c., 4to. Lond. 1841. In an introduction to this volume Mr. Wright remarks:—“The common notion that Walter Mapes was a ‘jovial toper’ must be placed in the long list of vulgar errors.” The drinking song, nevertheless, as commonly given, forms part of one of the pieces which Mr. Wright has printed, one which he admits has been constantly attributed to Mapes, and the authorship of which, he says, he hesitates, without any direct evidence to the contrary, in taking from him; and the only correction which the perusal of the entire poem can make upon the impression produced by the part commonly quoted is to extend the sense in which we must

To Warton's dozen names, or thereby, Mr. Wright, in his account of the writers of the Anglo-Norman Period (Biog. Brit. Lit., vol. ii. 1846), has added about a score of others belonging to Latin poets and versifiers of the first century and a half after the Conquest. Among the most important are those of Guy, or Wido, bishop of Amiens, author of an elegiac poem on the Battle of Hastings, discovered a few years ago at Brussels, and since several times printed; Godfrey, prior of Winchester, in the latter part of the eleventh century, whom Mr. Wright designates as "the first and best of the Anglo-Norman writers of Latin verse;" Hilarius, author of three scriptural dramas and a number of shorter pieces, preserved in a single manuscript now in the Bibliothèque Impériale at Paris, from which they were edited in 1838 by M. Champollion-Figeac; John of Salisbury, a work in verse by whom was edited by Professor Christian Petersen, at Hamburg, in 1843; and Nigellus Wireker, for whose surname, however, Mr. Wright finds no satisfactory authority, the author, among other pieces, of the *Speculum Stultorum* referred to in a preceding page.



LATIN CHRONICLERS.

BUT by far the most valuable portion of our Latin literature of this age consists of the numerous historical works which it has bequeathed to us. As these works have a double interest for the English reader, belonging to the country and the age in which they were written by their subject as well as by their authorship, we will give some account of the most important of them.

The following are the principal collections that have been made in modern times of our old Latin historians or chroniclers:—

1. *Rerum Britannicarum, id est, Angliæ, Scotiæ, Vicinarumque Insularum ac Regionum, Scriptores Vetusiores ac Præcipui*: (a *HIER. COMMELINO*). Fol. Heidelb. & Lugd. 1587.

consider the author to have been what he has been designated, the Anacreon of his day. Lord Lyttelton, from whom that epithet is quoted by Warton as a very happy one, has inadvertently written the Anacreon of the *eleventh*, instead of the *twelfth*, century. Mapes lived and wrote in the reigns of Henry II. and Richard I.: his death, according to Mr. Wright, "is supposed to have occurred towards the year 1210." (Introd. to *Poems*, p. vii.)

2. *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores post Bedam Præcipui, ex Vetus-
tissimis MSS. nunc primum in lucem editi*: (a HEN. SAVILE).
Fol. Lon. 1596, and Francof. 1601.

3. *Anglica, Normannica, Hibernica, Cambrica, a veteribus Scripta,
ex Bibl GUILIELMI CAMDENI*. Fol. Francof. 1602 and 1603.

4. *Historiæ Normannorum Scriptores Antiqui*; studio ANDRÆ
DUCHESNE. Fol. Paris. 1619.

5. *Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores Decem, ex vetustis MSS.
nunc primum in lucem editi*: (a ROG. TWYSDEN et JOAN. SELDEN).
Fol. Lon. 1652.

6. *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptorum Veterum Tomus I^{m^{us}}*; Quo-
rum Ingulfus nunc primum integer, ceteri nunc primum, prodeunt:
(a JOAN. FELL, vel potius GUL. FULMAN). Fol. Oxon. 1684.
(Sometimes incorrectly cited as the 1st vol. of Gale's Collection.)

7. *Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores Quinque, ex vetustis Codd.
MSS. nunc primum in lucem editi*: (a THOM. GALE). Fol. Oxon.
1687. (This is properly the 2d vol. of Gale's Collection.)

8. *Historiæ Britannicæ, Saxonicæ, Anglo-Danicæ, Scriptores
Quindecim, ex vetustis Codd. MSS. editi, opera THOMÆ GALE*.
Fol. Oxon. 1691. (This is properly the 1st vol. of Gale's Collec-
tion, though often cited as the 3d.)

9. *Anglia Sacra; sive Collectio Historiarum . . . de Archie-
piscopis et Episcopis Angliæ*; (a HENRICO WHARTON). 2 Tom.
Fol. Lon. 1691.

10. *Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores Varii, e Codd. MSS. nunc
primum editi*: (a JOS. SPARKE). Fol. Lon. 1723.

11. *Historiæ Anglicanæ circa tempus Conquestus Angliæ a
Guilielmo Notho, Normannorum Duce, selecta Monumenta; ex-
cerpta ex volumine And. Duchesne; cum Notis, &c.*: (a FRANCISCO
MASERES). 4to. Lon. 1807.

12. *Monumenta Historica Britannica; or, Materials for the His-
tory of Britain from the earliest period to the end of the reign of
King Henry VII. Published by command of her Majesty. Vol.
1st (extending to the Norman Conquest). Fol. Lon. 1848. (By
PETRIE, SHARPE, and HARDY.)*

To which may be added:—

13. The series of works printed by the HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
from 1838 to 1856, extending to 29 vols. 8vo.; and,

14. The series entitled *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scrip-
tores, or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland*

during the Middle Ages. Published by authority of her Majesty's Treasury, under the direction of the Master of the Rolls. 8vo. Lon. 1857, &c.

INGULPHUS.

THE History of the Abbey of Croyland, or, as the place is now called, Crowland, in Lincolnshire, professing to be written by the Abbot Ingulphus, who presided over the establishment from A. D. 1075 till his death, at the age of about eighty, in 1109, was first published from an imperfect copy by Sir Henry Savile in his collection (Lon. 1596, and Francfort 1601); and afterwards in a more complete form by Fulman in his *Scriptores Veteres* (Oxford 1684). In the interval between these two (the only) editions of the work, the Laws of William the Conqueror, in French, which were wanting in the MS. used by Savile, were published from another MS. by Selden in 1623 in his edition of Eadmer, and from another by Sir Henry Spelman in 1639 in the first volume of his *Concilia*. All these four (the only known) MSS. of the work have now disappeared. Of what has become of that used by Savile nothing is known; that from which Selden took his copy of the Laws of the Conqueror seems to have been one which was in the Cotton Library, — the same from which Fulman was supplied with a leaf in which his own MS. was defective by his friend Gale,¹ — and that was destroyed by the calamitous fire at Ashburnham House in 1731; that which Spelman transcribed was preserved in the church of Croyland, in a chest locked with three keys, which were kept by the church-wardens, and was believed by him to be what it was reputed, the author's autograph, — but, as Selden could not obtain access to it a few years before, so nobody has seen it since, and, when Fulman made inquiry after it in the latter part of the same century, it was no longer to be found; — finally, that employed by Fulman, which belonged to Sir John Marsham, was afterwards given or lent by him to Obadiah Walker, the famous Master of University College, who was turned out at the Revolution in 1688, and all that further appears is that Walker told Bishop Gibson in 1694 that it was then in the library of University College, where

¹ See *Rer. Ang. Script.* 1684, *Præfat.*, and p. 131.

however it has not since been found. It seems most likely that it never was deposited there, but was carried off by Walker, who professed to consider it as his own property on the simple principle, which it appears is recognized among antiquarian collectors, that a manuscript belongs to any one who has once, no matter by what means, got it into his possession. "The old gentleman," writes Gibson to Dr. Charlett, the then Master of University College, in relating what had just passed between them on the subject, "has too much of the spirit of an antiquary and a great scholar to think stealing a manuscript any sin. He has ordered me not to discover where it is lodged." These particulars are mostly collected from a learned and valuable paper on the sources of Anglo-Saxon history which appeared some years ago in the *Quarterly Review*,¹ and to which we shall have frequent occasion further to refer. The writer (understood to be Sir Francis Palgrave) proceeds to show, very ingeniously and conclusively, that the MS. which Spelman saw at Croyland could not in all probability have been older than the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century, from a mistranscription of a word in his extract (*Eustres* for *Eucesges*), which was very likely to have taken place in copying a writing of that date, but could hardly have happened in reading a manuscript of the end of the eleventh century, the age of Ingulphus. But, if the external evidence for the antiquity and authenticity of the work be thus defective, the internal evidence may be pronounced to be conclusive against its claim to be accounted either the composition of Ingulphus or a work of any historical value. It appears in fact to be, if not altogether what the reviewer calls it, "an historical novel," at least in the main a monkish forgery of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, which may possibly contain some things not the produce of the writer's invention, and found by him in histories or other records now lost, but no statement in which, whatever appearance of probability it may wear, can be safely received upon its authority. Not only the portion of the history which relates to the times preceding the pretended writer's own age, but the account which Ingulphus is made to give of himself, is full of the most glaring improbabilities, and in some parts demon-

¹ Vol. xxxiv. No. 67 (for June, 1826), pp. 248-298. According to Mr. Wright, however (*Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 31), "there is a transcript of the latter part of the sixteenth century among the Arundel MSS. in the British Museum, No. 178, which was evidently the copy from which Savile printed his edition." "The MS. used by Gale [Fulman]," he adds, "is said to exist in the Library at Holkham."

strably false and impossible. For the demonstration, however, we must refer the reader to the article in the Quarterly Review, the writer of which justly observes that “anachronisms which merely impeach the *accuracy* of the *historian* are entirely *fatal* to *autobiography*.” In none of our chroniclers anterior to the fourteenth century, the reviewer asserts, is there a single line to be traced that is borrowed from Ingulphus. And this is a fact of no slight significance:—“If the work,” he remarks, “had existed, it could scarcely have been neglected by these inveterate compilers.” Of course, if the History of Croyland by Ingulphus be rejected, its continuation to A. D. 1118, attributed to Peter of Blois, which was also contained in the Cotton and Sir John Marsham’s codices, and is published in Fulman’s Collection, must be included in the same sentence, its pretended author having died long before the date at which, upon this supposition, the work he professes to continue was written. There are also three further continuations, bringing down the narrative, with certain gaps, to the year 1469. An English translation of the whole, by Mr. H. T. Riley, was published in Bohm’s Antiquarian Library, in 1854; and another the same year by Mr. Stevenson in vol. ii. Part 2d of the Church Historians of England.



WILLIAM OF POITIERS.

PUTTING Ingulphus and his first continuator aside, our oldest historian of the Conquest will be William of Poitiers (Guillelmus Pictavensis, Pictaviensis, or Pictavinus), whose life of the Conqueror (*Gesta Guillelmi Ducis Normannorum et Regis Anglorum*) was published by Duchesne in his *Historiæ Normannorum Scriptores*, Paris, 1619, and has been reprinted by Baron Maseres in his useful selection from that scarce volume, Lon. 1808. A new edition announced as in preparation by the English Historical Society, has never appeared; but a translation into French, originally published at Caen in 1826, is included in M. Guizot’s *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l’Histoire de France, jusqu’au 13^e siècle*, 31 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1820–35. Unfortunately the only known MS. of the work, which is in the Cotton Library at the British Museum, is imperfect: Ordericus Vitalis (writing in the beginning of the

next century) expressly describes the narrative as ending with the death of Earl Edwin in 1070, but what we have of it comes down only to March, or April, 1067. The beginning is also wanting. What remains, however, which includes the English and Norman story from the death of Canute in 1035, when the Norman duke was only eight years old, to his coronation as king of England after the victory of Hastings, and the first acts of his reign, is of the highest value. William of Poitiers was not an Englishman; he was a native of Normandy, and derived his surname of Pictaviensis from having received his education at Poitiers; but he appears to have accompanied his hero and patron on his expedition to England, and, in that as well as in the other parts of his story, to relate for the most part what he had seen with his own eyes. He had been in close attendance upon or connection with the Conqueror for the greater part of their lives, having first served under him as a soldier, and having afterwards been made his chaplain, — if indeed he may not, like Friar Tuck and Robin Hood in the next age, have officiated at the same time in both these capacities. No one, therefore, could have enjoyed better opportunities of observing and appreciating William in all aspects of his character, public and domestic, as a sovereign and as a man; and Pictaviensis had both head and heart enough of his own to comprehend the high nature with which he was thus brought into contact. His biography of the Conqueror is throughout a cordial and sympathizing narrative — a full-length picture of a great man drawn at least with no timid hand. Yet there is no profession or apparent design of defence or panegyric, and but little direct expression of admiration; that feeling is too natural, too habitual, too much a matter of course with the worthy chaplain to be very often or very emphatically expressed; with no misgivings either of his subject or of his reader, he contents himself for the most part with stating facts, and leaving them to speak for themselves. The work, it may be added, is written with considerable ambition of eloquence; Pictaviensis had had a learned education to begin with, which his campaigning did not knock out of him, so that, when he returned in his old age to his native country and was made archdeacon of Lisieux, he was esteemed quite a shining light of scholarship in the Norman Church. In the judgment of Ordericus Vitalis his Latin is an imitation of that of Sallust; and in the same subtle and artistic style, we are told, he also wrote much verse, none of which, however, appears to be now extant.

ORDERICUS VITALIS.

ORDERICUS VITALIS is the author of a general Ecclesiastical History, beginning from the Creation and coming down to A. D. 1141, the whole of which, consisting of thirteen books, and occupying above 600 folio pages, or more than half of his collection, Duchesne has printed. A greatly improved edition of the entire work, by M. A. Le Prévost, the publication of which at Paris was begun in 1838 under the auspices of the Société de l'Histoire de France, was completed in 5 volumes 8vo. in 1855; and a reproduction of the old text of Duchesne is stated to form the 148th volume of the Patrologie of M. l'Abbé Migne, published the same year. Ordericus, or Ordricus, who assumed the name of Vitalis on becoming a monk of the monastery of Ouche (*Uticum*), otherwise known as that of St. Evroult, in Normandy, in which he spent the rest of his days, was of English birth: he was born at a village which he calls Attingesham (Atcham) on the Severn, in Shropshire, in 1075; and, although he had been carried to the Continent to be educated for the ecclesiastical profession when he was only in his eleventh year, and spent all the rest of his life abroad, he continued to take a special interest in the affairs of his native country, and of its Norman sovereigns, with whom his father, whom he calls Odclerius, the son of Constantius of Orleans, had probably been nearly connected as principal counsellor (*præcipuo consiliario*), whatever that may mean, to Roger Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, who was one of the followers of the Conqueror. He is accordingly very full in his account of English transactions from the epoch of the Norman Conquest; and his history is particularly valuable in the portion of it from A. D. 1066 to 1070, as in some sort supplying what is lost of that of Pictaviensis, whose narrative he professes generally to have followed, although not without both omissions and variations. This portion of the History of Ordericus Vitalis, making about a thirteenth part of the whole, has been reprinted by Maseres in his *Selecta Monumenta*; and there is a French translation of the entire work by Louis Du Bois, in the collection of ancient French *Mémoires*, published at Paris under the superintendence of M. Guizot. (Vols. 25, 26, 27, and 28.) An English translation, with Notes, by Mr. Thomas Forester, has appeared in Bohn's *Antiquarian Library*, in 4 vols., 1853-4.

A remarkable fragment, taken from an ancient book belonging to the monastery of St. Stephen at Caen, containing an account of the last hours of the Conqueror, and of his death and funeral, which Camden has printed in his Collection, and which he conjectures to be probably from the pen of Guillelmus Pictaviensis, is in fact the concluding portion of the Seventh Book of Ordericus Vitalis. A translation of it is given by Stow in his Chronicle. Ordericus has himself told us that Pictaviensis was prevented by circumstances from bringing down his History, as he had intended to do, to the death of the Conqueror.



GESTA STEPHANI.—WILLIAM OF JUMIEGES.

ANOTHER valuable portion of the English history of this period by a contemporary writer, which Duchesne has published, is the tract entitled *Gesta Stephani*, filling about fifty of his pages. It is by a partisan of Stephen, but is probably the fairest, as it is the fullest and most distinct account we have of his turbulent reign. A new edition of it, prepared by Mr. R. C. Sewell, was published by the English Historical Society in 1846; and it is translated, along with the Chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon, by Mr. Forester, in one of the volumes of Bohn's Antiquarian Library, 1853.

In Duchesne's Collection is likewise the History, in eight books, of the Dukes of Normandy, by William, the monk of Jumieges, surnamed *Calculus*, — *Willelmi Calculi Gemmeticensis Monachi Historia Normannorum*, — which Camden had printed before, from a worse manuscript and less correctly, in his *Anglica, Normannica, &c.* Of this also there is a French translation in M. Guizot's Collection (vol. 29): it was originally published at Caen, along with William of Poitiers, in 1826. *Gemmeticensis* in the earlier part of his work, down to the accession of Duke Richard II., the great-grandfather of William the Conqueror, in 996, is little more than an abridger of the earlier Norman historian Dudo (also in Duchesne); but there are a few facts not elsewhere to be found in the sequel, which brings down the narrative of Norman and English affairs to his own time, and which is farther continued through

the reigns of the Conqueror and his two sons, apparently by another hand; for Gemmeticensis dedicates his work to the Conqueror, and Ordericus Vitalis expressly states that he finished it with the battle of Hastings.

FLORENCE OF WORCESTER.

THE earliest of our English chroniclers or annalists, properly so called, who wrote after the Norman Conquest is commonly held to be the monk Florence of Worcester, whose work, entitled *Chronicon ex Chronicis*, was printed in 4to., at London, in 1592, under the care of Lord William Howard,¹ and reprinted in folio at Francfort in 1601. Two new editions have recently been published:—one, by Mr. Petrie, in the *Monumenta*, 1848; the other prepared by Mr. Thorpe for the Historical Society, 2 vols. 8vo., 1848–49. It extends from the Creation to the year 1119, in which the author died; and there is printed along with it a continuation by another writer to the year 1141. It is, for the greater part, a transcript from the notices of English affairs contained in the *General History or Chronology* which bears the name of *Marianus Scotus*, intermixed with a nearly complete transcript of Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, and enlarged in the times not treated of in that work by ample translations from the *National Chronicle*. The *Chronicle of Scotus* (said to have been of English birth and descended from a relation of Bede), was a favorite book in our monasteries in the Middle Ages; “there was hardly one in the kingdom,” says Bishop Nicolson, “that wanted a copy of it, and some had several.” Besides the numerous transcripts, which vary greatly, it has been more than once printed, but never, we believe, in a complete form. Speaking of Florence of Worcester's compilation, the writer of the article in the *Quarterly Review*, to which we have more than once referred, observes: “Some notices are

¹ This was Lord William Howard, Warden of the Western Marches, the “Belted Will Howard” of Border tradition, whose castle of Naworth, in Cumberland, where his bedroom and library were preserved, with the books and furniture, in the same state as when he tenanted the apartments more than two centuries ago, was unhappily consumed a few years ago by an accidental fire, with all its interesting contents.

extracted from Bede. The facts of which the original sources cannot be ascertained are very few, but important, and occur principally in the early part of this history. They are generally of that class which we may suppose to have been derived from the Saxon genealogies. Though the great mass of information afforded by Florence is extant in the Saxon Chronicle, still his work is extremely valuable. He understood the ancient Saxon language well—better, perhaps, than any of his contemporaries; and he has furnished us with an accurate translation from a text which seems to have been the best of its kind.” The principal value of Florence’s performance in fact consists in its serving as a key to the Chronicle. One of the volumes of Bohn’s Library contains a translation, by Mr. Forester, of Florence of Worcester, and also of two anonymous continuations of his work, one of which, extending to the year 1141, is accounted of great value. This is not given in the Monumenta, but it is in the other editions. Both Florence and his continuators appear also in the First Part of the Second Volume of *The Church Historians of England* (1853), “in part translated” by Mr. Stevenson.



MATTHEW OF WESTMINSTER.

THE Quarterly Reviewer, however, is inclined to think that Florence was preceded by another writer, the author of the compilation entitled *Flores Historiarum*, usually ascribed to Matthew of Westminster, who appears to be a fictitious personage. This English History, which has been brought down by other unknown writers to the year 1307 (or to the end of the reign of Edward I.), is based upon another general chronicle similar to that of Marianus Scotus, with the addition of much matter derived apparently from ancient English sources, some of which are unknown. The writer in the Quarterly Review, who prefers giving the author the name of Florilegus, thinks it probable that his work supplied Florence with certain passages which are not found in the National Chronicle. “Florilegus,” he observes, “has retained and quoted a sufficient number of Anglo-Saxonisms, and of Anglo-Saxon phrases, to show that he was in possession of Saxon materials,

which he consulted to the best of his ability. He has not used them with the fidelity of Florence of Worcester, for his knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language was imperfect, but still he is not guilty of any intentional falsification, and, therefore, when he relates probable facts, it is fair to conclude that he is equally veracious, although the Saxon original of his *Chronicle* be not extant.”¹ The work, under the title of *Matthæi Westmonasteriensis Flores Historiarum, præcipue de Rebus Britannicis, ab exordio mundi usque ad A. D. 1307*, was first published by Archbishop Parker, in folio, at London in 1567, and again in 1570; and was reprinted, in folio, at Francfort in 1601, along with Florence of Worcester. There is an English translation of it, by Mr. C. D. Yonge, making two volumes of Bohn’s Library, 1853.

WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY.

THE first, in point of merit and eminence, of our Latin historians of this period is William of Malmesbury, so designated as having been a monk of that great monastery, although his proper surname is said to have been Somerset. He was probably born about the time of the Norman Conquest; and, though of English birth, he intimates that he was of Norman descent by one parent, putting in a claim on that ground to be accounted an impartial witness or judge between the two races. Malmesbury’s English History consists of two parts, or rather distinct works; the first entitled *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, in five books, extending from the arrival of the Angles and Saxons to the year 1120; the second entitled *Historia Novella*, in three books, bringing the narrative down to 1142. It has been commonly supposed that the author died in that or the following year; but there is no evidence that he did not live to a later date. A portion of the *Gesta* was printed, as the work of an unknown author, in Commeline’s volume of British writers, in 1587; both the *Gesta* and the *Historia Novella* are in Savile’s Collection, 1596 and 1601; and a new and much more correct edition of the two, by Mr. Thomas Duffus Hardy, in two vols. 8vo. Lon. 1840, forms one of the publications

¹ Quarterly Review, No. lxxvii. p. 282.

of the Historical Society. There is a very good English translation of William of Malmesbury by the Rev. John Sharpe, 4to. Lon. 1815; and another, professing to be based upon it, by Dr. Giles, makes one of the volumes of Bohn's Library, 1847. Malmesbury, although there is an interval of nearly five hundred years between them, stands next in the order of time after Bede in the series of our historical writers properly so called, as distinguished from mere compilers and diarists. His Histories are throughout original works, and, in their degree, artistic compositions. He has evidently taken great pains with the manner as well as with the matter of them. But he also evinces throughout a love of truth as the first quality of historical writing, and far more of critical faculty in separating the probable from the improbable than any other of his monkish brethren of that age who have set up for historians, notwithstanding his fondness for prodigies and ecclesiastical miracles, in which of course he had the ready and all-digestive belief which was universal in his time. Of course, too, he had his partialities in the politics of his own day; and his account of the contest between Matilda and Stephen may be compared with that of the author of the *Gesta Stephani* by those who would study both sides of the question. Both his histories are inscribed in very encomiastic dedications to Robert Earl of Gloucester, Matilda's famous champion. Savile's Collection also contains another work of Malmesbury's, his *Lives of the Bishops of England* (*De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum*), in four books; and a *Life of St. Aldhelm* (bishop of Sherborn), assumed to be a fifth book of this work, was afterwards published by Gale in his *Scriptores XV.* Oxon. 1691, and the same year by Henry Wharton, in the second volume of his *Anglia Sacra*. Gale's volume contains, besides, a *History of the Monastery of Glastonbury* by Malmesbury, — *De Antiquitate Glastoniensis Ecclesiæ*; — and Wharton's contains his *Life of St. Wulstan*. Others of his treatises still remain in manuscript.



EADMER.

THE Modern History, or History of His Own Time (*Historia Novorum, sive Sui Seculi*), by his contemporary Eadmer, the

monk of Canterbury, is noticed by Malmesbury in the Prologue, or Preface, to the First Book of his Gesta, as a lucubration written with a sober festivity of style (*sobria sermonis festivitate elucubratum opus*). It was first published (folio, Lon. 1623), with learned annotations, by Selden, who holds that in style Eadmer equals Malmesbury, and in the value of his matter excels him. It is also added, with the other writings of Eadmer, as a supplement to the Works of Archbishop Anselm, both in Gerberon's edition, folio, Paris, 1675, and in that of the Benedictines, folio, Paris, 1721. Eadmer's History is distributed into six books, and comprehends the reigns of the Conqueror and Rufus, and the first twenty-two years of Henry the First (that is, from A.D. 1066 to 1122). One distinction belonging to Eadmer's narrative is the nearly entire absence of miracles. He probably considered it improper to introduce such high matter into a composition which did not profess to be of a sacred or spiritual nature. Much of his work, however, is occupied with ecclesiastical transactions, which indeed formed almost the entire home politics, and no small part of the foreign politics also, of that age. He has in particular entered largely into the great controversy between the crown and the pope about investiture; and one of the most curious parts of his history is a long and detailed account which he gives of his own appointment to the bishopric of St. Andrew's in Scotland, and his contest about his consecration with the stout Scottish king, Alexander I. Mabillon has published a life of St. Wilfrid, by Eadmer, in the *Acta Sanctorum Benedictinorum* (Sæc. iii. part i.); and other tracts by him are in the *Anglia Sacra*.



TURGOT, AND SIMEON OF DURHAM.—JOHN OF HEXHAM,
AND RICHARD OF HEXHAM.

EADMER'S immediate predecessor in the see of St. Andrew's was Turgot, who had been a monk of Durham before he was elevated to the primacy of Scotland in 1109. Perhaps the most interesting composition that we have from the pen of Turgot is a life of Malcolm Canmore's queen, Margaret, the sister of Edgar Atheling, whose confessor he was: it was drawn up at the request of her

daughter Maud, wife of King Henry I., and is printed in the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists.¹ Selden, in his learned Preface to the *Decem Scriptores*, has advanced strong reasons for believing that the *History of the Church of Durham* which passes under the name of Simeon Dunelmensis, and which that monk appears to have published as his own, was really written by Turgot; but this view has been disputed in a disquisition by Thomas Reed, which accompanies an edition of the *History* published at London in an octavo volume in 1732 by the Rev. Thomas Bedford. It is in four books, and extends over the time from A. D. 635 to 1095. This *History*, along with a continuation to A. D. 1154, and a *History of St. Cuthbert*, an *Epistle* respecting the Archbishops of York, a tract on the siege of Durham by the Scots in 969, and a history of English affairs, entitled *De Regibus Anglorum et Dacorum*, from A. D. 616 to 1129, which, for anything that is known, are really by Simeon, are all in Twysden's Collection; and the *English History to A. D. 957* is in the *Monumenta*. The latter, which is in the form of compendious annals, is continued to 1154, by John, prior of Hexham (*Joannes Hagustaldensis*), whose *Chronicle* is likewise in Twysden; as are also two books of *Lives of the Bishops of Hexham*, and an historical fragment on the reign of Stephen from 1135 to 1139, including a narrative of the battle of the Standard, by his successor Prior Richard, together with a short poem in rhyming Latin verses on that battle by Serlo, a monk of Fountain Abbey in Yorkshire.

AILRED.

BUT the best account we have of the battle of the Standard is that of Ailred, abbot of Rievault, in Yorkshire, — *Ailredi Abbatis Rievallensis Historia de Bello Standardii*, — also printed among the *Scriptores X.*, along with an *Epistle* on the Genealogy of the English Kings, a *Life of Edward the Confessor*, and a singular

¹ *Acta Sanct. Junii*, pp. 328–535. Papebroch, the editor, has printed the tract, on the authority of the MS. he used, as the work of an unknown monk of the name of Theodoric; but Lord Hailes has adduced sufficient reasons for believing it to be by Turgot to whom it is ascribed by Fordun. See his *Annals of Scotland*, i. 36, 37 (edit. of 1819).

relation, entitled *De Quodam Miraculo Mirabili*, all by the same writer. Ailred, Ealred, Elred, Alured, Adilred, Ethelred, or Valred, who is supposed to have died about 1166, and who is one of the saints of the Roman calendar (his day is the 12th of January), spent his life in studious retirement, and is the author of many other treatises, some printed in various collections, some still remaining in manuscript.¹ But those that have been mentioned are the only ones that relate to English history. He often writes with considerable animation, and a decided gift of popular eloquence may be discerned in his fluent though not very classical Latin.



GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH.—ALFRED OF BEVERLEY.

THE famous *British History of Geoffrey of Monmouth* was printed at Paris, in 4to., in 1508, and again in 1509, and it is also contained in Commeline's Collection, folio, Heidelberg, 1587. It professes to be, and, as already intimated, in all probability is in the main, a translation from a Welsh Chronicle, given to Geoffrey by his friend Walter, archdeacon of Oxford (a different person from Walter Mapes, the poet, though they have been usually confounded), who had procured the manuscript in Brittany. It contains in nine books the history of the Britons, or Welsh, from the era of their leader Brutus, the great-grandson of the Trojan Æneas, to the death, in 688, of their king Cadwallo, or Cadwallader, the same personage called by the English historians Ceadwall, or Ceadwalla, and represented by them as King of Wessex. Geoffrey, archdeacon of Monmouth, and afterwards bishop of St. Asaph, is a clever and agreeable writer, and his Latin is much more scholarly than that of the generality of the monkish chroniclers of his time. His work, whatever may be thought of its historical value, has at least the merit of having preserved the old legends and traditions of the race who were driven out by the Angles and Saxons in a more complete and consistent form than we have them elsewhere. But the outline of the same story in

¹ The fullest and most accurate accounts of the writings of Ailred are in the *Biographical Dictionary of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, and in Mr. Wright's *Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 187-196.

all its parts, from the Trojan descent to the wars of Arthur, is found in Nennius, who lived and wrote certainly not later than the middle of the ninth century, or nearly three centuries before Geoffrey. The archdeacon of Monmouth, therefore, was at any rate not the inventor of the fables, if they be such, to which his name has been generally attached. At the most he can only be suspected of having sometimes expanded and embellished them. But, if not the creator of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, Geoffrey was their reviver from almost universal oblivion to sudden and universal notoriety; his book, published probably about 1128, and dedicated to the same Earl of Gloucester whom Malmesbury chose for his patron, obtained immediately the most wonderful currency and acceptance; and from the date of its appearance we find a new inspiration, derived from its pages, pervading the popular literature of Europe. Most of the subsequent Latin chroniclers also adopt more or less of his new version of our early history. An English translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth by Aaron Thompson, originally published in an 8vo. volume at London in 1718, was reprinted in 1842, as "revised by J. A. Giles, LL. D.;" and it is included by Dr. Giles in his volume entitled *Six Old English Chronicles* (Bohn), 1848. A detailed analysis of Geoffrey's work is given by the late George Ellis in his *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances*.

The compendium of Alfred, Alred, or Alured, canon of the collegiate church of St. John at Beverley, in Yorkshire, published by Hearne, in 8vo., at Oxford, in 1716, under the title of *Aluredi Beverlacensis Annales, sive Historia de Gestis Regum Britanniae, Libris IX.*, comes down to the year 1129, but is in the first five books (making half the work, which consists only of 152 pages altogether) a mere abridgment of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Alured, in fact, though he does not expressly name the archdeacon, sets out with stating that his design simply is to epitomize the new History of the Britons, which everybody was so eager to read, and of which he had himself for some time in vain sought to procure a copy; a fact which is strangely suppressed both by Hearne and by Dr. Campbell in the *Biographia Britannica*, in their attempts to show that Alured did not copy Geoffrey, but Geoffrey him. Geoffrey's very expressions are sometimes adopted by Alured. What the latter has added in the continuation of the history down to his own time contains scarcely anything not to be

found elsewhere. The period from the Norman Conquest, extending over sixty-two years, which may probably have been about that of his own life, is all comprised in the last book, filling twenty-seven pages.



GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS.

GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS, another learned Welshman, who makes a principal figure among our historical writers of the twelfth century, is of somewhat later date than his countryman Geoffrey of Monmouth: — Geoffrey died in 1154; Giraldu, whose proper Welsh name was Gerald Barry, appears to have been born about 1146. His *Itinerary and Description of Wales* (the first book) — *Itinerarium Cambriæ* and *Descriptio Cambriæ* — were published, with learned annotations, by Dr. David Powell, in a 12mo. volume, at London, in 1685; both are included in Camden's *Anglica, Normannica, &c.*, together with his *Topography and Conquest of Ireland*, — *Topographia Hiberniæ* and *Expugnatio Hiberniæ*, — there published for the first time; and a second book of the *Description of Wales*, various biographies of English bishops, an account of his own life, entitled *De Rebus a Se Gestis*, in three books, together with two separate catalogues of his works drawn up by himself, a treatise concerning the Church of St. Asaph (*De Jure et Statu Menevensis Ecclesiæ Distinctiones vii.*), and two or three other short pieces, are in the second volume of Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*. An English translation of the *Itinerary* and of both parts of the *Description of Wales*, profusely illuminated with engravings as well as with annotations and commentary, was published by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, Bart., in two vols. 4to., Lond. 1806, under the title of *The Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through Wales, A. D. 1187*, by Giraldu de Barri, and forms one of the most magnificent productions of the modern English press.¹ Many other writings, however, both in prose and verse, are attributed to him, which are either lost (if they ever existed), or remain in manuscript, with the exception of a treatise, called by

¹ In his Preface, Sir Richard seems to state that he had also reprinted the *Itinerary and Description of Wales* in the original Latin, but we have never seen the book.

himself *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, which is said to have been printed at Mentz without his name in 1549 under the title of *Gemma Animæ*. Giraldus, though his style abounds in the conceits and false ornaments which constituted the eloquence of his time, is a very lively writer, and he shows a genius both for narrative and description to which nothing is wanting except the influences of a happier age. In literary ardor and industry, at least, he has not often been surpassed. He “deserves particular regard,” says Warton, “for the universality of his works, many of which are written with some degree of elegance. He abounds with quotations of the best Latin poets. He was an historian, an antiquary, a topographer, a divine, a philosopher, and a poet. His love of science was so great that he refused two bishoprics; and from the midst of public business, with which his political talents gave him a considerable connection in the court of Richard the First, he retired to Lincoln for seven years with a design of pursuing theological studies.”¹ The fancy of Giraldus, however, it must be confessed, was more vigorous than either his judgment or his veracity; and much of the matter in his historical works would have suited poetry better than history.

HENRY OF HUNTINGDON.

MALMESBURY'S two Histories are followed in Savile's Collection by the Eight Books of that of Henry, archdeacon of Huntingdon, extending from the invasion of Julius Cæsar to the accession of Henry II. (A. D. 1154). The work has not been elsewhere printed in full; but a very superior text of the first Six Books, with the exception of the Third, which is only an abridgment of Bede, is given by Mr. Petrie in the *Monumenta*, 1848. Henry of Huntingdon first distinguished himself as a poet, and is said by Leland to have in the earlier part of his life written eight books of Latin epigrams, and eight more of love verses, besides a long didactic poem on herbs, another on spices, and a third on precious stones. His History, which he composed in his more advanced years, is interspersed with a good deal of verse, most of it professing to be quoted, but some of it confessedly his own. Savile describes him

¹ Dissertation on Introduct. of Learning, p. cxxiv.

as, in respect of historical merit, although separated by a long interval from Malmesbury, yet making as near an approach to him as any other writer of the time, and as deserving to be placed in the first rank of the most diligent explorers and most truthful expounders of the times preceding their own. He is, indeed, more of an antiquary than an historian. His work, in so far as it is a history of his own time, is of little importance. The writer in the *Quarterly Review*, however, remarks that it is a more ambitious attempt than had been made by such mere annalists as the Saxon chroniclers on the one hand, or such compilers as Florence of Worcester and Simeon of Durham on the other. "Abandoning the simple plan of his predecessors, he divided his History into books, treating distinctly upon each of the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, until their union under Edgar. Huntingdon states that, taking Bede as his basis, he added much from other sources, and borrowed from the chronicles which he found in ancient libraries. His descriptions of battles are often more diffuse than in the Anglo-Saxon chronicles. It has been supposed that, because these scenes and pictures are not warranted by the existing texts, they are mere historical amplifications; but we find no difficulty in believing that the researches of a writer who was considered as a most learned antiquarian should have enabled him to discover a chronicle lost to us, and which contained more fragments of poetry or poetical prose than the chronicles which have been preserved."¹ The second volume of Wharton's *Anglia Sacra* contains a Long Letter from Henry of Huntingdon to his friend Walter, abbot of Ramsay (*De Episcopis Sui Temporis*), which is full of interesting notices and anecdotes of the kings, prelates, and other distinguished personages of his time. Both the History and this Letter are translated by Mr. Forester in one of the volumes of Bohn's *Antiquarian Library*, 1853.

ROGER DE HOVEDEN.

THE next work printed in Savile's Collection (and his edition is again our only one) is the copious Chronicle of Roger de Hoveden.

¹ *Quarterly Review*, xxxiv., 283.

(probably so designated from having been a native of Hoveden, or Howden, in Yorkshire). It fills 430 pages, or not much less than half the volume. Hoveden takes up the narrative at the year 732, where the History of Bede (a north-country man like himself) ends, and brings it down to 1202. His account is particularly full throughout the reigns of Henry II. and Richard I., and the commencement of that of John, making together what may be called his own half-century. The greater portion, indeed, of the 340 pages of which this second or latter part of his annals — *Annalium Pars Posterior* — consists, is occupied by letters of kings, popes, and prelates, and other public documents; but it contains also an extraordinary number of minute historical details. Hoveden is of all our old chroniclers the most of a matter-of-fact man; he indulges occasionally in an epithet, rarely or never in a reflection; his one notion of writing history seems to be to pack as many particulars as possible into a given space, giving one the notion in perusing his close array of dates and items that he had felt continually pressed by the necessity of economizing his paper or parchment. It is true that he has no notion of the higher economy of discrimination and selection; but among the multitude of facts of all kinds that crowd his pages are many that are really curious and illustrative. A translation of Roger de Hoveden by Mr. Henry T. Riley makes two of the volumes of Bohn's Antiquarian Library 1853.



WILLIAM OF NEWBURGH.

WILLIAM OF NEWBURGH (in Latin *Gulielmus Neubrigensis*), so called from the monastery of Newburgh, in Yorkshire, to which he belonged, — although his proper name is said to have been Little, whence he sometimes designates himself *Petit*, or *Parvus*, — has had the luck to have the five books of his English History from the Conquest to the year 1197 repeatedly printed; first, in 12mo., at Antwerp in 1597; a second time, with notes by J. Picard, in 8vo., at Paris in 1610; again, under the care of the industrious Thomas Hearne, in 3 vols. 8vo., at Oxford in 1719; and still once more, as edited for the Historical Society by Mr. H. C. Hamilton, in 2 vols., in 1856. It is also in the collection of Jerome Commelinus.

The work of Neubrigensis is much more what we now understand by a history than those of either Hoveden or Huntingdon: in the superior purity of its Latinity it ranks with that of Malmesbury: and it has the same comparatively artistic character in other respects. But his merit lies rather in his manner than in his matter; he has disposed the chief events of the times of which he treats into a regular and readable narrative, but has not contributed many new facts. He is famous as having been, so far as is known, the first writer after Geoffrey of Monmouth who refused to adopt the story of the Trojan descent of the old Britons, and the other "figments," as he calls them, of the Welsh historians, which moreover he accuses Geoffrey of having made still more absurd and monstrous by his own "impudent and impertinent lies." Whether he knew enough of the original chronicle which Geoffrey professed to translate, or of the language in which it was written, to be entitled to express an opinion upon this latter point, does not appear. The Welsh maintain that he had a personal spite at their whole nation: "This William," says Dr. Powell, "put in for the bishopric of St. Asaph upon the death of the said Geoffrey, and, being disappointed, fell into a mad humor of deeryng the whole principality of Wales, its history, antiquity, and all that belongs to it." It must be admitted, too, that, if not guilty of the same dishonesty and forgery which he imputes to Geoffrey, William of Newburgh is himself, in credulity at least, a match for the most fabulous of our old chroniclers.



BENEDICTUS ABBAS.—RALPH DE DICETO.—GERVASE OF
CANTERBURY.

ONE of the most valuable of our chronicles of the twelfth century is that of the Abbot Benedict, embracing the space from A. D. 1170 to 1192, which was published by Hearne, in 2 vols. 8vo., at Oxford in 1735, under the title of *Benedictus Abbas Petroburgensis de Vita et Rebus Gestis Henrici II. et Ricardi I.* Benedict, though a partisan of Becket, and one of his biographers, was so highly esteemed by Henry II., who had both the eye to discern, and the magnanimity to appreciate merit and ability wherever they were to be found, that he was by his direction elected abbot of

Peterborough in 1177; and in 1191, after Richard had come to the throne, he was advanced to be Keeper of the Great Seal, in which high office he died in 1193.

Ralph de Diceto, archdeacon of London, who probably died soon after the commencement of the thirteenth century, is the author of two chronicles: the first entitled *Abbreviationes Chronicorum*, and extending from A. D. 589 to 1148; the second, continuing the narrative, upon a larger scale, to A. D. 1199. Both are published in the Collection of the *Scriptores X.*, where they occupy together not quite 300 columns. They are followed by a brief outline of the controversy between King Henry and Becket, — *Series Causæ inter Henricum Regem et Thomam Archiepiscopum*, — which may also perhaps have been drawn up by Diceto. A compendium of the early British History from Brutus to the death of Cadwallader, after Geoffrey of Monmouth, by this writer (*Historia Compendiosa de Regibus Britonum*), is given in his collection entitled *Scriptores XV.* by Gale, who says that he had seen a better manuscript of the *Abbreviationes Chronicorum* than that used by Twysden. He adds a short tract of two or three pages from a manuscript in the Arundel Collection (now in the British Museum) entitled *De Partitione Provinciæ in Schiras et Episcopatus et Regna*, which he entitles as by Diceto, although in his Preface he describes it as by an unknown writer. There is a short history of the Archbishops of Canterbury to the year 1200 by this Diceto in the second volume of Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*. Bishop Nicolson complains of it as not only of little value, from its brevity, but as "stuffed with matters foreign to the purpose."

The Chronicle of Gervase of Canterbury, — *Gervasii Monachi Dorobernensis, sive Cantuariensis, Chronica*, — from the accession of Henry I. in A. D. 1100 (or 1122, as he reckons, "*secundum Evangelium*") to the end of the reign of Richard I. and of the century, is published in the collection of the *Scriptores X.* (col. 1338-1628); together with three shorter pieces by the same writer: — the first, an account of the burning, A. D. 1174, and subsequent restoration of Canterbury Cathedral (*Tractatus de Combustione et Reparatione Dorobernensis Ecclesiæ*); the second, on the contest between the monks of Canterbury and Archbishop Baldwin (*Imaginationes de Discordiis inter Monachos Cantuariensis et Archiepiscopum Baldwinum*); the third, a history of the Archbishops of Canterbury (*Actus Pontificum Cantuariensis Ecclesiæ*)

from Augustine, to Hubert Walter, who died in 1205, and whom Gervase probably did not long survive. Leland, who gives this writer a high character for his diligent study and accurate and extensive knowledge of the national antiquities, speaks of his History as commencing with the earliest British times, and including the whole of the Saxon period ("tum Britannorum ab origine historiam, tum Saxonum et Normannorum fortia facta, deduxit"). He takes great pains in the portion we have of it to present a correct and distinct chronology; but it is principally occupied with ecclesiastical affairs.

VINSAUF. — RICHARD OF DEVISES. — JOSCELIN DE
BRAKELONDA.

AN account of the expedition of Richard Cœur de Lion to the Holy Land, in six books, by Geoffrey Vinsauf, has been published, under the title of *Itinerarium Regis Anglorum Richardi, et aliorum, in terram Hierosolymorum*, by Gale in his *Scriptores Quinque* (pp. 245-429). A portion of the same work had been previously printed by Bongarsius in his *Gesta Dei per Francos*, 1611, as a fragment of the History of Jerusalem (*Hierosolimitanæ Historiæ Fragmentum*) from A. D. 1171 to 1190, by an unknown writer, probably an Englishman. There is a translation of the whole in the volume of Bohn's *Antiquarian Library* entitled *Chronicles of the Crusaders*. Geoffrey, or Walter, Vinsauf, or Vinisau, or Vinesalf (in Latin *de Vino Salvo*), was an Englishman by birth, although of Norman parentage, and accompanied Richard on his crusade. His prose is spirited and eloquent, and he was also one of the best Latin poets of his day. His principal poetical work, entitled *De Nova Poetria* (On the New Poetry), has been several times printed: it "is dedicated," Warton observes, "to Pope Innocent the Third, and its intention was to recommend and illustrate the new and legitimate mode of versification which had lately begun to flourish in Europe, in opposition to the Leonine or barbarous species." This work, published soon after the death of King Richard, contains an elaborate lamentation over that event, which is quoted in what is called *Bromton's Chronicle*¹ (written in the

¹ In the *Scriptores* X. col. 1280. The author's name is misprinted *Galfridus de Nino Salvo*.

reign of Edward III.), and, as both Camden¹ and Selden² have noted, is referred to by Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*,³ although only the latter seems to have understood the delicate ridicule of the allusion. The "craft of Galfride" (so he names Vinsauf) is also celebrated by the great English poet, apparently with much less irreverence, in his *Court of Love*,⁴ no doubt composed at a much less advanced period of his life.

Another valuable contemporary history of the early part of the reign of Richard the First (from A. D. 1189 to 1192), comprehending the transactions in England as well as abroad, the *Chronicle of Richard of Devises*, has been printed for the first time by the Historical Society:—*Chronicon Ricardi Divisiensis de Rebus Gestis Ricardi Primi, Regis Angliæ; nunc primum typis mandatum, curante Josepho Stevenson;—8vo. Lon. 1838.* *Divisiensis* appears to have written before either Diceto or Hoveden, and his work forms therefore an authority additional to and quite independent of theirs.

Finally, we ought not to omit to mention the singularly curious *Chronicle of Joscelin de Brakelonda*, printed a few years ago by the Camden Society, — *Chronica Jocelini de Brakelonda, de Rebus Gestis Samsonis Abbatis Monasterii Sancti Edmundi; nunc primum typis mandata, curante Johanne Gage Rokewode; 4to. Lon. 1840,* — which, although professing to record only the acts of Abbot Samson and the history of the monastery of St. Edmondsbury, includes also several notices of the public affairs of the kingdom, as well as lets us see farther into the system of English life and society in that remote time than perhaps any other record that has come down to us. It embraces the space from 1173 to 1202, comprehending the last sixteen years of the reign of Henry II., the whole of that of Richard I., and the first three years of that of John; and it contains repeated personal notices of all these three kings. *Brakelonda's Chronicle* has been translated by Mr. T. E. Tomlins (8vo. Lon. 1840); and Mr. Carlyle's brilliant resuscitation of the old Abbot and his century in his *Past and Present*, 1843, lives in the memory of most readers of modern English books.

¹ Remains, 7th edit., p. 414.

² Præfat. ad Scriptores X., p. xli.

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³ Nonne's *Preestis Tale*, v. 15,353, &c.

⁴ v. 11.

MONASTIC REGISTERS.

AMONG the contemporary historical monuments of this age are also to be reckoned parts at least of several of the monastic registers, compiled by a succession of writers, which have been published; — such as that of Melrose, extending from A. D. 735 to 1270 (in Fulman, 1684, and much more carefully edited by Mr. Stevenson for the Bannatyne Club, 4to. 1835); that of Margan, from 1066 to 1232 (in Gale, 1687); that of Waverley,¹ from 1066 to 1291 (in the same collection); those of Ramsay and Ely, both, as far as printed, coming down to the Conquest (the former in Gale, 1691, the latter in the same collection, and also, in part, in the second *Seculum* of Mabillon's *Acta Sanctorum Benedictinorum*); that of Ely by the Priors Thomas and Richard, from A. D. 156 to 1169 (in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*); those of Holyrood, from A. D. 596 to 1163, and of Abingdon, from 870 to 1131, and the *History of the Bishops and Church of Durham* from A. D. 633 to 1214 (all in the same collection). A new and much improved edition of that of Holyrood was brought out in 1828 for the Bannatyne Club by the late Mr. R. Pitcairn. To these may be added some of the tracts relating to the great monastery of Peterborough in Sparke's collection; and several lives of prelates by Malmesbury, Goseclin of Canterbury, Osbern, John of Salisbury, Eadmer, &c., in Wharton. The *Annals of the Monastery of Burton*, in Staffordshire, from A. D. 1004 to 1263, and the continuation of the *History of England* from 1149 to 1470 (both in Fulman), appear to be throughout compilations of a later date. The venerable collection of ancient monuments relating to the church of Rochester and the kingdom of Kent, entitled the *Textus Roffensis*, which was published by Hearne, in 8vo., at Oxford in 1720, was drawn up by Bishop Ernulphus, who presided over the see of Rochester from A. D. 1115 till his death in 1124; and Heming's *Chartulary of the Church of Worcester*, — *Hemingi Chartularium Ecclesiæ Wigorniensis*, — published by Hearne in two vols. 8vo. in 1723, is of still earlier date, having been compiled in the reign of the Conqueror.

¹ The passage, however, from the earlier portion of the *Waverley Annals*, which Gale quotes in proof of the writer having lived at the time of the Conquest, is merely a translation from the vernacular Chronicle

LAW TREATISES. — DOMESDAY BOOK. — PUBLIC ROLLS AND
REGISTERS.

WE may close the account of the numerous historical writings of the first century and a half after the Conquest by merely noticing, that to the same period belong the earliest work on the common law of England, the *Tractatus de Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliæ*, commonly ascribed to the chief justiciary Ranulf de Glanvil, which was first printed, in 4to., at London in 1673, and of which there is an English translation, with notes, by Mr. John Beames, 8vo. Lon. 1812; the *Liber Niger*, or Black Book of the Exchequer, supposed to have been compiled by Gervase of Tilbury (*Gervasius Tilburiensis*), who, according to some authorities, was a nephew of King Henry II., of which there is an edition by Hearne, 2 vols. 8vo. Oxford, 1728, reprinted at London in 1771; and the *Dialogus de Scaccario*, or Dialogue respecting the Exchequer, probably written by Richard Fitz-Nigel, or Fitz-Neale, bishop of London, from A. D. 1189 to 1198, which is printed at the end of Madox's History of the Exchequer, 4to. Lon. 1711, and again 2 vols. 4to. 1769; and of which there is an English translation, 4to. Lon. 1756. Along with these text-books of English law may be noticed the book of the laws and legal usages of the Duchy of Normandy, called the *Coutumes de Normandie*, of which there are editions of 1681, 1684, 1694, and 1709, all printed at Rouen, and each in 2 volumes folio. It hardly belongs to our subject to mention the most venerable of all national registers, the Domesday Book of the Conqueror, printed at London in 1783, in 2 volumes, folio, under the title of *Domesday Book, seu Liber Censualis Wilhelmi Primi Regis Angliæ inter Archivos Regni in Domo Capitulari Westmonasterii conservatus*; the Indices printed in 1811, and the additional volume printed in 1816 containing the Exon Domesday, the *Inquisitio Eliensis*, the Book of Winchester, and the Boldon Book; the public documents appertaining to the present period in the Statutes of the Realm, the *Fœdera*, the Calendar of Patent Rolls in the Tower, the Calendar of Rolls, Charters, and Inquisitions *Ad Quod Damnum*, the *Placitorum Abbreviatio*, the *Rotuli Literarum Patentium*, the *Rotuli Literarum Clausarum*, the Great Rolls of the Pipe of the 31st of Henry I. and of the 3d of John, the *Rotuli Normanniæ*, the *Rotuli de Oblatis et Fini-*

bus, the *Fines in Curia Domini Regis*, the *Rotuli Curiae Regis*, the Charter Rolls of John, the Ancient Laws and Institutes of England from Æthelbert to Henry I., and perhaps one or two other publications of the late Record Commission; the *Concilia* of Spelman, and of Wilkins, &c.

THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN ENGLAND.

IT is commonly asserted that for some reigns after the Norman Conquest the exclusive language of government and legislation in England was the French, — that all pleadings, at least in the supreme courts, were carried on in that language, — and that in it all deeds were drawn up and all laws promulgated. “This popular notion,” observes a learned living writer, “cannot be easily supported. . . . Before the reign of Henry III. we cannot discover a deed or law drawn or composed in French. Instead of prohibiting the English language, it was employed by the Conqueror and his successors in their charters until the reign of Henry II., when it was superseded, not by the French but by the Latin language, which had been gradually gaining, or rather regaining, ground; for the charters anterior to Alfred are invariably in Latin.”¹ So far was the Conqueror from showing any aversion to the English language, or making any such attempt as is ascribed to him to effect its abolition, that, according to Ordericus Vitalis, when he first came over he strenuously applied himself to learn it for the special purpose of understanding, without the aid of an interpreter, the causes that were pleaded before him, and persevered in that endeavor till the tumult of many other occupations, and what the historian calls “*durior ætas*” — a more iron time² — of necessity compelled him to give it up.³ The common statement rests on the more than suspicious authority of the History attributed to Ingulphus, the fabricator of which, in his loose and ignorant account of the matter, has set down this falsehood along with

¹ Sir Francis Palgrave, *Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, vol. i p. 56.

² *Quid nos dura refugimus ætas?* — Hor. Od. i. 35.

³ *Excerpta ex Libro iv. Orderici Vitalis*, p. 247; edit. Maseres.

some other things that are true or probable. Even before the Conquest, the Confessor himself, according to this writer, though a native of England, yet, from his education and long residence in Normandy, had become almost a Frenchman; and when he succeeded to the English throne, he brought over with him great numbers of Normans, whom he advanced to the highest dignities in the church and the state. "Wherefore," it is added, "the whole land began, under the influence of the king and the other Normans introduced by him, to lay aside the English customs, and to imitate the manners of the French in many things; for example, all the nobility in their courts began to speak French as a great piece of gentility, to draw up their charters and other writings after the French fashion, and to grow ashamed of their old national habits in these and many other particulars."¹ Further on we are told, "They [the Normans] held the language [of the natives] in such abhorrence that the laws of the land and the statutes of the English kings were drawn out in the Gallic [or French] tongue; and to boys in the schools the elements of grammar were taught in French and not in English; even the English manner of writing was dropped, and the French manner introduced in all charters and books."² The facts are more correctly given by other old writers, who, although not contemporary with the Conquest, are probably of as early a date as the compiler of the Croyland History. The Dominican friar Robert Holcot, writing in the earlier part of the fourteenth century, informs us that there was then no institution of children in the old English, — that the first language they learned was the French, and that through that tongue they were afterwards taught Latin; and he adds that this was a practice which had been introduced at the Conquest, and which had continued ever since.³ About the middle of the same century Ranulf Higden, in his Polychronicon, says, as the passage is translated by Trevisa, "This apayringe (impairing) of the birthe tonge is by cause of tweye thinges; oon is for children in scole, aghenes (against) the usage and maner of alle other naciouns, beth (be) compelled for to leve her (their) owne langage, and for to con-

¹ Ingulphi Historia, in Savile, 895; or in Fulman, 62. The translation, which is officiently faithful, is Henry's.

² Id. Savile, 901; Fulman, 71.

³ Lect. in Libr. Sapient. Lect. ii. 4to. Paris, 1518; as referred to by Warton, Hist Eng. Poetry, i. 5.

strewed her lessons and her things a Frensche, and haveth siththe (have since) that the Normans come first into England. Also gentil mennes children both ytaught (be taught) for to speke Frensche from the time that thei beth rokked in her cradel, and cunneth (can) speke and playe with a childes brooche; and uplondish (rustic) men wol likne hem self (will liken themselves) to gentilmen, and fondeth (are fond) with grete bisynesse for to speke Frensche, for to be the more ytold of.”¹ The teachers in the schools, in fact, were generally, if not universally, ecclesiastics; and the Conquest had Normanized the church quite as much as the state. Immediately after that revolution great numbers of foreigners were brought over, both to serve in the parochial cures and to fill the monasteries that now began to multiply so rapidly. These churchmen must have been in constant intercourse with the people of all classes in various capacities, not only as teachers of youth, but as the instructors of their parishioners from the altar, and as holding daily and hourly intercourse with them in all the relations that subsist between pastor and flock. They probably in this way diffused their own tongue throughout the land of their adoption to a greater extent than is commonly suspected. We shall have occasion, as we proceed, to mention some facts which would seem to imply that in the twelfth century the French language was very generally familiar to the middle classes in England, at least in the great towns. It was at any rate the only language spoken for some ages after the Conquest by our kings, and not only by nearly all the nobility, but by a large proportion even of the inferior landed proprietors, most of whom also were of Norman birth or descent. Ritson, in his rambling, incoherent Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy, prefixed to his Ancient English Metrical Romances, has collected, but not in the most satisfactory manner, some of the evidence we have as to the speech of the first Norman kings. He does not notice what Ordericus Vitalis tells us of the Conqueror’s meritorious attempt, which does not seem, however, to have been more successful than such experiments on the part of grown-up gentlemen usually are; so that he may be allowed to be correct enough in the assertion with which he sets out, that we have no information “that William the Bastard, his son Rufus, his daughter Maud, or his nephew

¹ Quoted from MS. Harl. 1900, by Tyrwhitt, in Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer, prefixed to his edition of the Canterbury Tales.

Stephen, did or could speak the Anglo-Saxon or English language." Reference is then made to a story told in what is called Brompton's Chronicle respecting Henry II., which, however, is not very intelligible in all its parts, though Ritson has slurred over the difficulties. As Henry was passing through Wales, the old chronicler relates, on his return from Ireland in the spring of 1172, he found himself on a Sunday at the castle of Cardiff, and stopped there to hear mass; after which, as he was proceeding to mount his horse to be off again, there presented itself before him a somewhat singular apparition, a man with red hair and a round tonsure,¹ lean and tall, attired in a white tunic and barefoot, who, addressing him in the Teutonic tongue, began, "Gode Olde Kinge,"² and proceeded to deliver a command from Christ, as he said, and his mother, from John the Baptist and Peter, that he should suffer no traffic or servile works to be done throughout his dominions on the Sabbath-day, except only such as pertained to the use of food; "which command, if thou observest," concluded the speaker, "whatever thou mayest undertake thou shalt happily accomplish." The king immediately, speaking in French, desired the soldier who held the bridle of his horse to ask the rustic if he had dreamed all this. The soldier made the inquiry, as desired, in English; and then, it is added, the man replied in the same language as before, and addressing the king said, "Whether I have dreamed it or no, mark this day; for, unless thou shalt do what I have told thee, and amend thy life, thou shalt within a year's time hear such news as thou shalt mourn to the day of thy death." And, having so spoken, the man vanished out of sight. With the calamities which of course ensued to the doomed king we have here nothing to do. Although the chronicler reports only the three commencing words of the prophet's first address in what he calls the Teutonic tongue, there can be no doubt, we conceive, that the rest, though here translated into Latin, was also delivered in the same Teutonic (by which, apparently, can only have been meant the vernacular English, or what is commonly called Saxon)

¹ *Tonsura rotunda*. Scriptores Decem, 1079. The epithet would seem to imply that there were still in Wales some priests of the ancient British Church who retained the old national crescent-shaped tonsure, now deemed heretical.

² Henry and his son of the same name were commonly distinguished as the Old and the Young King from the date of the coronation of the latter (whom his father survived) in 1170.

The man would not begin his speech in one language, and then suddenly break away into another. But, if this was the case, Henry, from his reply, would appear to have understood English, though he might not be able to speak it. The two languages, thus subsisting together, were probably both understood by many of those who could only speak one of them. We have another evidence of this in the fact of the soldier, as we have seen, speaking English and also understanding the King's French. It is, we suppose, merely so much affectation or bad rhetoric in the chronicler that makes him vary his phrase for the same thing from "the Teutonic tongue" (*Teutonica lingua*) in one place to "English" (*Anglicè*) in another, and immediately after to "the former language" (*lingua priori*); for the words which he gives as Teutonic are English words, and, when Henry desired the soldier to address the priest in English and the soldier did so, it must have been because that was the language in which he had addressed the king.¹

"King Richard," Ritson proceeds, "is never known to have uttered a single English word, unless one may rely on the evidence of Robert Mannyng for the express words, when, of Isaac King of Cyprus, 'Ó dele,' said the king, 'this is a fole Breton. The latter expression seems proverbial, whether it alludes to the Welsh or to the Armoricians, because Isaac was neither by birth, though he might be both by folly. Many great nobles of England, in this century, were utterly ignorant of the English language." As an instance, he mentions the case, before noticed by Tyrwhitt, of William Longchamp, bishop of Ely, chancellor and prime minister to Richard I., who, according to a remarkable account in a letter of his contemporary Hugh bishop of Coventry, preserved by Hoveden, did not know a word of English.² The only fact relating to this subject in connection with John or his

¹ A somewhat different view of this story is taken by Mr. Luders in his tract *On the Use of the French Language in our ancient Laws and Acts of State*. (Tracts on Various Subjects, p. 400.) He remarks: "The author does not tell why the ghost spoke German to the King in Wales, or how this German became all at once good English; nor how it happened that the groom addressed the German ghost in English." Mr. Luders, therefore, understands "the Teutonic tongue" to mean, not *English*, but *German*.

² *Lingua Anglicanum prorsus ignorabat*. — Hoveden, 704. Ritson, omitting all mention either of Hoveden or Tyrwhitt, chooses to make a general reference to the chronicle called Bromton's, a later compilation, the author of which (vide col. 1227) has quietly appropriated Bishop Hugh's Letter, and made it part of his narrative.

reign that Ritson brings forward, is the speech which that king's ambassador, as related by Matthew Paris, made to the King of Morocco:—"Our nation is learned in three idioms, that is to say, Latin, French, and English."¹ This would go to support the conclusion that both the French and the Latin languages were at this time not unusually spoken by persons of education in England.



THE LANGUE D'OC AND THE LANGUE D'OYL.

FRENCH as well as Latin was at least extensively employed among us in literary composition. The Gauls, the original inhabitants of the country now called France, were a Celtic people, and their speech was a dialect of the same great primitive tongue which probably at one time prevailed over the whole of Western Europe, and is still vernacular in Ireland, in Wales, and among the Highlanders of Scotland. After the country became a Roman province, this ancient language gradually gave place to the Latin; which, however, here as elsewhere, soon became corrupted in the mouths of a population mixing it with their own barbarous vocables and forms, or at least divesting it of many of its proper characteristics in their rude appropriation of it. But, as different depraving or obliterating influences operated in different circumstances, and a variety of kinds of bad Latin were thus produced in the several countries which had been provinces of the empire, so even within the limits of Gaul there grew up two such distinct dialects, one in the south, another in the north. All these forms of bastard Latin, wherever they arose, whether in Italy, in Spain, or in Gaul, were known by the common name of Roman, or Romance, languages, or the Rustic Roman (*Romana Rustica*), and were by that generic term distinguished from the barbarian tongues, or those that had been spoken by the Celtic, German, and other uncivilized nations before they came into communication with the Romans. From

¹ This was a secret mission despatched by John, the historian tells us, in 1213, "ad Admiraliū Murmelium, regem magnum Aphricæ, Marrochiæ, et Hispaniæ, quem vulgus Miramumelinum vocat." The words used by Thomas Herdington, the one of the three commissioners selected, on account of his superior gift of eloquence, to be spokesman, were "Gens nostra speciosa et ingeniosa tribus pollet idiomatibus erudita, scilicet Latino, Gallico, et Anglico." — *Matt. Paris*, 243

them have sprung what are called the Latin languages of modern Europe, — the Italian, the Spanish, and the Portuguese, as well as what we now denominate the French. The Romance spoken in the south of Gaul appears to have been originally nearly, if not altogether, identical with that spoken in the northeast of Spain; and it always preserved a close resemblance and affinity to that and the other Romance dialects of Spain and Italy. It is in fact to be accounted a nearer relation of the Spanish and Italian than of the modern French. The latter is exclusively the offspring of the Romance of Northern Gaul, which, both during its first growth and subsequently, was acted upon by different influences from those which modified the formation of the southern tongue. It is probable that whatever it retained of the Celtic ingredient to begin with was, if not stronger or of larger quantity than what entered into the Romance dialect of the south, at any rate of a somewhat different character; but the peculiar form it eventually assumed may be regarded as having been mainly owing to the foreign pressure to which it was twice afterwards exposed, first by the settlement of the Franks in the north and northeast of Gaul in the fifth century (while the Visigoths and Burgundians had spread themselves over the south), and again by that of the Normans in the northwest in the tenth. What may have been the precise nature or amount of the effect produced upon the Romance tongue of Northern Gaul by either or both of these Teutonic occupations of the country, it is not necessary for our present purpose to inquire; it is sufficient to observe that that dialect could not fail to be thereby peculiarly affected, and its natural divergence from the southern Romance materially aided and promoted. The result, in fact, was that the two dialects became two distinct languages, differing from one another more than any two other of the Latin languages did, — the Italian, for example, from the Spanish, or the Spanish from the Portuguese, and even more than the Romance of the south of Gaul differed from that either of Italy or of Spain. This southern Romance, it only remains further to be observed, came in course of time to be called the Provençal tongue; but it does not appear to have received this name till, in the beginning of the twelfth century, the county of Provence had fallen to be inherited by Raymond Berenger, Count of Catalonia, who thereupon transferred his court to Arles, and made that town the centre and chief seat of the literary cultivation which had previously flourished at Barce-

lona. There had been poetry written in the Romance of Southern Gaul before this ; but it was not till now that the Troubadours, as the authors of that poetry called themselves, rose into much celebrity ; and hence it has been maintained, with great appearance of reason, that what is best or most characteristic about the Provençal poetry is really not of French but of Spanish origin. In that case the first inspiration may probably have been caught from the Arabs. The greater part of Provence soon after passed into the possession of the Counts of Toulouse, and the Troubadours flocked to that city. But the glory of the Provençal tongue did not last altogether for much more than a century ; and then, when it had ceased to be employed in poetry and literature, and had declined into a mere provincial patois, it and the northern French were wont to be severally distinguished by the names of the Langue d'Oc (sometimes called by modern writers the Occitanian) and the Langue d'Oyl, from the words for *yes*, which were *oc* in the one, and *oyl*, afterwards *oy* or *oui*, in the other. Dante mentions them by these appellations, and with this explanation, in his treatise *De Vulgari Eloquio*, written in the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century ; and one of them still gives its name to the great province of Languedoc, where the dialect formerly so called yet subsists as the popular speech, though, of course, much changed and debased from what it was in the days of its old renown, when it lived on the lips of rank and genius and beauty, and was the favorite vehicle of love and song.

The Langue d'Oyl, on the other hand, formerly spoken only to the north of the Loire, has grown up into what we now call the French language, and has become, at least for literary purposes, and for all the educated classes, the established language of the whole country. Some fond students of the remains of the other dialect have deplored this result as a misfortune to France, which they contend would have had a better modern language and literature if the Langue d'Oc, in the contest between the two, had prevailed over the Langue d'Oyl. It is probable, indeed, that accident and political circumstances have had more to do in determining the matter as it has gone than the merits of the case ; but in every country as well as in France, — in Spain, in Italy, in Germany, in England, — some other of the old popular dialects than the one that has actually acquired the ascendancy has in like manner had its enthusiastic reclaimers against the unjust fortune which

has condemned it to degradation or oblivion ; and we may suspect that the partiality which the mind is apt to acquire for whatever it has made the subject of long investigation and study, especially if it be something which has been generally neglected, and perhaps in some instances a morbid sympathy with depression and defeat, which certain historical and philosophical speculators have in common with the readers and writers of sentimental novels, are at the bottom of much of this unavailing and purposeless lamentation. The question is one which we have hardly the means of solving, even if any solution of it which might now be attainable could have any practical effect. The *Langue d'Oyl* is now unalterably established as the French language ; the *Langue d'Oc* is, except as a local patois, irrecoverably dead. Nor are there wanting French archæologists, quite equal in knowledge of the subject to their opponents, who maintain that in this there is nothing to regret, but the contrary, — that the northern Romance tongue was as superior to the southern intrinsically as it has proved in fortune, and that its early literature was of far higher value and promise than the Provençal.¹



NORMAN TROUVEURS : — DUKE RICHARD I. — THIBAUT DE
VERNON. — TUROLD, OR THEROULDE. — CHANSON DE RO-
LAND.

It is, at any rate, this early literature of the *Langue d'Oyl* which is for us in England of most interest. It is, in fact, in a manner a part of our own. Not only did it spring up, and for a long time flourish exclusively, among those same wonderful Normans whose greatest and most enduring dominion has been established in this island ; the greater part of it appears to have been

¹ What has come to be called the French tongue, it may be proper to notice, has no relationship whatever to that of the proper French, or Franks, who were a Teutonic people, speaking a purely Teutonic language, resembling the German, or more nearly the Flemish. This old Teutonic French, which the Franks continued to speak for several centuries after their conquest of Gaul, is denominated by philologists the *Frankish*, or *Francic*. The modern French, which is a Latin tongue, has come to be so called, from the accident of the country in which it was spoken having been conquered by the French or Franks, — the conquerors, as in other cases, in course of time adopting the language of the conquered, and bestowing upon it their own name.

produced not in France, but in England. This was first shown by the late Abbé de la Rue in a series of dissertations published in 1796 and 1797 in the twelfth and thirteenth volumes of the *Archæologia*, or *Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries*, and subsequently, at more length and with more elaborate research, in his work entitled *Essais Historiques sur les Bardes, les Jongleurs, et les Trouvères Normands et Anglo-Normands*; 3 vols. 8vo. Caen, 1834.

The earliest recorded writer of French verse appears to be Richard I., Duke of Normandy, the natural but only son of William I., son and successor of Rollo, the great founder of the duchy. Richard, who afterwards acquired for himself the surname of *Sans-peur*, (the Fearless,) was born in 933, was recognized as duke on the death of his father, ten years after, and died, after a glorious reign of more than half a century, in 996. Of his poetry, however, nothing remains except the fame, preserved in the writings of another Trouvère of the next age. Richard, it may be observed, had been sent by his father to be educated at Bayeux, where the Danish language was still spoken, instead of at Rouen, the capital of the duchy, where even already, only a generation after the arrival of the Normans, they or their children, as well as the native population, spoke only French; and his taste for poetry is said to have been first awakened by the songs of the land of his ancestors. Much of the peculiar character, indeed, of the early northern French poetry betokens a Scandinavian inspiration. With this influence was probably combined that of the old Celtic poetry of Britany, or Armorica, of which the country now called Normandy had been originally a part, and with which it still continued to be intimately connected. In this way may be reconciled the various theories that have been proposed on the subject of the origin of romantic poetry and fiction in Europe; one deducing it from a Scandinavian, another from a Celtic, a third from an Oriental source; and each, separately looked at, appearing to support itself by facts and considerations of great force. When these several theories were advanced in opposition to one another by ingenious and more or less well-informed speculators of the last century, the distinction between the early language and poetry of the south and those of the north of France had been little attended to, and was very imperfectly understood. Had the love-songs of the Provençal Troubadours, and the lays and tales of the Norman Trouvères,

not been confounded together, it might have been perceived that both the internal and the external evidence concurred in assigning, in great part at least, a Saracenic origin to the former, and a mixed Scandinavian and Armorican parentage to the latter.

Another early Norman Trouvère, whose name only has been preserved, is Thibaut de Vernon, who was a canon of Rouen in the early part of the eleventh century, or in the age intermediate between that of Duke Richard Sans-peur and that of the Conqueror. A collection of fifty-nine old French Lives of Saints, of which three are in verse and the rest in prose, has been attributed to De Vernon; but erroneously, as is shown by M. de la Rue. What he really wrote was a verse Life of St. Vandrille (the Abbot Wandregisilus), which appears to be lost.

The renowned minstrel Taillefer, who struck the first blow at the battle of Hastings, is described by his countryman Wace, in the next century, as having dashed on horseback among the ranks of the English, to meet his glorious death, singing of Charlemagne and Roland and Oliver, and the other peers who died at Roncesvaux:—

De Karlemaigne et de Rollant,
E d'Oliver, et des vassals,
Qy morurent en Roncesvals.

Various pieces of ancient verse have been from time to time produced, claiming to be this Song of Roland (as it is styled by several later chroniclers); and it has been generally assumed that it was a short lyrical strain, and a composition of Taillefer's own. Lately, however, much attention has been attracted to a long poem, of nearly three hundred stanzas, or some three thousand lines, which was first published by M. Francisque Michel from the manuscript in the Bodleian Library, under the title of *La Chanson de Roland, ou de Roncevaux* (8vo. Paris, 1837), and which is maintained to be the true old epic of which a portion was recited by Taillefer on this occasion. The existence of this poem was, we believe, first pointed out in a note to his edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (v. 13,741), by Tyrwhitt, so many of whose hints and conjectures on such subjects have anticipated or been confirmed by more recent inquiry, and who observes that the "romance, which in the MS. has no title, may possibly be an older copy of one which is frequently quoted by Du Cange, under the

title of *Le Roman de Ronceveaux*." "The author's name," he adds, "is Turolde, as appears from the last line: —

Ci fait le geste que Turolde declinet.¹

He is not mentioned by any of the writers of French literary history that I have seen." There are in fact other manuscripts of the work, but of a later age, and exhibiting a modernized text. It appears, however, to have been generally forgotten until it was again mentioned by the late Rev. J. F. Conybeare, in announcing, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1817, his *Illustrations of the Early History of English and French Poetry*, — a work which, unfortunately, he did not live to publish. That same year an analysis of the poem was given in the first volume of the *Mémoires et Dissertations de la Société Royale des Antiquaires de France*, by M. de Musset, who at the same time announced an edition of it as in preparation by M. Guyot des Herbiers. This, however, never appeared, any more than an edition which was announced in 1832 as then preparing by M. Bourdillon. Nor, although it was subsequently made the subject of much discussion by M. H. Monin, who published a *Dissertation* upon it in an 8vo. volume, at Paris, in 1832, by M. Paulin Paris, by M. Le Roux de Lincy, in his *Analyse du Roman de Garin le Loherain* (12mo. Paris, 1835), and other French poetical antiquaries, was the poem made accessible to the public, till M. Michel was enabled to bring out his edition of it (of which the impression, however, was very limited) by the liberality of the French government. But a more sumptuous edition was subsequently produced by the late M. F. Génin, — *La Chanson de Roland, Texte Critique*; 8vo. Par. 1850, — founded on a further examination, conducted with extraordinary care, of the original manuscript (which the enthusiastic editor is inclined to believe to be the very copy that had belonged to Taillefer) — and illustrated with everything in the way of explanation and disquisition that any student could desire, or that rare ingenuity as well as erudition could supply.²

¹ *Turolde* is the common contraction for *Turoldeus*.

² See also *Lettre sur les Variantes de la Chanson de Roland*, (édition de M. F. Génin), à M. Léon de Bastard, par F. Guessard; *Lettre à M. Paulin Paris*, par F. Génin; and *Lettre à un Ami sur l'Article de M. Paulin Paris*, inséré dans la *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, par F. Génin; all published at Paris in 1851.

ANGLO-NORMAN POETS. — KING HENRY I. — HIS QUEENS,
MATILDA AND ALICE.

To our King Henry I., surnamed Beauclerc, or the Scholar, who was carefully educated under the superintendence of the learned Lanfranc, afterwards archbishop and saint, M. de la Rue attributes both an English translation of a collection of Latin Æsopian fables, mentioned in the next age by Marie de France, and rendered by her into French verse, and a short poem in Romance entitled *Urbanus*, or *Le Dictié d'Urbain*, being a sort of code of the rules of politeness as understood and observed in his day. The evidence, however, is not very conclusive as to either production; and the English fables, in particular, now only known from Marie's translation, have been claimed, with perhaps more probability, for King Alfred, whose name appears instead of that of Henry in some manuscripts of Marie's work.¹ Both Henry's queens, it may be noticed, are recorded to have been, as well as himself, fond of literature and poetry. M. de la Rue refers to the works of Hildebert, bishop of le Mans, as containing several pieces of Latin poetry addressed to the first of them, Matildis, or Matilda, the daughter of the Scottish king Malcolm Canmore and the English Margaret, herself a learned as well as pious princess. But the liveliest picture of this part of Queen Matilda's character is that drawn by William of Malmesbury, who, it will be perceived however, is no great admirer of some of the tastes which he describes: — "She had a singular pleasure in hearing the service of God; and on this account was thoughtlessly prodigal towards clerks of melodious voice; addressed them kindly, gave to them liberally, and promised still more abundantly. Her generosity becoming universally known, crowds of scholars, equally famed for verse and for singing, came over; and happy did he account himself who could soothe the ears of the queen by the novelty of his song. Nor on those only did she lavish money, but on all sorts of men, especially foreigners, that, through her presents, they might proclaim her liberality abroad; for the desire of fame is so rooted in the human mind that scarcely is any one contented with the

¹ See a note upon this subject (which, however, appears not to have convinced De la Rue) by the late Mr. Price, in his edition of Warton's *History of English Poetry*, i. lvii.-lxvi.

precious fruits of a good conscience, but is fondly anxious, if he does anything laudable, to have it generally known. Hence, it was generally observed, the disposition crept upon the queen to reward all the foreigners she could, while the others were kept in suspense, sometimes with effectual, but often with empty promises. Hence, too, it arose that she fell into the error of prodigal givers; bringing many claims on her tenantry, exposing them to injuries, and taking away their property; by which, obtaining the credit of a liberal benefactress, she little regarded their sarcasms.”¹ With all this vanity, however, and love of admiration and applause, if such it is to be called, Matilda is admitted by the historian to have constantly practised the humblest and most self-denying offices of religion: she did not shrink, we are told, either from washing the feet of diseased persons, or even from touching and dressing their sores and pressing their hands for a long time with devout affection to her lips; and her chief pleasure was in the worship of God. It is a trait of the times to find the same person the chief patroness of piety and of poetry. Henry’s second queen, also, Adelais, or Alice, of Louvain, is addressed by several of the Norman and Anglo-Norman trouvères as the special protectress of them and their art.



PHILIP DE THAN. — GEOFFREY, ABBOT OF ST. ALBANS.

ONE of those by whom Queen Adelais is thus distinguished is Philip de Than (anciently Thaon or Thaun), who, if the age of Turold and his Roman de Roncevaux be disputed, may be regarded as the earliest of the trouvères any of whose works have certainly come down to us. He is the author of two French poems of considerable length: one a treatise on chronological computation, entitled *Li Livre des Creatures*; the other, known as *The Bestiary*, being a sort of natural history, comprising an account of both animal and mineral productions. The latter is dedicated to the English queen, and was probably written between 1120 and 1130. Both poems are mainly compiled from various Latin originals.²

¹ Willelmi Malmesbiriensis *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, lib. v. ad an. 1107; as translated by the Rev. John Sharpe. 4to. London, 1815, p. 516.

² They are both given, with translations, in Mr. Wright’s *Popular Treatises on*
VOL. I.

We have already mentioned Geffroy, or Geoffrey, also a native of Normandy, who died abbot of the monastery of St. Albans in 1146, and his miracle-play of St. Catharine, which is stated by Matthew Paris to have been acted by the boys attending his school at Dunstable about the year 1110, and is generally referred to as the earliest drama upon record in any modern tongue.¹ But in truth we have no information in what language this lost production of Geoffrey was composed; it may have been in French, in English, or in Latin, though it is most probable that it was in the first-mentioned tongue. If so, it is by much the most ancient French play of which the name has been preserved. Its claim to stand at the head of modern dramatic literature, however, has been disputed. "Perhaps," observes a late learned writer, "the plays of Roswitha, a nun of Gandersheim in Lower Saxony, who lived towards the close of the tenth century, afford the earliest specimens of dramatic composition since the decline of the Roman empire."² These plays of Roswitha's appear to have been intended only for reading, and are not known ever to have been acted; but they have been twice published, — first by Conrad Celtes in 1501, and again by Leonard Schurtzfleisch in 1707.



PILGRIMAGE OF SAINT BRANDAN. — CHARLEMAGNE.

ANOTHER of the poetical protégés or celebrators of Queen Adalais is the unknown author of a poem of between 800 and 900 verses on the Pilgrimage of St. Brandan. There were, it appears, in the sixth century two Irish ecclesiastics of the name of Brandan or Brendan, both of whom have since been canonized, the day assigned in the Calendar to the one being the 29th of November, to the other the 16th of May. It is the latter with whom we have here to do. He has the credit of having been the founder of the abbey of Clonfert in Galway; but the most memorable passage of his history is his voyage, along with some of his monks, in quest of a more profound seclusion from the world, which was believed

Science written during the Middle Ages, in Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, and English. 8vo. London, 1841.

¹ See ante, p. 70.

² Note by Price to Warton's Hist. of Eng. Poet., ii. 68.

in an after-age to have conducted him to one of the Fortunate Islands, or one of the Canaries according to a still later interpretation. He did not find the scheme of so distant a retirement to answer, and he soon returned to Ireland; but M. de la Rue thinks it probable that he drew up a narrative of his adventures for the information of the European public of that day, out of which there grew in course of time the legend which bears the name of his Voyage to the Terrestrial Paradise, and which is as full of marvels and miracles as that of Ulysses, or any of those of Sinbad the Sailor. Indeed, one of Sinbad's principal wonders, his landing on the whale, is actually found in the Voyage of St. Brandan. De la Rue has given copious extracts from the poem on this subject which he notices, and which professes to have been composed at the command of Queen Adalais, and immediately after her marriage in 1121. But the fullest account of St. Brandan and his Pilgrimage will be found in the Preface to a more recent publication by M. Achille Jubinal, entitled *La Légende Latine de S. Brandaines, avec une traduction inédite en prose et en poésie Romane, publiée d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi, remontant aux xi^e, xii^e, et xiii^e siècles*; 8vo., Paris, 1836. Of the French metrical legend here printed, which is different from the Anglo-Norman romance analyzed by De la Rue, M. Jubinal states that there are many manuscripts. It is found as part of a poem of the thirteenth century written by Gauthier de Metz, entitled *Image du Monde*. Several copies of the story in Latin prose also exist; of the French prose version there is only one known text, which is in the *Bibliothèque Impériale* at Paris. It is found, however, both in verse and prose in most of the other European tongues, — in Irish, in Welsh, in Spanish, in German of various dialects, in Flemish, in English; and there are printed editions of it, both recent and in the earlier ages of typography, in several of these languages. M. Jubinal mentions an edition of it in English prose, printed by Wyuken de Worde, in folio, in 1516: it appears to be a translation from a Latin version contained in a volume of *Lives of the Saints*, compiled under the title of *Legenda Aurea*, by John Capgrave, who was an English monk of the fourteenth century, and the author also of a quantity of verse, some of which still exists, in his native tongue.¹ It is remarkable that St. Brandan, or Brandain, has given his name to an imaginary island long popularly believed to form one of the Ca-

¹ See Warton's *Hist. of Eng. Poet.*, ii. 355; and additional note by Park, p. 514 edit. of 1824).

nary group, although become invisible since his day, or at least not to be discovered by modern navigators, to whom it was a frequent object of search from the beginning of the sixteenth down to so late a date as the beginning of the eighteenth century: the last expedition in quest of it was fitted out from Spain in 1721. The Spaniards, who call the lost island San Borendon, believe it to be the retreat of their King Rodrigo; the Portuguese assign it to their Don Sebastian.¹ The acquaintance of the modern nations of Europe with the Canary Islands dates only from about the year 1330, when a French ship was driven upon one of them in a storm.

Along with this romance on the pilgrimage of St. Brandan may be noticed another old French poem on a fabulous journey of Charlemagne to Constantinople and Jerusalem, which is perhaps of still earlier date, and which has also from the language been supposed to have been written in England. An account of it is given by De la Rue (*Essais*, ii. 23-32); and the poem has been since published by M. Francisque Michel, from the Royal MS. 16 E. viii., at the British Museum, under the title of *Charlemagne*, an Anglo-Norman poem of the Twelfth Century, with an Introduction and a Glossarial Index; 12mo. Lon. 1836. It consists of only 870 lines.



ANGLO-NORMAN CHRONICLERS:—GAIMAR;—DAVID.

BUT the farther we pursue the history of this early Norman poetry, the closer becomes its connection with our own country. Not only does it seek its chief audience in England, but the subjects with which it occupies itself come to be principally or almost exclusively English. The earliest of the old French versifiers of our English history appears to be Geffroy Gaimar, the author of a metrical chronicle, entitled *Estorie des Engles* (History of the English). It was probably completed about the middle of the twelfth century. Attention was first called to Gaimar and his work by the Abbé de la Rue, who appears, however, to have in part mistaken the sense of the account the old chronicler gives of

¹ Both the Abbé de la Rue and M. Jubinal refer the reader for information upon the subject of the Isle of St. Brandan to the *Noticias de la Historia de las islas de Canaria* of Dom Joseph da Viera y Clavigo (Madrid, 1672 or 1771).

nimself. In the complete work the History of the English was preceded by a *Brut d'Angleterre*, or History of the Britons, which he had compiled principally, he tells us, from a Latin work, itself a translation from a Welsh original, the good book of Oxford belonging to Walter the archdeacon. Comparing this with what is stated by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the Preface or Dedication to his History, we cannot doubt that that was the Latin original upon which Gaimar worked. He seems to say that he also made some use of another book which he calls the History of Winchester, and of an English book of Washingburgh (in Lincolnshire), where he found accounts of the Roman emperors who possessed the sovereignty of England and of the kings who had held of them. This portion of Gaimar's performance, however, is no longer known to exist. His English History extends from the coming of the Angles and Saxons to the death of William Rufus, and is for the most part based on the vernacular National Chronicle, but owes its chief interest and value to certain legendary matter gathered either from other written sources, or, in some cases perhaps, from mere popular tradition. The first portion of it which was printed was that containing the story of Havelok the Dane, which was given by Sir Frederic Madden in his edition of that romance prepared for the Roxburghe Club, London, 1828. The latter portion of the work, commencing from the Norman Conquest, was published by M. Francisque Michel, at Rouen, in 1835, in the first volume of his collection entitled *Chroniques Anglo-Normandes*. The portion relating to the period before the Norman Conquest, again, extending to above 5300 lines in all, is contained in the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, 1848. Finally, the whole has been edited by Mr. Thomas Wright, for the Caxton Society, under the title of *Gaimar's Anglo-Norman Metrical Chronicle*, with *Illustrative Notes and Appendix*, containing the Lay of Havelok, the Legend of Ernulf, and the Life of Herward; 8vo. London, 1850. A translation of Gaimar by Mr. Stevenson is given in the Second Part of the Third Volume of *The Church Historians of England*, 1854.

At the end of his History, Gaimar, who here describes himself as of Troyes, intimates his intention of writing a separate Life of King Henry I., of whom he says that he could tell a thousand things omitted by David, who did not go sufficiently into details to do justice to the nobleness, the liberality, the magnificence, and

the other brilliant qualities of that great king, although his chronicle was highly esteemed, and in particular was a favorite book with the Queen Adelais. Of this David, who is nowhere else made mention of, nothing is known. His performance was in verse; Gaimar calls it a *Chanson*. Nor have we any evidence that Gaimar's own promised Life of King Henry was ever written.

WACE.

THE most famous of these writers of early English history in romance verse is Master Wace, — *Maître Wace, clerc lisant* (that is, writing clerk), as he calls himself, — in Latin *Magister Wacius*. The name is also otherwise written in his own day *Waice, Gace, Gasse, and Gasce*; but *Guace, Huace, Huistace, Wistace, Extasse, Eustace, Eustache*, are the corruptions of a subsequent age or modern variations, and *Wate*, which is the form adopted by some modern writers, is a mere mistranscription.¹ His Christian name appears to have been Richard. He was a native of the island of Jersey, where he was probably born in the last decade of the eleventh century, and of a good family: his father was one of the Norman barons who accompanied the Conqueror to England and fought at Hastings; he himself was educated for the ecclesiastical profession at Caen, and, after passing some years in other parts of France, and also, it appears, visiting England, he returned and settled in that city, where he spent the rest of his life in writing his several poetical works. In his latter years he was made by Henry II. a canon of Bayeux. The Waces, probably descendants of the poet's father, obtained large possessions in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire; and another branch continued to flourish for some ages in Normandy. The first of Wace's chronicles is entitled the *Brut d'Angleterre*,² and is in the main a translation into romance

¹ *Wace*, however, according to Mr. Wright, is really "merely the vernacular form of the Latin *Eustocius*." — (Biog. Brit. Lit., ii. 206.)

² The British Chronicles are generally supposed to have been called *Bruts* from Brutus, the great-grandson of Æneas, who is represented in them as the first king of the Britons; but the author of Britannia after the Romans puts forward a new interpretation. "Brud," he says (p. xxii.), "in construction Brut, is reputation, or rumor, and in the secondary sense, a chronicle, or history. It retails that

verse of eight syllables of the British History of Geoffrey of Monmouth, although it contains also a good many things which are not in Geoffrey. It extends to upwards of 15,000 lines. After finishing his work Wace is said to have presented it to Henry II.'s queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Many manuscripts of it exist both in England and in France; and it has now been printed, under the title of *Le Roman de Brut, par Wace; avec un Commentaire et des Notes, par Le Roux de Lincy*; 2 vols. 8vo. Rouen, 1836, 1838. Wace's other great work is his *Roman de Rou*, that is, Romance of Rollo. It is a chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy, in two parts: the first, in Alexandrine verses, extending only to the beginning of the reign of the third duke, Richard Sans-peur; the second, in eight-syllable rhymes, coming down to the year 1170, the sixteenth of Henry II. There are nearly 17,000 lines in all. The composition of the first part is stated to have been commenced in 1160, and it appears to have been published by itself; but some years after, on learning that the charge of writing the history of the Dukes of Normandy in verse had been confided by King Henry to another poet named Benoît, Wace, as M. de la Rue supposes, resumed his pen, and, adopting for expedition the easier octosyllabic verse, hastened to complete his task before his rival.¹ The entire work was printed for the first time in 1827 at Rouen, in 2 vols. 8vo., under the title of *Le Roman de Rou et des Ducs de Normandie, par Robert Wace; avec des Notes par Frédéric Pluquet*; but, although M. Pluquet, who had in 1824 published a short notice about Wace (*Notice sur la Vie et les Ecrits de Robert Wace*), mostly copied from the Abbé de la Rue's paper in the *Archæologia*, was assisted in the preparation of his edition by M. Auguste le Prévost, whose notes are often learned and curious, it is evident that very little knowledge or critical judgment has been employed in settling the text, which is often manifestly corrupt either from mistranscription or reliance on a faulty original. Some of its errors have been pointed out, with sufficient gentleness, by M. Raynouard in a small tract entitled *Observations Philosophiques et Grammaticales sur le Roman de Rou*, 8vo.

original sense in the French and English word *bruit*; and, though it is curious that all the Welsh Chronicles begin with the reign of Brutus, we must not be seduced by that accident into etymological trifling."

¹ M. Le Roux de Lincy, however, denies that this latter part of the *Roman des Ducs de Normandie* is by Wace, or that he ever really attempted in his old age to compete with Benoît.

Rouen, 1829; which ought always to accompany M. Pluquet's edition. Mr. Edgar Taylor (author of the volume entitled *Lays of the Minnesingers or German Troubadours*, and other works) has translated so much of the *Roman de Rou* as relates to the Conquest of England into English prose, with notes and illustrations, 8vo. Lond. 1837. The interest that has been lately excited by this old Norman poet is further evinced by the publication of two others of his supposed works; his *Shorter Chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy*, in Alexandrine verse, from Henry II. back to Rollo, which is printed in the first volume (Part ii. pp. 444-447) of the *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, 8vo. 1824;¹ and his poem, in verse of eight syllables, on the establishment by William the Conqueror of the Festival of the Conception of the Virgin, which was printed in 8vo. at Caen, in 1842, under the title of *L'Établissement de la Fête de la Conception Notre Dame, dite la Fête aux Normands*; publié pour la première fois d'après les MSS. de la Bibliothèque du Roi, par MM. Mancel et Trebutien. A very limited impression, also, of another of his romances, entitled *La Vie de St. Nicholas*, in about 1500 lines, of which there are several manuscripts in existence, and some extracts from which are given by Hickes in his *Thesaurus Linguarum Septentrionalium*, is stated by M. le Roux de Lincy to have been produced by M. Monmerqué for the *Société des Bibliophiles Français*, and to be contained in the seventh volume of their privately printed *Mélanges*, 8vo. Paris, 1820-1834. Wace is besides commonly held to be the author of a Romance about the Virgin, extending to 1800 verses, and comprising a full account of her life and death, which is still in manuscript.

BENOÎT.

WACE'S contemporary and rival, Benoît, also wrote a *Chronicle of the Norman Dukes*, though not till some years after Wace had finished his. Benoît's performance consists of above 30,000 octo-

¹ Both M. Le Roux de Lincy, however, and M. Francisque Michel, a much higher authority (in the Preface to his *Chronique des Ducs de Normandie par Benoît*, 1836, p. xv.), agree in holding this to be the production of a later writer than Wace.

syllabic verses, and begins at the first irruption of the Normans under their leaders Hastings and Bier Ironside, but comes down no farther than to the end of the reign of Henry I. It was supposed to have been preserved only in one MS. which is in the Harleian collection in the British Museum, and from which it has been printed at Paris, under the care of M. Francisque Michel, with the title of *Chronique des Ducs de Normandie, par Benoît, Trouvère Anglo-Normand du 12^{me} siècle*, 3 vols. 4to. 1836-44.¹ But another MS. has since been found in the Library of the city of Tours. It is, from its fulness and minuteness, one of the most curious monuments we possess of early Norman history, and contains many details nowhere else to be found. This Benoît also appears to be the same with the Benoît de St. More, or St. Maure, by whom we have another long romance of nearly 30,000 verses, entitled the *Roman de Troye*, being a legendary history of the Trojan war, founded on the favorite authorities of the Middle Ages, the fictitious Dares Phrygius and Dictys of Crete: their identity had been doubted by M. Michel in his edition of the Norman Chronicle; but he was subsequently induced, Mr. Wright informs us (*Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 262) to change his opinion.



EVERARD.—FRENCH LANGUAGE IN SCOTLAND.

AMONG these early romance poets, the Abbé de la Rue reckons a Scotsman, one Everard, who, after having been a monk of Kirkham in Yorkshire, was in 1150 appointed by David I. of Scotland—that “sore saint to the crown,” as he was called by his successor, the first James—the first abbot of his newly-founded abbey of Ulme or Holme-Cultraine in Cumberland. To him M. de la Rue attributes a French metrical translation of what are called the Distichs of Cato, which is said to afford the earliest known example in the language of mixed rhymes, that is, of the alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes, now an established rule of French poetry. A romance history of the Passion of Christ, in 126 strophes, and in the same style with the Distichs, which is found along with the Latin work in one of the Arundel MSS., for-

¹ In the Collection de Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de France.

merly belonging to the Royal Society, now in the British Museum, the Abbé conceives to be also in all probability by Everard. But the evidence for identifying the translator of the Distichs with the monk of Kirkham appears, it must be confessed, to be extremely slight.¹ A knowledge of the French language, nevertheless, seems to have been as general at this date in Scotland as in England. Pinkerton, in his *Essay on the Origin of Scottish Poetry*, prefixed to his *Ancient Scottish Poems*, 2 vols. 8vo. Lond. 1786, after observing that the chief English poets wrote solely in French for three centuries after the Conquest, — that French was the only language used at court or by the nobility, nay even by the middle ranks of people, — that Saxon was left merely to the mob, — that the apophthegms, expressions, &c., preserved by historians of the time, are all in old French, — and that probably upwards of a hundred names of English writers who wrote in French during that interval might yet be recovered, — proceeds to mention some facts which illustrate the prevalence of the same language in the northern kingdom. “Upon the murder of Duncan by Macbeth,” he remarks, “in 1039, Malcolm, the heir of the crown, fled into England, where he remained for seventeen years before he was enabled to resume his kingdom. Edward the Confessor was king of England from 1041 till 1065, and in his reign we know that French was the court-language in England. Malcolm surely used this speech, and his court also. Many Saxons came to Scotland with him in 1056, and also at the Conquest (1066); but in 1093 they were all very prudently ordered to leave the kingdom by Dovenald Ban, his successor. They were chiefly men of rank; and, had they introduced any language, it would have been the French. . . . But yet another point requires our attention. In 945, Edmund king of England gave Cumberland to Malcolm I., king of Scotland, on condition of homage for it. From this period the heir of the Scotch crown was always Prince of Cumberland, and resided as a king in that country. . . . Now the prince, it may be supposed, did not use the Gaelic in a country where it was never spoken; but, remaining there from early youth, adopted French, the court-tongue of England, in which country his principality was, and to the king of which he was bound to do homage.”² He then mentions that under William of Scotland, in 1165, the coin of that country bears a French inscription; and that Alexan-

¹ See Wright's *Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 124.

² *Essay*, p. lxiv.

der III., in 1249, is stated to have taken the coronation oath *Latine et Gallice*, in Latin and in French: it was read in Latin (probably after the ancient formula), and then expounded in French.¹ And he concludes:—“French being the language of the polite, and Latin of the learned, who could use the vulgar tongue in writing? . . . I suspect that no Scottish poet, before Thomas of Ersildon, ventured beyond a ballad when using his native tongue. Perhaps one or two may have written a romance in French rhyme, though now lost or unknown. . . . The poor bards who entertained the mob might recite ballads and short romances in the vulgar tongue; but the minstrels who appeared in the king’s or in the baron’s hall would use French only, as in England; for had they tried the common language they would have been sent into the kitchen.”² By the common language, Pinkerton means the Pictish, which he conceives to have been a Gothic dialect nearly allied to the English. In this notion he is probably wrong: there is every reason to believe that the Picts spoke a Celtic dialect; but it is true, nevertheless, that the popular speech of the south-eastern half of Scotland at this period was, as he assumes, a Gothic dialect, though derived not from the Picts, but from the Anglian and Danish settlers, who had occupied the whole of that region partially, and a great part of it exclusively, ever since the seventh century.



LUC DE LA BARRE.—GUICHARD DE BEAULIEU.

ANOTHER early trouvère whose history connects him with England is Luc de la Barre, famous for the satirical rhymes which he composed against Henry I., and for the terrible punishment (the extinction of his sight) which he drew down upon himself from the exasperated king. It appears, however, that it was not till after repeated and extreme provocation, and the abuse of much clemency, that Henry took this savage revenge. De la Barre, who was a distinguished Norman baron and warrior as well as a poet, had espoused the cause of Duke Robert in the quarrel between the two brothers; but, although, in the course of the contest of arms for the possession of the duchy, he had been several times taken

¹ Hailes, *Annals*, i. 195.

² *Essay*, p. lxxi.

prisoner, he had always been dismissed without ransom by the English king, perhaps out of respect to his poetical talents or reputation, till he at last, in a fatal hour for himself, turned against his benefactor with his pen as well as with his sword. Henry was perhaps stung more by the ingratitude of the poet than by the sharpness of his sarcasms; or, at any rate, as De la Rue insinuates, if it was an acute feeling of the wit and the poetry which actuated him, there was still something generous and highminded even in an excess of such sensibility. There is nothing, however, of De la Barre's remaining.

Guichard (or Guiscard) de Beaulieu describes himself as a monk, and is supposed by M. de la Rue to have belonged to the priory of that name, which was a dependency of the abbey of St. Albans. Mr. Wright, however, doubts this, and thinks that Beaulieu was probably his family name.¹ His only known work is a sort of sermon, in French verse, on the vices of the age, consisting of nearly 2000 Alexandrine lines. It has been edited by M. Achille Jubinal, 8vo. Paris, 1834. It appears to have been intended for a popular audience. The poetical preacher begins by telling his hearers that he is not going to speak to them in Latin, but in Romance, in order that all may understand him. "The mention of sermons in verse," observes De la Rue, "may perhaps surprise the reader; but it is certain that at this epoch, at least among the Normans and the Anglo-Normans, it was customary to read to the people the lives of the Saints in French verse, on Sundays and holidays."² Guichard's poetry is described as often naïve and graceful in expression, and sweet in its flow; and he is the first writer who is known to have introduced into the romance poetry the practice of preserving the same rhyme throughout each stanza or paragraph, extending sometimes to thirty, sixty, or even eighty lines or more³—a fashion followed by many succeeding writers in ten and twelve syllabled verse, and which De la Rue conceives Guichard must have borrowed from the Welsh, or their kindred the Armoricians.

¹ Biog. Brit. Lit., ii. 132.

² Essais, ii. 138.

³ The commencing stanza of *Parise la Duchesse* (considered as one of the parts of the *Roman des Douze Paires de France*), which has been published under the care of M. G. F. de Martonne, 12mo. Paris, 1836, consists of 119 lines, all ending with the same rhyme.

ARTHURIAN ROMANCE:—THE SAINT GREAL.—LUC DU
GAST.—BURON.—MAPES.

WE cannot here attempt to take up the intricate and obscure question of the origin of the Arthurian body of Romance, including the romances of the Round Table and those of the quest of the Saint Greal, about which so much has been written, in great part to little purpose except to be refuted by the next inquirer. In addition to the earlier speculations of Warburton, Tyrwhitt, Warton, Percy, and Ritson, and to what has been more recently advanced by Ellis, Southey, Scott, Dunlop, and other writers among ourselves, the Preface of the late Mr. Price to his edition of Warton's History of English Poetry (pp. 68, &c.), and the Introduction to Britannia after the Romans (pp. vi. &c.), may be pointed out to the reader's attention. The theory of the author of the last-mentioned treatise is in some respects new and curious. "The great Work," he observes, "and, as I may say, the Alcoran, of Arthurian romance was the Book of the Saint Greal. In truth, it is no romance, but a blasphemous imposture, more extravagant and daring than any other on record, in which it is endeavored to pass off the mysteries of bardism for direct inspirations of the Holy Ghost." The original work, this writer holds, was actually composed in Welsh, as it professes to have been, in the year 717. "Greal," he says, "is a Welsh word, signifying an aggregate of principles, a magazine; and the elementary world, or world of spirits, was called the *Country of the Greal*. From thence the word Greal, and in Latin Gradalis, came to signify a vessel in which various messes might be mixed up." The Saint Greal, according to the common account in the British romances, which appears to be derived from the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus, is the plate from which Christ ate his last supper, and which is said to have been appropriated by Joseph of Arimathea, and to have been afterwards used by him to collect the blood that flowed from the wounds of the Redeemer. It makes a great figure in the romantic history of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, as may be seen in the eleventh and subsequent books of the popular compilation entitled *Morte Darthus*. The author of *Britannia after the Romans* maintains that the original Welsh Book of the Saint Greal was unquestionably the work of the bard Tysilio. De la

Rue holds that the original romances on the quest of the Saint Greal, or Saint Graal, are to be considered as forming quite a distinct body of fiction from those relating to the Round Table, and that much misapprehension has arisen from confounding the two. The account given by him is in substance as follows:— The oldest verse romance on the subject of the Saint Greal appears to have been composed by Chrétien de Troyes about the year 1170; but of his work only some fragments remain, and the earliest entire romance now existing which treats of this subject is the prose Roman de Tristan, written by Luc du Gast, who was a person of family and property; he calls himself Chevalier and Sire du Chastel du Gast—that is, according to M. de la Rue, Gast in Normandy, now situated in the canton of St. Sever, and the department of Calvados. Although of Norman descent, however, he was a native and inhabitant of England: he resided, he tells us, near Salisbury; and, if his French should not always be correct, he begs his readers to excuse him on the score of his English birth and breeding. It was from this prose romance, the Abbé proceeds to state, and from a continuation of it by Walter Map, or Mapes, already mentioned, whose work is entitled Roman des Diverses Quêtes du Saint Graal, and is dedicated to Henry II., that Chrétien de Troyes soon after drew the materials of his verse romance, which is called the Roman du Saint Graal, or sometimes the Roman de Perceval. But both Luc du Gast and Walter Map, and also Robert de Borron, who likewise wrote in this age a prose Roman du Saint Graal (which, however, is merely a life of Joseph of Arimathea), all declare that they translated from a Latin original, which they say had been drawn up by order of King Arthur himself, and deposited by him in the library of the cathedral of Salisbury. Another romance on the subject of the Saint Greal, which is now lost, is attributed to a writer named Gace le Blount, who is said to have been a relation of Henry II. Map, in addition to his Roman des Diverses Quêtes, which is in two parts, continued the history of the knights who had engaged in the search for the Saint Greal in a third romance, also in prose, which he entitled La Mort d'Artur; and he is also the author of another prose romance on the adventures of Lancelot du Lac. Upon one of the incidents in this last, Chrétien de Troyes founded his verse romance, also still extant, entitled La reclot de la Charette. From another prose romance by Robert de Borron, on the subject of the enchanter Merlin, an

Anglo-Norman trouvère of the latter part of the thirteenth century composed a verse romance, which is still preserved, entitled *Merlyn Ambroise*. Finally, in association with his relation Elie de Borron, and with another writer called Rusticien de Pise, Robert de Borron produced a prose translation of the *Historia Britonum* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and also the two romances of *Meliadus de Leonois* and *Giron le Courtois*; and Elie de Borron wrote by himself the *Roman de Palamedes*.¹

Thus far the Abbé de la Rue. Since his work appeared, however, some parts of his statement have been corrected or controverted by M. Michel and other recent writers. In the elaborate Introduction to his edition of *Tristan*, to be presently mentioned (Paris, 1835), M. Michel, accepting his own account of himself, maintains Luc, or Luce, to whom he attributes either the invention, or at least the first translation from the Latin, of that romance, to have been an Englishman, and lord of a château in the neighborhood of Salisbury, the name of which is variously given in the manuscripts as *Gat*, *Gast*, *Gad*, *Gant*, and *Gail*. Henry II., M. Michel further states, delighted with this prose work of Luce, engaged Walter Map to follow it up in the same style with the Romance of *Lancelot*; and Robert de Buron, Borron, or Bowron, to add that of the *Saint Greal*: finally, Heyle de Buron, a brother, or at least a relation, of Robert, revised the whole, and gave a unity and completeness to the cycle by finishing the story of *Tristram*.

In the Notice prefixed to his publication, from the MS. in the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, now the *Bibliothèque Impériale*, of the *Roman du Saint Graal*, in old French verse (12mo. Bordeaux, 1841), M. Michel states that Map, by order of Henry II., drew up the Romance of the *Saint Graal* in Latin from the songs and lays of the bards of Britany; and that his work was afterwards translated into French by Robert de Borron. The *Roman de Perceval* of Chrestien de Troyes is not, he says, a romance of the *Saint Graal* at all; it only contains the last adventures of the *Saint Graal*. The poem which he publishes, and which is incomplete, extends to 4018 octosyllabic lines.²

¹ De la Rue, *Essais Historiques*, ii. 206-248.

² "Walter Mapes," says Mr. Wright, "was distinguished as a writer in the Anglo-Norman language, as well as in Latin. It is to him we owe a large portion of the cycle of the romances of the Round Table in the earliest form in which they

ROMAN DU ROI HORN.

It will be most convenient to notice here the French metrical Romance of King Horn (*Roman du Roi Horn*). This is the work of a poet who calls himself "Mestre Thomas," and is regarded by Ritson and M. de la Rue as a composition of the latter part of the twelfth century, and as the original of the English *Horne Childe*, or *Geste of Kyng Horn*; but by other eminent authorities, such as Bishop Percy and the late learned editor of Warton, the English poem has been held to be the earlier of the two; and in this latter opinion both Mr. Wright and Sir F. Madden concur. A few extracts from this French Romance were given by Ritson in the notes to his edition of the English *Geste* (*Ancient English Metrical Romances*, iii. 264-281); others were printed by M. de la Rue (*Essais Hist.* ii. 251-260); and a complete edition by M. Francisque Michel has long been announced, to include also the English romance from a text prepared by Mr. Wright. Bishop Percy ascribed the English *Kyng Horn* to so early a date as "within a century after the Conquest;" and, although in its present form it is probably not older than the latter part of the thirteenth century, Mr. Price has no hesitation in expressing his belief that it owes its origin to a period even long anterior to the date assigned by Percy.¹

are known. This first series of these romances consists of the *Roman de St. Graal*, or the history of the Graal before its pretended arrival in Britain, brought by Joseph of Arimathea; of the *Roman de Merlin*; of the *Roman de Lancelot du Lac*; of the *Quête du Saint Graal*, which is a sequel to the adventures of Lancelot; and of the death of King Arthur, forming the *Roman de la Mort Arthus*. The three latter were the work of Mapes, as we learn from the concluding paragraph of the *Mort Arthus*, and from a later writer of another branch of the series, *Helie de Borron*, who completed the *Roman de Tristan* in the reign of Henry III. These authorities appear to intimate that Mapes translated his romances from a Latin original, which is distinctly stated in some of the manuscripts; but we have no other evidence of the existence of such an original, and it is probable that a great part of the incidents of the story was the work of the writer's own imagination, the whole being founded on popular legends then floating about." — *Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 304.

Mr. Wright adds that the manuscripts containing this series of pure romances, though rather numerous, are mostly no older than the latter half of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth, no one being known which can be assigned to the age in which the authors lived; and that from this circumstance, and the fact that most of them were written in France, they cannot be regarded as representing accurately the language in which they were originally written.

¹ Warton (edit. of 1840), i. 41.

TRISTAN, OR TRISTREM.

To the author of the *Roi Horn* or to another Thomas the French metrical *Roman de Tristan* is also ascribed. All that remains of this romance is a fragment of 1811 verses.¹ There can hardly be a doubt that it is an earlier composition than the English *Sir Tristrem*, published by Sir Walter Scott, from the *Auchinleck MS.*, and attributed by him to Thomas of Ercildown, styled the Rhymer, who is admitted to have belonged to the latter part of the thirteenth century; but whether the author of the French romance be the Thomas of Britany referred to as his chief authority by Gottfried von Strasburgh, a German minstrel of the thirteenth century, by whom there remains a long metrical romance, in his own language, on the subject of *Sir Tristrem*, — whether he be the same Thomas to whom we owe the *Roman du Roi Horn* (which Scott was also inclined to claim as a translation from another English romance of his Thomas of Ercildown), — and what may be the real connection between either the French or the German *Tristrem* and the English, — as well as whether the latter work be the *Sir Tristrem* of Thomas of Ercildown mentioned by Robert de Brunne (in the early part of the fourteenth century), — or to what age, country, and author it is to be assigned, — are questions upon which we cannot enter. They will be found profusely discussed in Scott's *Introduction and Notes* to his edition of *Sir Tristrem* (8vo. Edinb. 1803); in a long *Note*, in reply to his views, by Mr. Price, inserted at the end of the first volume of his edition of *Warton's History* (pp. 181–198, and, with additional notes by Mr. Wright, Sir F. Madden, and the late Rev. Richard Garnett, in the edition of 1840, i. 95–112); in an *Advertisement* by Mr. Lockhart, prefixed to his republication of Scott's volume (12mo. Edinb. 1833); in *M. de la Rue's Essais Historiques* (ii. 251–269); in a valuable paper, known to be by Sir Frederick Madden, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1833 (vol. civ., pp. 307–312); and in *M. Michel's* elaborate *Introduction* to his publication of *The Poetical Romances*.

¹ There is another fragment, of 996 verses, of a romance of *Tristan*, which has been assumed to belong to the same work; but it appears now to be agreed that the two fragments are parts of two different poems written by different authors. Abstracts, in English, by the late Mr. George Ellis are given of both in the *Appendix* to Sir Walter Scott's edition of the English Romance of *Sir Tristrem*. Both were among the MSS. of the late Mr. Douce, and are now in the Bodleian Library.

of Tristan in French, in Anglo-Norman, and in Greek (2 vols. 12mo. London and Paris. 1835).

GUERNES DE PONT SAINTE MAXENCE.

M. DE LA RUE mentions, in one of his papers in the *Archæologia*, a Life of Becket in French verse by a contemporary of the name of Guernes, an ecclesiastic of Pont Sainte Maxence, in Picardy, which is curious from the statement of the author that he had several times read his composition publicly at the tomb of the archbishop. This, the Abbé observes, would seem to show that, in the time of Henry II., the Romance or old French was understood in England even by many of the common people.¹ Guernes appears to have begun his poem in France; but he came over to England in 1172, and finished it here in 1177. It consists of above 6000 lines, in stanzas in each of which all the verses terminate in the same rhyme. The only manuscript of it known to De la Rue was one in the Harleian collection (No. 270); but another has since been discovered in the ducal library at Wolfenbüttel, from which the poem has been published by Immanuel Bekker, under the title of *Leben des h. Thomas von Canterbury, Altfranzösisch* (8vo. Berlin, 1838). The Wolfenbüttel manuscript, however, wants the beginning, and contains only about 5220 lines.²

¹ *Archæologia*, xii. 324.

² An account of Guernes, nearly the same as in the *Archæologia*, is given by De la Rue in his *Essais* (vol. ii. pp. 309-313), under the name of Gervais de Pont Ste. Maxence. In the Harleian MS. the poem is entitled, in Latin, *Vita Thome Cantuar. per Guernes de Ponte Sti Maxentii*. This title is in a more recent hand than the poem; and under "Guernes" is written "Garnerius." He is called "Gervais," or "Gerveis," by the transcriber of another work. "This poem," says Mr Wright, "is especially valuable in a philological point of view, because we know the exact date at which it was written. It is historically important as the earliest of the Lives of Becket. Guernes tells us . . . that he had collected his materials from Becket's friends and acquaintance, that he had repeatedly and carefully corrected it, and that he had read it many times at the martyr's tomb. His narrative is very clear and vigorous, and furnishes valuable information not found in the same detail in the other biographers."—*Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 329.

HERMAN.

A WRITER named Herman, who calls himself a priest, and was no doubt of English birth, is the author of several religious romance poems:—a *Life of Tobias*, in about 1400 verses, written at the request of William, prior of Kenilworth, in Warwickshire (Keneilleworth en Ardenne); another, of 1152 verses, on the birth of the Redeemer, entitled *Les Joies de Notre Dame*; a third, of 844 verses, on a curious theme, — *Smoke, Rain, and Woman* considered as the three disturbers of a man's domestic comforts, — which was given him, it seems, by Alexander, bishop of Lincoln; a fourth, in 712 verses, on the *Miracles of Magdalen of Marseilles*; a fifth, on the life, death, and burial of the *Virgin Mary*; a sixth, a sort of mystery, or scriptural drama, on the divine scheme of redemption, also written at the request of the prior of Kenilworth; and a seventh, a *History of the ten ancient Sibyls*, extending to 2496 verses, which professes to be a translation from the Latin, and which he composed at the desire of the Empress Matilda. The era of this poet is ascertained from that of his patron, Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, who died in 1147, and that of Matilda, who died in 1167, while he was employed on his last-mentioned work.



HUGH OF RUTLAND. — BOSON. — SIMON DU FRESNE.

OTHER English *trouveurs* of the same age were Hughes de Rotelande, or Hugh of Rutland, who lived, it seems, according to his own account, at Credenhill in Cornwall,¹ and who is the author of two romances, each containing between 10,000 and 11,000 verses, the *Roman d'Ypomedon* and its continuation the *Roman de Protesilaus*, which are remarkable as having their scene in *Magna Græcia*, or the south of Italy, and as not drawing their subject from the Welsh or Armorican legends of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, which were now become the common source of the chivalrous romance:² a religious poet of the name of Boson, from whom we have a volume of lives of nine of the Saints, and

¹ There is a place of this name in Hereford.

² See an account of these two poems in *De la Rue, Essais*, ii. 285–296.

who the Abbé de la Rue thinks may have been the same person with a learned theologian of that name who was nephew and secretary to Pope Adrian IV.;¹ and Simon du Fresne, canon of the Cathedral of Hereford (sometimes called by later authorities Simon Ash), the friend and correspondent of Giraldus Cambrensis, and well known among the Latin versifiers of his time, who has left us a French poem of considerable merit entitled in one manuscript *Dictié du Clerc et de la Philosophie*, in another *Romance Dame Fortunée*, founded on the favorite classic work of the Middle Ages, *Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiæ*.²

CARDINAL LANGTON.

DE LA RUE has introduced among his Anglo-Norman poets of the twelfth or the early part of the thirteenth century the great Stephen Langton, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1207 to 1228, and also a cardinal. The only undoubted specimen of Cardinal Langton's French poetry occurs, strangely enough, in the course of one of his Latin Sermons (preserved in one of the Arundel MSS., now in the British Museum), where, deserting his prose and the more learned language, he suddenly breaks out into song in the idiom of the *trouvans*, and, after having pronounced eight graceful and lively lines relating how "belle Alice" rose betimes, and, having bedecked herself, went out into a garden and there gathered five flowers which she wove into a chaplet, proceeds throughout the remainder of the discourse to make a mystical application of the several points of this little anecdote to the Holy Virgin — exclaiming at the close of each enthusiastic paragraph,

Ceste est la bele Aliz,
 Ceste est la flur, ceste est le lis.
 (She is the fair Alice,
 She is the flower, she is the lily.)³

"It will be admitted," remarks the Abbé de la Rue, "that the taste for French poetry must have been very general in England

¹ De la Rue, *Essais*, ii. pp. 297-300.

² *Id.* pp. 329-334 See also Wright, *Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 349, 350.

³ Mr. Wright has printed the entire sermon, in his *Biog. Brit. Lit.*, ii. 446, 447

when we find the chief prelate of the kingdom taking this way of conciliating the attention of his audience." The Abbé thinks it highly probable that Cardinal Langton is also the author of two poetical pieces which occur in the same manuscript with his sermon; the first a little theological drama on the subject of the Fall and Restoration of Man, the other a canticle or song, of 126 strophes, on the Passion of Christ. Both are stated to be of considerable merit.



KING RICHARD CŒUR-DE-LION.

FINALLY, we have to enroll in this list of the early English writers of French poetry the renowned King Richard I., if we may put faith in old tradition. Among the poetical performances attributed to Richard are several *Sirventes* or *Serventois*,¹ and his share in the song formerly composed between them, which, according to the well-known story, discovered him in his prison to his faithful minstrel Blondel, the strain begun by the latter having been taken up and finished by the king. But all this, it must be confessed, is not so clear or certain as were to be desired. The song said to have been sung by Richard and Blondel was printed by Mademoiselle l'Héritier in her volume entitled *La Tour Ténébreuse et les Jours Lumineux*, 12mo. Paris, 1705; it is in mixed Norman and Provençal; but, unfortunately, the manuscript from which it professes to have been extracted is now unknown. Mlle. l'Héritier also prints as a composition of Richard a love-song in Norman French. But the most celebrated composition attributed to Richard is a poem addressed by him from his prison to his barons of England, Normandy, Poitou, and Gascony, remonstrating with them for suffering him to remain so long a captive. A Provençal version of this poem, one of the stanzas of which only had been previously quoted by Crescimbinì in his *Istoria della Volgare Poesia*, was first printed from a manuscript in the library of San Lorenzo at Florence by Horace Walpole, in his *Catalogue of Royal*

¹ M. de la Rue shows that, originally and properly, a *Serventois*, or *Sirvente* (the former the northern, the latter the southern term), was a poem relating to military affairs, from *serventagium* or *sirventagium*, the low Latin for *servitium*, service; according to the definition in Ducange, "Poemata in quibus *servitium* seu militum facta et *servitia* referuntur."

and Noble Authors, 1758. It consists of six stanzas of six lines each, with an Envoy of five lines. Two English verse translations of it have been produced; one by Dr. Burney, in his *History of Music*, the other by the late Mr. George Ellis, which is given in Park's edition of the *Royal and Noble Authors*. More recently, the appearance of a version of the same poem in Norman French in Sismondi's *Littérature du Midi de l'Europe* (vol. i. p. 149), has raised the question in which of the two dialects it was originally written.¹ Meanwhile the Provençal version has been more correctly republished by Raynouard in the fourth volume of his *Choix des Poésies Originales des Troubadours*. And the poetical reputation of Richard has been also enlarged by the appearance of another Provençal song claiming to be of his inditing in the *Parnasse Occitanien* (by the Comte de Rohegude), 2 vols. 8vo., Toulouse, 1819. It cannot be said, however, that any or all of these effusions, supposing their authenticity to be admitted, tend to give us a high idea of the genius of the lion-hearted king in this line, — even if we should not go the length of Walpole, who declares the particular poem he has printed to be so poor a composition that the internal evidence weighs with him more than anything else to believe it of his majesty's own fabric.²



VERNACULAR LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE: ≍ A. D. 1066-1216.

FROM the Norman Conquest to the termination of the reign of the seventh Norman sovereign, King John, is almost exactly a century and a half, even to a day. The victory of Hastings was gained on the 14th of October, 1066, and John died on the 19th of October, 1216. His death, happening at the time it did, was probably an event of the greatest importance. The political constitution, or system of government, established by the Conquest, — a system of pure monarchy or absolutism — had been formally brought to an end the year before by the grant of the Great Charter wrung from the crown by the baronage, which at any rate tempered

¹ See it also in M. Le Roux de Lincy's *Recueil de Chants Historiques* (1842), i. 56.

² See, for notices of other compositions attributed to Richard, Wright's *Biog Brit. Lit.*, ii. 324-327.

the monarchical despotism by the introduction of the aristocratic element into the theory of the constitution; but this might have proved little more than a theoretical or nominal innovation if John had lived. His death, and the non-age of his son and heir, left the actual management of affairs in the hands of those by whom the constitutional reform had been brought about; and that reform became a practical reality. At the least, its legal character and authority never were disputed; no attempt ever was made to repeal it; on the contrary it was ratified no less than six times in the single reign of Henry III., John's successor; and it has retained its proper place at the head of the Statute Book down to our own day. Its proper place; for it is indeed our first organic law, the true commencement or foundation-stone, of the constitution. Before it there was no mechanism in our political system, no balance of forces or play of counteracting elements and tendencies; nothing but the sort of life and movement that may belong to a stone or a cannon-ball or any other mere mass. The royal power was all in all. With the Charter, and the death of the last despotic king, from whom it was extorted, begins another order of things both political and social. It may be likened to the passing away of the night and the dawning of a new day. In particular, the Charter may be said to have consummated by a solemn legislative fiat the blending and incorporation of the two races, the conquerors and the conquered, which had been actively going on without any such sanction, and under the natural influence of circumstances only, throughout the preceding half century, — having commenced, we may reckon, perhaps, half a century earlier, or about the middle of the reign of Henry I. There is, at least, not a word in this law making the least reference to any distinction between the two races. Both are spoken of throughout only as English; the nation is again recognized as one, as fully as it had been before either William the Norman or Canute the Dane.

We have thus four successive periods of about half a century each: — The first, from the Danish to the Norman Conquest, — half English, half Danish; the second, from the Norman Conquest to the middle of the reign of Henry I., in which the subjugated English and their French or Norman rulers were completely divided; the Third and Fourth extending to the date of Magna Charta, and presenting, the former the comparatively slow, the latter the accelerated, process of the intermixture and fusion of

the two races. Some of our old chroniclers would make the third half century also, as well as the first and second, to have been inaugurated by a great constitutional or political event: as the year 1016 is memorable for the Danish and the year 1066 for the Norman Conquest, so in 1116, we are told by Stow, "On the 19th day of April, King Henry called a council of all the States of his realm, both of the Prelates, Nobles, and Commons, to Salisbury, there to consult for the good government of the Commonwealth, and the weighty affairs of the same, which council, taking the name and fame of the French, is called a Parliament;" "and this," he adds, "do the historiographers note to be the first Parliament in England, and that the kings before that time were never wont to call any of their Commons or people to council or lawmaking." This theory of the origin of our parliamentary government must, indeed, be rejected;¹ but the year 1116 will still remain notable as that in which Henry, reversing what had been done fifty years before, crossed the sea with an army of English to reduce his ancestral Normandy, or prevent it from falling into the hands of the son of his unfortunate elder brother. Even the next stage, half a century further on, when we have supposed the amalgamation of the two races to have assumed its accelerated movement, may be held to be less precisely indicated by such events as the appointment of Becket, said to be the first Englishman since the Conquest promoted to high office either in the Church or the State, to the archbishopric of Canterbury in 1161, — the enactment in 1164 of the Constitutions of Clarendon, by which the clergy, a body essentially foreign in feeling and to a great extent even of foreign birth, were brought somewhat more under subjection to the law of the land — and the Conquest of Ireland in 1172, to the vast exaltation of the English name and power.

What was the history of the vernacular language for this first century and a half after the Norman Conquest, throughout which everything native would thus seem to have been in a course of gradual re-emergence from the general foreign inundation that had overwhelmed the country? We have no historical record or statement as to this matter: the question can only be answered, in so far as it can be answered at all, from an examination of such compositions of the time in the vernacular tongue as may have come down to us.

¹ See Sir H. Spelman, *Concilia*; ad an. 1116.

The principal literature of this period, it will have been seen from the above notices, was in the Latin and French languages. In the former were written most works on subjects of theology, philosophy, and history; in the latter most of those intended rather to amuse than to inform, and addressed, not to students and professional readers, but to the idlers of the court and the upper classes, by whom they were seldom actually read, or much expected to be read, but only listened to as they were recited or chanted (for most of them were in verse) by others. How far over society such a knowledge of the imported tongue came to extend as was requisite for the understanding and enjoyment of what was thus written in it has been matter of dispute. The Abbé de la Rue conceives that a large proportion even of the middle classes, and of the town population generally, must have been so far frenchified; but later authorities look upon this as an extravagant supposition.

It is, at all events, this French literature only that is to be considered as having come into competition with, or to have taken the place, of the old vernacular literature. The employment of the Latin language in writing by monks, secular churchmen, and other persons who had had a learned education, was what had always gone on in England as in every other country of Western Christendom; there was nothing new in that; we continue to have it after the Conquest just as we had it before the Conquest. But it is quite otherwise with the writing of French; that was altogether a new thing in England, and indeed very much of a new thing everywhere, in the eleventh century: no specimen of composition in the *Langue d'Oyl*, in fact, either in verse or in prose, has come down to us from beyond that century, nor is there reason to believe that it had been much earlier turned to account for literary purposes even in France itself. The great mass of the oldest French literature that has been preserved was produced in England, or, at any rate, in the dominions of the King of England, in the twelfth century.

To whatever portion of society in England an acquaintance with this French literature was confined, it is evident that it was for some time after the Conquest the only literature of the day that, without addressing itself exclusively to the learned classes, still demanded some measure of cultivation in its readers or auditors as well as in its authors. It was the only popular literature that was not adapted to the mere populace. We might infer this even from the fact that, if any other ever existed, it has mostly perished.

The various metrical chronicles, romances, and other compositions in the French tongue, of the principal of which an account has been given, are very nearly the only literary works which have come down to us from this age. And, while the mass of this produce that has been preserved is, as we have seen, very considerable, we have distinct notices of much more which is now lost. How the French language should have acquired the position which it thus appears to have held in England for some time after the Conquest is easily explained. The advantage which it derived from being the language of the court, of the entire body of the nobility, and of the opulent and influential classes generally, is obvious. This not only gave it the prestige and attraction of what we now call fashion, but, in the circumstances to which the country was reduced, would very speedily make it the only language in which any kind of regular or grammatical training could be obtained. With the native population almost everywhere deprived of its natural leaders, the old landed proprietary of its own blood, it cannot be supposed that schools in which the reading and writing of the vernacular tongue was taught could continue to subsist. This has been often pointed out. But what we may call the social cause, or that arising out of the relative conditions of the two races, was probably assisted by another which has not been so much attended to. The languages themselves did not compete upon fair terms. The French would have in the general estimation a decided advantage for the purposes of literature over the English. The latter was held universally to be merely a barbarous form of speech, claiming kindred with nothing except the other half-articulate dialects of the woods, hardly one of which had ever known what it was to have any acquaintance with letters, or was conceived even by those who spoke it to be fit to be used in writing except on the most vulgar occasions, or where anything like either dignity or precision of expression was of no importance; the former, although somewhat soiled and disfigured by ill usage received at the hands of the uneducated multitude, and also only recently much employed in formal or artistic eloquence, could still boast the most honorable of all pedigrees as a daughter of the Latin, and was thus besides allied to the popular speech of every more civilized province of Western Christendom. The very name by which it had been known when it first attracted attention with reference to literary capabilities was, as we have seen, the Rustic Latin, or

Roman (*Lingua Romana Rustica*). Even without being favored by circumstances, as it was in the present case, a tongue having these intrinsic recommendations would not have been easily worsted, in a contest for the preference as the organ of fashionable literature, by such a competitor as the unknown and unconnected English.

There was only one great advantage possessed by the national tongue with which it was impossible for the other in the long run to cope. This was the fact of its being the national tongue, the speech, actual and ancestral, of the great body of the people. Even that, indeed, might not have enabled it to maintain its ground, if it had been a mere unwritten form of speech. But it had been cultivated and trained for centuries both by the practice of composition, in prose as well as in verse, and by the application to it of the art of the grammarian. It already possessed a literature considerable in volume, and embracing a variety of departments. It was not merely something floating upon men's breath, but had a substantial existence in poems and histories, in libraries and parchments. In that state it might cease, in the storm of national calamity, to be generally either written or read, but even its more literary inflections and constructions would be less likely to fall into complete and universal oblivion. The memory, at least, of its old renown would not altogether die away; and that alone would be found to be much when, after a time, it began to be again, although in a somewhat altered form, employed in writing.

The nature of the altered form which distinguishes the written vernacular tongue when it reappears after the Norman Conquest from the aspect it presents before that date (or the earliest modern English from what is commonly designated Saxon or Anglo-Saxon) is not matter of dispute. "The substance of the change," to adopt the words of Mr. Price, the late learned editor of Warton, "is admitted on all hands to consist in the suppression of those grammatical intricacies occasioned by the inflection of nouns, the seemingly arbitrary distinctions of gender, the government of prepositions, &c."¹ It was, in fact, the conversion of an inflectional into a non-inflectional, of a synthetic into an analytic, language. The syntactical connection of words, and the modification of the mental conceptions which they represent, was indicated, no longer, in general, by those variations which constitute what are called declen-

¹ Preface to Warton's *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, p. 86.

sion and conjugation, but by separate particles, or simply by juxtaposition; and whatever seemed to admit of being neglected without injury to the prime object of expressing the meaning of the speaker, or writer, — no matter what other purposes it might serve of a merely ornamental or artistic nature, — was ruthlessly dispensed with.

A change such as this is unquestionably the breaking up of a language. In the first instance, at least, it amounts to the destruction of much that is most characteristic of the language, — of all that constitutes its beauty to the educated mind, imbued with a feeling for the literature into which it has been wrought, — of something, probably, even of its precision as well as of its expressiveness in a higher sense. It has become, in a manner, but the skeleton of what it was, or the skeleton with only the skin hanging loose upon it: — all the covering and rounding flesh gone. Or we may say it is the language no longer with its old natural bearing and suitable attire, but reduced to the rags and squalor of a beggar. Or it may be compared to a material edifice, once bright with many of the attractions of decorative architecture, now stripped of all its splendors and left only a collection of bare and dilapidated walls. It may be, too, that, as is commonly assumed, a synthetic tongue is essentially a nobler and more effective instrument of expression than an analytic one, — that, often comprising a whole sentence, or at least a whole clause, in a word, it presents thoughts and emotions in flashes and pictures where the other can only employ comparatively dead conventional signs. But perhaps the comparison has been too commonly made between the synthetic tongue in its perfection and the analytic one while only in its rudimentary state. The language may be considered to have changed its constitution, somewhat like a country which should have ceased to be a monarchy and become a republic. The new political system could only be fairly compared with the old one, and the balance struck between the advantages of the one and those of the other, after the former should have had time fully to develop itself under the operation of its own peculiar principles. Even if it be inferior upon the whole, and for the highest purposes, an analytic language may perhaps have some recommendations which a synthetic one does not possess. It may not be either more natural or, properly speaking, more simple, for the original constitution of most, if not of all, languages seems to have been synthetic, and a synthetic

language is as easy both to acquire and to wield as an analytic one to those to whom it is native; nor can the latter be said to be more rational or philosophical than the former, for, as being in the main natural products, and not artificial contrivances, languages must be held to stand all on an equality in respect of the reasonableness at least of the principle on which they are constituted; but yet, if comparatively defective in poetical expressiveness, analytic languages will probably be found, whenever they have been sufficiently cultivated, to be capable, in pure exposition, of rendering thought with superior minuteness and distinctness of detail. With their small tenacity or cohesion, they penetrate into every chink and fold, like water or fine dust.

But the great question in every case of the apparent conversion of a synthetic into an analytic language is, how, or under the operation of what cause or causes, the change was brought about. In the particular case before us, for instance, what was it that converted the form of our vernacular tongue which we find alone employed in writing before the Norman Conquest into the comparatively uninflected form in which it appears in the generality of the compositions which have come down to us from the first ages after that great political and social catastrophe?

First, however, we may remark that there is no proof of the latter form having been really new, or of recent origin, about the time of the Conquest. All that we can assert is, that soon after that date it first appears in writing. If it was ever so employed before, no earlier specimens of it have been preserved. It was undoubtedly the form of the language popularly in use at the time when it thus first presents itself in our national literature. But did it not exist as an oral dialect long before? May it not have so existed from the remotest antiquity alongside of the more artificial form which was exclusively, or at least usually, employed in writing? It has been supposed that even the classical Greek and Latin, such as we find in books, may have always been accompanied each by another form of speech, of looser texture, and probably more of an analytical character, which served for the ordinary oral intercourse of the less educated population, and of which it has even been conjectured we may have some much disguised vestige or resemblance in the modern Romaic and Italian. The rise, at any rate, of what was long a merely oral dialect into a language capable of being employed in literature, and of thereby

being gradually so trained and improved as to supplant and take the place of the ancient more highly inflected and otherwise more artificial literary language of the country, is illustrated by what is known to have happened in France and other continental provinces of the old Empire of the West, where the *Romana Rustica*, as it was called, which was a corrupted or broken-down form of the proper Latin, after having been for some centuries only orally used, came to be written as well as spoken, and, having been first taken into the service of the more popular kinds of literature, ended by becoming the language of all literature and the only national speech. So in this country there may possibly have been in use for colloquial purposes a dialect of a similar character to our modern analytic English even from the earliest days of the old synthetic English; and the two forms of the language, the regular and the irregular, the learned and the vulgar, the mother and the daughter, or rather, if you will, the elder and the younger sister, may have subsisted together for many centuries, till there came a crisis which for a time laid the entire fabric of the old national civilization in the dust, when the rude and hardy character of the one carried it through the storm which the more delicate structure of the other could not stand.

Or was the written English of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the same English (or Anglo-Saxon) that was written in the ninth and tenth, only modified by that process of gradual change the principle of which was inherent in the constitution of the language? Was the former neither the sister nor the daughter of the latter, but the latter merely at a different stage of its natural growth? This is the view that has been maintained by some eminent authorities. The late Mr. Price, acknowledging it to be a matter beyond dispute "that some change had taken place in the style of composition and general structure of the language" from the end of the ninth to the end of the twelfth century, adds: — "But that these mutations were a consequence of the Norman invasion, or were even accelerated by that event, is wholly incapable of proof; and nothing is supported upon a firmer principle of rational induction, than that the same effects would have ensued, if William and his followers had remained in their native soil."¹ The change, as we have seen, may be said to have amounted to the transformation of the language from one of a synthetic to one

¹ Preface to Warton, 85.

of an analytic constitution or structure ; but Mr. Price contends that, whether it is to be considered as the result of an innate law of the language, or of some general law in the organization of those who spoke it, its having been in no way dependent upon external circumstances, — upon foreign influence or political disturbances, — is established by the undeniable fact that every other language of the Low-German stock displays the same simplification of its grammar. “In all these languages,” he observes, “there has been a constant tendency to relieve themselves of that precision which chooses a fresh symbol for every shade of meaning, to lessen the amount of nice distinctions, and detect as it were a royal road to the interchange of opinion. Yet, in thus diminishing their grammatical forms and simplifying their rules, in this common effort to evince a striking contrast to the usual effects of civilization, all confusion has been prevented by the very manner in which the operation has been conducted ; for the revolution produced has been so gradual in its progress, that it is only to be discovered on a comparison of the respective languages at periods of a considerable interval.”¹

The interval that Mr. Price has taken in the present case is certainly wide enough. What has to be explained is the difference that we find between the written English of the middle of the twelfth century and that, not of the age of Alfred, or the end of the ninth century, but rather of the end of the eleventh. The question is, how we are to account for a great change which would appear to have taken place in the language, as employed for literary purposes, not in three centuries, but in one century, or even in half a century. The English of Alfred continues to be in all respects the English of Alfric, who lived and wrote more than a century later. The *National Chronicle*, still written substantially in the old language, comes down even to the year 1154. It is probable that we have here the continued employment, for the sake of uniformity, of an idiom which had now become antique, or what is called dead ; but there is certainly no evidence or trace of any other form of the national speech having ever been used in writing before the year 1100 at the earliest. The overthrow of the native government and civilization by the Conquest in the latter part of the eleventh century would not, of course, extinguish the knowledge of the old literary language of the country till after the lapse

¹ Preface to Warton, 86.

of about a generation. We may fairly, then, regard the change in question as having taken place, in all probability, not in three centuries, as Mr. Price puts the case, but within at most the third part of that space. This correction, while it brings the breaking up of the language into close connection in point of time with the social revolution, gives it also much more of a sudden and convulsive character than it has in Mr. Price's representation. The gradual and gentle flow, assumed to have extended over three centuries, turns out to have been really a rapid precipitous descent, — something almost of the nature of a cataract, — effected possibly within the sixth or eighth part of that space of time.

It may be that there is a tendency in certain languages, or in all languages, to undergo a similar simplification of their grammar to that which the English underwent at this crisis. And it is conceivable that such a tendency constantly operating unchecked may at last produce such a change as we have in the present case, the conversion of the language from one of a synthetic to one of an analytic structure. That may have happened with those other languages of the Low-Germanic stock to which Mr. Price refers. But such was certainly not the case with the English. We have that language distinctly before us for three or four centuries, during which it is not pretended that there is to be detected a trace of the operation of any such tendency. The tendency, therefore, either did not exist, or must have been rendered inoperative by some counteracting influence. If, on the other hand, we are to suppose, that in our own or in any other language, the tendency suddenly developed itself or became active at a particular moment, that would necessarily imply the very operation of a new external cause which Mr. Price's theory denies. It is no matter whether we may or may not be able to point out the cause; that a cause there must have been is unquestionable.

In the case before us, the cause is sufficiently obvious. The integrity of the constitution or grammatical system of the language was preserved so long as its literature flourished; when that ceased to be read and studied and produced, the grammatical cultivation and knowledge of the language also ceased. The two things, indeed, were really one and the same. The literature and the literary form of the language could not but live and die together. Whatever killed the one was sure also to blight the other. And what was it that did or could bring the native literature of England

suddenly to an end in the eleventh or twelfth century except the new political and social circumstances in which the country was then placed? What other than such a cause ever extinguished in any country the light of its ancient literature?

Of at least two similar cases we have a perfect knowledge. How long did the classical Latin continue to be a living language? Just so long as the fabric of Latin civilization in the Western Empire continued to exist; so long, and no longer. When that was overthrown, the literature which was its product and exponent, its expression and in a manner its very soul, and the highly artificial form of language which was the material in which that literature was wrought, were both at once struck with a mortal disease under which they perished almost with the generation that had witnessed the consummation of the barbaric invasion. Exactly similar is the history of the classic Greek, only that it continued to exist as a living language for a thousand years after the Latin, the social system with which it was bound up, of which it was part and parcel, lasting so much longer. When that fell, with the fall of the Eastern Empire in the fifteenth century, the language also became extinct. The ancient Greek gave place to the modern Greek, or what is called the Romaic. The conquest of Constantinople by the Turks was to the Greek language the same thing that the Norman Conquest was to the English.



THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES.—ASCENDENCY OF THE SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY.

EVER since the appearance of Peter Lombard's Four Books of Sentences, about the middle of the twelfth century, a struggle for ascendancy had been going on throughout Europe between the Scholastic Theology, or new philosophy, and the grammatical and rhetorical studies with which men had previously been chiefly occupied. At first the natural advantages of its position told in favor of the established learning; nay an impulse and a new inspiration were probably given to poetry and the belles-lettres for a time by the competition of logic and philosophy, and the general intellectual excitement thus produced: it was in the latter part of

the twelfth century that the writing of Latin verse was cultivated with the greatest success; it was at the very end of that century, indeed, that Geoffrey de Vinsauf, as we have seen, composed and published his poem on the restoration of the legitimate mode of versification, under the title of *Nova Poetria*, or the *New Poetry*. But from about this date the tide began to turn; and the first half of the thirteenth century may be described as the era of the decline and fall of elegant literature, and the complete reduction of studious minds under the dominion of the scholastic logic and metaphysics.

In the University of Paris, and it was doubtless the same elsewhere, from about the middle of the thirteenth century, the ancient classics seem nearly to have ceased to be read; and all that was taught of rhetoric, or even of grammar, consisted of a few lessons from Priscian. The habit of speaking Latin correctly and elegantly, which had been so common an accomplishment of the scholars of the last age, was now generally lost: even at the universities, the classic tongue was corrupted into a base jargon, in which frequently all grammar and syntax were disregarded. This universal revolt from the study of words and of æsthetics to that of thoughts and of things is the most remarkable event in the intellectual history of the species. Undoubtedly all its results were not evil. On the whole, it was most probably the salvation even of that learning and elegant literature which it seemed for a time to have overwhelmed. The excitement of its very novelty awakened the minds of men. Never was there such a ferment of intellectual activity as now sprung up in Europe. The enthusiasm of the Crusades seemed to have succeeded by an enthusiasm of study, which equally impelled its successive inundations of devotees. In the beginning of the fourteenth century there were thirty thousand students at the University of Oxford; and that of Paris could probably boast of the attendance of a still vaster multitude. This was something almost like a universal diffusion of education and knowledge. The brief revival of elegant literature in the twelfth century was a premature spring, which could not last. The preliminary processes of vegetation were not sufficiently advanced to sustain any general or enduring efflorescence: nor was the state of the world such as to call for or admit of any extensive spread of the kind of scholarship then cultivated. The probability is, that, even if nothing else had taken its place, it would

have gradually become feebler in character, as well as confined within a narrower circle of cultivators, till it had altogether evaporated and disappeared. The excitement of the new learning, turbulent and in some respects debasing as it was, saved Western Europe from the complete extinction of the light of scholarship and philosophy which would in that case have ensued, and kept alive the spirit of intellectual culture, though in the meanwhile imprisoned and limited in its vision, for a happier future time when it should have ampler scope and full freedom of range.

Almost the only studies now cultivated by the common herd of students were the Aristotelian logic and metaphysics. Yet it was not till after a struggle of some length that the supremacy of Aristotle was established in the schools. The most ancient statutes of the University of Paris that have been preserved, those issued by the pope's legate, Robert de Courçon, in 1215, prohibited the reading either of the metaphysical or the physical works of that philosopher, or of any abridgment of them. This, however, it has been remarked, was a mitigation of the treatment these books had met with a few years before, when all the copies of them that could be found were ordered to be thrown into the fire.¹ Still more lenient was a decree of Pope Gregory IX. in 1231, which only ordered the reading of them to be suspended until they should have undergone correction. Certain heretical notions in religion, promulgated or suspected to have been entertained by some of the most zealous of the early Aristotelians, had awakened the apprehensions of the Church; but the general orthodoxy of their successors quieted these fears; and in course of time the authority of the Stagirite was universally recognized both in theology and in the profane sciences.

Some of the most distinguished of the scholastic doctors of this period were natives of Britain. Such, in particular, were Alexander de Hales, styled the Irrefragable, an English Franciscan, who died at Paris in 1245, and who is famous as the master of St. Bonaventura, and the first of the long list of commentators on the Four Books of the Sentences; the Subtle Doctor, John Duns Scotus, also a Franciscan and the chief glory of that order, who, after teaching with unprecedented popularity and applause at Oxford and Paris, died at Cologne in 1308, at the early age of forty-three, leaving a mass of writings, the very quantity of which

¹ Crevier, *Histoire de l'Univ. de Paris* i. 313

would be sufficiently wonderful, even if they were not marked by a vigor and penetration of thought which, down to our own day, has excited the admiration of all who have examined them; and William Occam, the Invincible, another Franciscan, the pupil of Scotus, but afterwards his opponent on the great philosophical question of the origin and nature of Universals or General Terms, which so long divided, and still divides, logicians. Occam, who died at Munich in 1347, was the restorer, and perhaps the most able defender that the Middle Ages produced, of the doctrine of Nominalism, or the opinion that general notions are merely names, and not real existences, as was contended by the Realists. The side taken by Occam was that of the minority in his own day, and for many ages after, and his views accordingly were generally regarded as heterodox in the schools; but his high merits have been recognized in modern times, when perhaps the greater number of speculators have come over to his way of thinking.



MATHEMATICAL AND OTHER STUDIES.

IN the mathematical and physical sciences, Roger Bacon is the great name of the thirteenth century, and indeed the greatest that either his country or Europe can produce for some centuries after this time. He was born at Ilchester about the year 1214, and died in 1292. His writings that are still preserved, of which the principal is that entitled his *Opus Majus* (or *Greater Work*), show that the range of his investigations included theology, grammar, the ancient languages, geometry, astronomy, chronology, geography, music, optics, mechanics, chemistry, and most of the other branches of experimental philosophy. In all these sciences he had mastered whatever was then known; and his knowledge, though necessarily mixed with much error, extended in various directions considerably farther than, but for the evidence of his writings, we should have been warranted in believing that scientific researches had been carried in that age. In optics, for instance, he not only understood the general laws of reflected and refracted light, and had at least conceived such an instrument as a telescope, but he makes some advances towards an explanation of the phenomena of the rainbow.

It may be doubted whether what have been sometimes called his inventions and discoveries in mechanics and in chemistry were for the greater part more than notions he had formed of the possibility of accomplishing certain results ; but, even regarded as mere speculations or conjectures, many of his statements of what might be done show that he was familiar with mechanical principles, and possessed considerable acquaintance with the powers of natural agents. He appears to have been acquainted with the effects and composition of gunpowder, which indeed there is other evidence for believing to have been then known in Europe. Bacon's notions on the right method of philosophizing are remarkably enlightened for the times in which he lived ; and his general views upon most subjects evince a penetration and liberality much beyond the spirit of his age. With all his sagacity and freedom from prejudice, indeed, he was a believer both in astrology and alchemy ; but, as it has been observed, these delusions did not then stand in the same predicament as now : they were "irrational only because unproved, and neither impossible nor unworthy of the investigation of a philosopher, in the absence of preceding experiments."¹

Another eminent English cultivator of mathematical science in that age was the celebrated Robert Grosseteste, or Grostête, or Grosthead, bishop of Lincoln, the friend and patron of Bacon. Grostête, who died in 1253, and of whom we shall have more to say presently, is the author of a treatise on the sphere, which has been printed. A third name that deserves to be mentioned along with these is that of Sir Michael Scott, famous in popular tradition as a practitioner of the occult sciences, but whom his writings, of which several are extant, and have been printed, prove to have been possessed of acquirements, both in science and literature, of which few in those times could boast. He is commonly assumed to have been proprietor of the estate of Balwearie, in Fife, and to have survived till near the close of the thirteenth century ; but all that is certain is, that he was a native of Scotland, and one of the

¹ Penny Cyclopædia, iii. 243. Bacon's principal work, the *Opus Majus*, was published by Dr. Jebb, in a folio volume, at London in 1733 ; and several of his other treatises had been previously printed at Francfort, Paris, and elsewhere. His *Opus Minus* has also now been edited by Professor Brewer, of King's College, London, and forms one of the volumes of the series entitled *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores*, or *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages* ; published by the authority of Her Majesty's Treasury, under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, 8vo., London, 1857, &c

most distinguished of the learned persons who flourished at the court of the Emperor Frederick II., who died in 1250.¹ Like Roger Bacon, Scott was addicted to the study of alchemy and astrology; but these were in his eyes also parts of natural philosophy. Among other works, a History of Animals is ascribed to him; and he is said to have translated several of the works of Aristotle from the Greek into Latin, at the command of the Emperor Frederick. He is reputed to have been eminently skilled both in astronomy and medicine; and a contemporary, John Bacon, himself known by the title of Prince of the Averroists, or followers of the Arabian doctor Averroes, celebrates him as a great theologian.²

These instances, however, were rare exceptions to the general rule. Metaphysics and logic, together with divinity, — which was converted into little else than a subject of metaphysical and logical contention, — so occupied the crowd of intellectual inquirers, that, except the professional branches of law and medicine, scarcely any other studies were generally attended to. Roger Bacon himself tells us that he knew of only two good mathematicians among his contemporaries, — one John of Leyden, who had been a pupil of his own, and another whom he does not name, but who is supposed to have been John Peckham, a Franciscan friar, who afterwards became archbishop of Canterbury. Few students of the science, he says, proceeded farther than the fifth proposition of the first book of Euclid, — the well-known asses' bridge. The study of geometry was still confounded in the popular understanding with the study of magic, — a proof that it was a very rare pursuit. In arithmetic, although the Arabic numerals had found their way to Christian Europe before the middle of the fourteenth century, they do not appear to have come into general use till a considerably later date. Astronomy, however, was sufficiently cultivated at the University of Paris to enable some of the members to predict an eclipse of the sun which happened on the 31st of January, 1310.³ This science was indebted for part of the attention it received to the belief that was universally entertained in the influence of the stars over human affairs. And, as astrology led to the cultivation and improvement of astronomy, so the other imaginary science of

¹ See article in Penny Cyclopædia, xxi. 101.

² See an article in Michael Scott in Bayle.

³ Crevier, ii. 221.

alchemy undoubtedly aided the progress of chemistry and medicine. Besides Roger Bacon and Michael Scott in the thirteenth century, England contributes the names of John Daustein, of Richard, and of Cremer, abbot of Westminster, the disciple and friend of the famous Raymond Lully, to the list of the writers on alchemy in the fourteenth. Lully himself visited England in the reign of Edward I., on the invitation of the king; and he affirms in one of his works, that, in the secret chamber of St. Katharine in the Tower of London, he performed in the royal presence the experiment of transmuting some crystal into a mass of diamond, or adamant as he calls it, of which Edward, he says, caused some little pillars to be made for the tabernacle of God. It was popularly believed, indeed, at the time, that the English king had been furnished by Lully with a great quantity of gold for defraying the expense of an expedition he intended to make to the Holy Land. Edward III. was not less credulous on the subject than his grandfather, as appears by an order which he issued in 1329, in the following terms: — “ Know all men, that we have been assured that John of Rous and Master William of Dalby know how to make silver by the art of alchemy; that they have made it in former times, and still continue to make it; and, considering that these men, by their art, and by making the precious metal, may be profitable to us and to our kingdom, we have commanded our well-beloved Thomas Cary to apprehend the aforesaid John and William, wherever they can be found, within liberties or without, and bring them to us, together with all the instruments of their art, under safe and sure custody.” The earliest English writer on medicine, whose works have been printed, is Gilbert English (or Anglicus), who flourished in the thirteenth century; and he was followed in the next century by John de Gaddesden. The practice of medicine had now been taken in a great measure out of the hands of the clergy; but the art was still in the greater part a mixture of superstition and quackery, although the knowledge of some useful remedies, and perhaps also of a few principles, had been obtained from the writings of the Arabic physicians (many of which had been translated into Latin) and from the instructions delivered in the schools of Spain and Italy. The distinction between the physician and the apothecary was already well understood. Surgery also began to be followed as a separate branch: some works are still extant, partly printed, partly in manuscript,

by John Arden, or Arden, an eminent English surgeon, who practised at Newark in the fourteenth century. A lively picture of the state of the surgical art at this period is given by a French writer, Guy de Cauliac, in a system of surgery which he published in 1363. "The practitioners in surgery," he says, "are divided into five sects. The first follow Roger and Roland, and the four masters, and apply poultices to all wounds and abscesses; the second follow Brunus and Theodoric, and in the same cases use wine only; the third follow Saliceto and Lanfranc, and treat wounds with ointments and soft plasters; the fourth are chiefly Germans, who attend the armies, and promiscuously use charms, potions, oil, and wool; the fifth are old women and ignorant people, who have recourse to the saints in all cases."

Yet the true method of philosophizing, by experiment and the collection of facts, was almost as distinctly and emphatically laid down in this age by Roger Bacon, as it was more than three centuries afterwards by his illustrious namesake. Much knowledge, too, must necessarily have been accumulated in various departments by the actual application of this method. Some of the greatest of the modern chemists have bestowed the highest praise on the manner in which the experiments of the alchemists, or hermetic philosophers, as they called themselves, on metals and other natural substances appear to have been conducted. In another field—namely, in that of geography and the institutions, customs, and general state of distant countries—a great deal of new information must have been acquired from the accounts that were now published by various travellers, especially by Marco Polo, who penetrated as far as to Tartary and China, in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and by our countryman, Sir John Mandevil, who also traversed a great part of the East about a hundred years later. Roger Bacon has inserted a very curious epitome of the geographical knowledge of his time in his *Opus Majus*.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES.

ABOUT the middle of the thirteenth century, both in England and elsewhere, the universities began to assume a new form, by

the erection of colleges for the residence of their members as separate communities. The zeal for learning that was displayed in these endowments is the most honorable characteristic of the age. Before the end of the fourteenth century the following colleges were founded at Oxford :— University Hall, by William, archdeacon of Durham, who died in 1249 ; Baliol College, by John Baliol, father of King John of Scotland, about 1263 ; Merton College, by Walter Merton, bishop of Rochester, in 1268 ; Exeter College, by Walter Stapleton, bishop of Exeter, about 1315 ; Oriol College, originally called the Hall of the Blessed Virgin of Oxford, by Edward II. and his almoner, Adam de Brom, about 1324 ; Queen's College, by Robert Eglesfield, chaplain to Queen Philippa, in 1340 ; and New College, in 1379, by the celebrated William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester, the munificent founder also of Winchester School or College. In the University of Cambridge the foundations were, Peter House, by Hugh Balsham, sub-prior and afterwards bishop of Ely, about 1256 ; Michael College (afterwards incorporated with Trinity College), by Herby de Stanton, Chancellor of the Exchequer to Edward II., about 1324 ; University Hall (soon afterwards burnt down), by Richard Badew, Chancellor of the University, in 1326 ; King's Hall (afterwards united to Trinity College), by Edward III. ; Clare Hall, a restoration of University Hall, by Elizabeth de Clare, Countess of Ulster, about 1347 ; Pembroke Hall, or the Hall of Valence and Mary, in the same year, by Mary de St. Paul, widow of Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke ; Trinity Hall, in 1350, by William Bateman, bishop of Norwich ; Gonvil Hall, about the same time, by Edmond Gonvil, parson of Terrington and Rushworth, in Norfolk ; and Corpus Christi, or Ben'et (that is, Benedict) College, about 1351, by the United Guilds of Corpus Christi and St. Mary, in the town of Cambridge. The erection of these colleges, besides the accommodations which they afforded in various ways both to teachers and students, gave a permanent establishment to the universities, which they scarcely before possessed. The original condition of these celebrated seats of learning, in regard to all the conveniences of teaching, appears to have been humble in the extreme. Great disorders and scandals are also said to have arisen, before the several societies were thus assembled each within its own walls, from the intermixture of the students with the townspeople, and their exemption from all disci-

pline. But, when the members of the University were counted by tens of thousands, discipline, even in the most favorable circumstances, must have been nearly out of the question. The difficulty would not be lessened by the general character of the persons composing the learned mob, if we may take it from the quaint historian of the University of Oxford. Many of them, Anthony à Wood affirms, were mere "varlets who pretended to be scholars;" he does not scruple to charge them with being habitually guilty of thieving and other enormities; and he adds, "They lived under no discipline, neither had any tutors, but only for fashion sake would sometimes thrust themselves into the schools at ordinary lectures, and, when they went to perform any mischiefs, then would they be accounted scholars, that so they might free themselves from the jurisdiction of the burghers." To repress the evils of this state of things, the old statutes of the University of Paris, in 1215, had ordained that no one should be reputed a scholar who had not a certain master. Another of these ancient regulations may be quoted in illustration of the simplicity of the times, and of the small measure of pomp and circumstance that the heads of the commonwealth of learning could then affect. It is ordered that every master reading lectures in the faculty of arts should have his cloak or gown round, black, and falling as low as the heels — "at least," adds the statute, with amusing *naïveté*, "while it is new." But this famous seminary long continued to take pride in its poverty as one of its most honorable distinctions. There is something very noble and affecting in the terms in which the rector and masters of the faculty of arts are found petitioning, in 1362, for a postponement of the hearing of a cause in which they were parties. "We have difficulty," they say, "in finding the money to pay the procurators and advocates, whom it is necessary for us to employ — *we whose profession it is to possess no wealth.*"¹ Yet, when funds were wanted for important purposes in connection with learning or science, they were supplied in this age with no stinted liberality. We have seen with what alacrity opulent persons came forward to build and endow colleges, as soon as the expediency of such foundations came to be perceived. In almost all these establishments more or less provision was made for the permanent maintenance of a body of poor scholars, in other words, for the admission of even the humblest classes to a share in

¹ Crevier, ii. 404.

the benefits of that learned education whose temples and priesthood were thus planted in the land. It is probable, also, that the same kind of liberality was often shown in other ways. Roger Bacon tells us himself that, in the twenty years in which he had been engaged in his experiments, he had spent in books and instruments no less a sum than two thousand French livres, an amount of silver equal to about six thousand pounds of our present money, and in effective value certainly to many times that sum. He must have been indebted for these large supplies to the generosity of rich friends and patrons.



LATIN HISTORICAL WORKS OF THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES.

NOTWITHSTANDING the general neglect of its elegancies, and of the habit of speaking it correctly or grammatically, the Latin tongue still continued to be in England, as elsewhere, the common language of the learned, and that in which books were generally written that were intended for their perusal. Among this class of works may be included the contemporary chronicles, most of which were compiled in the monasteries, and the authors of almost all of which were churchmen.

The Chronicle of Roger de Wendover, hitherto existing only in MS., and in a single copy, has now been published, in the greater part, by the Rev. Henry O. Coxe, for the English Historical Society, under the title of *Rogeri de Wendover Chronica, sive Flores Historiarum*, 5 vols. 8vo. Lon. 1841-44. The portion omitted is merely the First Book, which contains the space from the creation to the commencement of the Christian era, and is abridged in the *Flores Historiarum* bearing the name of Matthew of Westminster, together with the first 446 years of Book Second, in which there is equally little that is peculiar or important. The remainder of the narrative comes down to the year 1235 (the 19th of Henry III.), and is very valuable. An English translation by Dr. Giles of so much of Roger de Wendover's Chronicle as has been published by Mr. Coxe makes two of the volumes of Bohn's *Antiquarian Library*, Lon. 1849. Wendover, who was probably a

native of the place of that name in Buckinghamshire, became a monk and precentor in the Benedictine monastery of St. Albans, and died prior of Belvoir, in a cell of that house, on the 6th of May, 1237. He has compiled the earlier portion of his work from Bede, Marianus Scotus, some of the Byzantine writers, Malmesbury, Florence of Worcester, Henry of Huntingdon, and the other best and most reputable of preceding chroniclers, and in a very workmanlike manner. Mr. Coxe holds him to be quite as good a writer as Matthew Paris, whose more celebrated History is, down to the point where that of Wendover ends, copied from him with few alterations, and those, Mr. Coxe declares, mostly for the worse even in point of expression. Mr. Coxe vindicates the claim of Wendover to the authorship of the portion of the Chronicle bearing his name which has been thus transcribed by Paris, in answer to some remarks by Mr. Halliwell in the introduction to his late edition of Rishanger's Chronicle of the Barons' Wars.

The most celebrated English historian of the thirteenth century, however, is Matthew Paris, who was another monk of the same great monastery of St. Albans, and was also much employed in affairs of state during the reign of Henry III. He died in 1259; and his principal work, entitled *Historia Major* (the Greater History), begins at the Norman Conquest, and comes down to that year. Matthew Paris is one of the most spirited and rhetorical of our old Latin historians; and the extraordinary freedom with which he expresses himself, in regard especially to the usurpations of the court of Rome, forms a striking contrast to the almost uniform tone of his monkish brethren. Nor does he show less boldness in animadverting upon the vices and delinquencies of kings and of the great in general. These qualities have in modern times gained him much admiration among writers of one party, and much obloquy from those of another. His work has always been bitterly decried by the Roman Catholics, who at one time, indeed, were accustomed to maintain that much of what appeared in the printed copies of it was the interpolation of its Protestant editors. This charge has now been abandoned; but an eminent Catholic historian of the present day has not hesitated to denounce the narrative of the monk of St. Albans as "a romance rather than a history," on the ground of the great discrepancy which he asserts he has found between it and authentic records or contemporary writers, in most instances when he could confront the one with the

other.¹ The *Historia Major* of Matthew Paris was first printed at London in 1571, under the care of Archbishop Parker; and it has been republished at Zurich in 1606; at London, under the care of Dr. William Wats, in 1640; at Paris, in 1644; and at London in 1684. All these editions are in folio. An excellent French translation, by M. A. Huillard-Bréholles, has lately been published under the superintendence, or at the cost, of the Duc de Luynes, in 9 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1840–41, with a few notes by the translator, but without the Introduction by the Duke, promised on the title-page — at least in the only copy of the work that has fallen in our way. An English translation, by Dr. Giles, makes three of the volumes of Bohn's Antiquarian Library. To the edition published by Dr. Wats, and those that have followed it, are appended some other historical pieces of the author; and there also exists, in MS., an abridgment of the *Historia Major*, drawn up by himself, and generally referred to as the *Historia Minor*.

The History of Matthew Paris was continued by William Rishanger, another monk of the same abbey, whose narrative appears to have come down to the year 1322 (the 15th of Edward II.), although no complete copy is now known to be in existence, and only the earlier part, extending to the death of Henry III. (A. D. 1272), has been printed. It is at the end of Wats's edition of Matthew Paris. Rishanger is also the author of several other historical tracts, one of the most curious of which, his *Chronicle of the Barons' Wars* (preserved in a single MS., with the title of *De Bellis Lewes et Evesham*) has been printed for the Camden Society, under the care of Mr. James Orchard Halliwell, 4to. Lond. 1840. To Rishanger's narrative Mr. Halliwell has appended a collection of miracles attributed to Simon de Montfort, from another MS. in the Cotton Library.

What is commonly called the *Chronicle of John Bromton*, and is printed among the *Decem Scriptorum* (pp. 721–1284) under the titles of *Chronicon Johannis Bromton*, and *Joralanensis Historia*, a *Johanne Brompton, Abbate Jorvalensi, Conscripta*, has been shown by Selden, in his most learned and curious preface to that collection, not to be either the composition of Bromton, or in any sense a *Chronicle of Jorevale* or *Jerevaux*, of which monastery in Yorkshire Bromton, Brompton, or Bramton, was abbot. The book was merely procured for the library of that house while he presided

¹ Dr. Lingard, *Hist. of Eng.* iii. 160, edit. of 1837.

over it, and probably through his means. It does not appear from Selden's account when Bromton lived; but he has proved (p. xli) that the Chronicle must have been written in or after the year 1328, or the second of Edward III. At the commencement the author intimates that it is his design to bring it down to the time of Edward I., but it terminates with the death of Richard I. (A. D. 1199), having set out from the conversion of the Saxons by St. Augustine. It is not therefore, in any part of it, a contemporary history; but the writer has gleaned from some authorities which we do not now possess, and he gives many details which have not elsewhere been preserved.

Among the other Latin chroniclers of this period, whose works have been printed, the following are the principal:— Thomas Wikes, or Wyeke, in Latin Wiccus, canon regular of Osney, near Oxford, whose chronicle, otherwise called the Chronicle of the Church of Salisbury, fills from p. 21 to p. 129 of Gale's *Scriptores Quinque*, and, as there printed, extends from the Conquest to the year 1304, although it is afterwards intimated (p. 595) that the last ten pages of it are by another hand; Walter Hemingford, or, as Leland calls him, Hemingoburgus, a monk of Gisborough in Yorkshire, the portion of whose work extending from the Conquest to the year 1273 (being the first three Books) was printed by Gale in the same collection (pp. 453–595), and the remainder, comprehending the reigns of Edward I., Edward II., and the first twenty years of that of Edward III., by Hearne, in 2 vols. 8vo., at Oxford, in 1731, and the whole of which has been edited by Mr. H. C. Hamilton for the Historical Society, in 2 vols. 8vo. Lon. 1848; Robert de Avesbury, register of the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose history of the reign of Edward III., *Historia de Mirabilibus Gestis Edwardi III.*, which is esteemed for its accuracy, but comes down only to A. D. 1356, was published by Hearne, in 8vo., at Oxford, in 1720; Nicolas Trivet, whose clear and exact history of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II., Richard I., John, Henry III., and Edward I. (or from A. D. 1135 to 1307), is printed in both editions of Father d'Achery's *Spicilegium* (1671 and 1723), and has also been published separately by Anthony Hall, in 8vo., at Oxford, in 1719, and, as edited by Mr. T. Hog for the Historical Society, 8vo., Lon. 1845; Adam Murimuth, whose short chronicle, extending from A. D. 1303 to 1337, along with a continuation by an anonymous writer to 1380, was printed

by Hall as a second volume to his *Trivet*, in 1721, and has also been edited for the Historical Society by Mr. Hog, 1846; Henry de Knyghton (or Cnitton, as he himself spells the name), a canon of Leicester, the author of a History of English affairs from the time of King Edgar to the death of Richard II., which is printed among the *Decem Scriptorum* (pp. 2297-2742); and the two ecclesiastical historians, Thomas Stubbs and William Thorne, the *Chronicle of the acts of the Archbishops of York to A. D. 1373* by the former of whom, and that of the *Abbots of St. Augustine's monastery at Canterbury to 1397* by the latter, are in the same collection (pp. 1685-1734, and 1753-2202). The original Latin *Polychronicon* of Ranulph, or Ralph, Higden, monk of St. Werburgh's in Chester, which ends in 1357, still remains, for the greater part, in MS., only the portion of it relating to the period of English history before the Norman Conquest having been published by Gale among his *Scriptorum Quindecim* (pp. 177-289); but an English translation of the whole by John de Trevisa, who was vicar of Berkeley in Gloucestershire towards the close of the fourteenth century, was printed, in folio, at Westminster, by Caxton in 1482, at the same place by Wynken de Worde in 1485, and at Southwark in 1517, and again in 1527. Besides many insertions, Caxton has added a continuation of the History down to 1460; but it appears that he has also omitted several passages which are found in Trevisa's MS. now in the Harleian collection.

John Fordun, the earliest of the regular Scottish chroniclers, also belongs to the fourteenth century. His History, entitled *Scotichronicon*, beginning with the creation, comes down only to the end of the reign of David I. (A. D. 1153), but is continued by Walter Bower, abbot of Inchcolm, to the death of James I. (A. D. 1437), the materials for the space from 1153 to 1385 having been collected by Fordun. The portion of the *Scotichronicon* actually written by Fordun, being the first five of the sixteen books, was printed by Gale among his *Scriptorum Quindecim* (pp. 563-701); and the whole was published by Hearne, at Oxford, in 5 vols. 8vo. in 1722, and again by Walter Goodall, at Edinburgh, in 2 vols. folio, in 1759.

The most important of the monastic chronicles belonging to this period, which has been preserved, is that called (it does not appear for what reason) the *Chronicle of Lanercost*. It has now been printed for the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs, under the superin-

tendence of Mr. Joseph Stevenson, 4to., Edinburgh, 1839. Before this it existed only in one or two very incorrect modern transcripts, and in a single original codex (the Cotton MS. D. vii.), where it is appended, without any break, to an imperfect copy of what is printed by Savile as Hoveden's History. Hoveden ends on the reverse of what is numbered as folio 172 of the MS., having filled from folio 66 inclusive: the continuation, or Lanercost Chronicle, goes on in one handwriting to the end of the volume on the reverse of fol. 242. The time which it comprehends is from A. D. 1201 to 1346; and Mr. Stevenson thinks that it was transcribed about the latter date from the contemporary register kept, most probably, in the Minorite monastery of Carlisle. As printed it fills 352 4to. pages; and it abounds in curious and valuable information relating to the course of events both in England and in Scotland during the period over which it extends.



USE AND STUDY OF THE LATIN AND GREEK, THE HEBREW AND OTHER ORIENTAL TONGUES.

LATIN was also, for a great part of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the usual language of the law, at least in writing. There may, indeed, be some doubt perhaps as to the Charter of John. It is usually given in Latin; but there is also a French text first published in the first edition of D'Achery's *Spicilegium* (1653-57), xii. 573, &c., which there is some reason for believing to be the original. "An attentive critical examination of the French and Latin together," says Mr. Luders, "will induce any person capable of making it to think several chapters of the latter translated from the former, and not originally composed in Latin."¹ Yet the *Capitula*, or articles on which the Great Charter is founded, are known to us only in Latin. And all the other charters of liberties are in that language. So is every statute down to the year 1275. The first that is in French is the Statute of Westminster the First, passed in that year, the 3d of Edward I. Throughout the remainder of the reign of Edward they are sometimes in Latin, sometimes

¹ Tracts on the Law and History of England (1810), p. 393. D'Achery's French text may also be read in a more common book, Johnson's *History of Magna Charta*, 2d edit. (1772), pp. 182-234

in French, but more frequently in the former language. The French becomes more frequent in the time of Edward II. and is almost exclusively used in that of Edward III. and Richard II. Still there are statutes in Latin in the sixth and eighth years of the last-mentioned king. It is not improbable that, from the accession of Edward I., the practice may have been to draw up every statute in both languages. Of the law treatises, Bracton (about 1265) and Fleta (about 1285) are in Latin; Britton (about 1280) and the *Miroir des Justices* (about 1320), in French.

Latin was not only the language in which all the scholastic divines and philosophers wrote, but was also employed by all writers on geometry, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, and the other branches of mathematical and natural science. All the works of Roger Bacon, for example, are in Latin; and it is worth noting that, although by no means a writer of classical purity, this distinguished cultivator of science is still one of the most correct writers of his time. He was indeed not a less zealous student of literature than of science, nor less anxious for the improvement of the one than of the other: accustomed himself to read the works of Aristotle in the original Greek, he denounces as mischievous impositions the wretched Latin translations by which alone they were known to the generality of his contemporaries: he warmly recommends the study of grammar and the ancient languages generally; and deplores the little attention paid to the Oriental tongues in particular, of which he says there were not in his time more than three or four persons in Western Europe who knew anything. It is remarkable that the most strenuous effort made within the present period to revive the study of this last-mentioned learning proceeded from another eminent cultivator of natural science, the famous Raymond Lully, half philosopher, half quack, as it has been the fashion to regard him. It was at his instigation that Clement V., in 1311, with the approbation of the Council of Vienne, published a constitution, ordering that professors of Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldaic should be established in the universities of Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca. He had, more than twenty years before, urged the same measure upon Honorius IV., and its adoption then was only prevented by the death of that pope. After all, it is doubtful if the papal ordinance was ever carried into effect. There were, however, professors of strange, or foreign, languages at Paris a few years after this time, as ap-

pears from an epistle of Pope John XXII. to his legate there in 1325, in which the latter is enjoined to keep watch over the said professors, lest they should introduce any dogmas as strange as the languages they taught.¹

Many additional details are collected by Warton in his Dissertation on the Introduction of Learning into England. He is inclined to think that many Greek manuscripts found their way into Europe from Constantinople in the time of the Crusades. "Robert Grosthead, bishop of Lincoln," he proceeds, "an universal scholar, and no less conversant in polite letters than the most abstruse sciences, cultivated and patronized the study of the Greek language. This illustrious prelate, who is said to have composed almost two hundred books, read lectures in the school of the Franciscan friars at Oxford about the year 1230. He translated Dionysius the Areopagite and Damascenus into Latin. He greatly facilitated the knowledge of Greek by a translation of Suidas's Lexicon, a book in high repute among the lower Greeks, and at that time almost a recent compilation. He promoted John of Basingstoke to the archdeaconry of Leicester, chiefly because he was a Greek scholar, and possessed many Greek manuscripts, which he is said to have brought from Athens into England. He entertained, as a domestic in his palace, Nicholas, chaplain of the abbot of St. Albans, surnamed *Græcus*, from his uncommon proficiency in Greek; and by his assistance he translated from Greek into Latin the testaments of the twelve patriarchs. Grosthead had almost incurred the censure of excommunication for preferring a complaint to the pope that most of the opulent benefices in England were occupied by Italians. But the practice, although notoriously founded on the monopolizing and arbitrary spirit of papal imposition, and a manifest act of injustice to the English clergy, probably contributed to introduce many learned foreigners into England, and to propagate philological literature."² "Bishop Grosthead," Warton adds, "is also said to have been profoundly skilled in the Hebrew language. William the Conqueror permitted great numbers of Jews to come over from Rouen, and to settle in England, about the year 1087. Their multitude soon increased, and they spread themselves in vast bodies throughout most of the cities and capital towns in England, where they built synagogues. There were fifteen hundred

¹ Crevier, Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris, ii. 112, 227.

² Hist. of Eng. Poet., i. cxxxv.

at York about the year 1189. At Bury in Suffolk is a very complete remain of a Jewish synagogue of stone, in the Norman style, large and magnificent. Hence it was that many of the learned English ecclesiastics of those times became acquainted with their books and language. In the reign of William Rufus, at Oxford the Jews were remarkably numerous, and had acquired a considerable property; and some of their rabbis were permitted to open a school in the university, where they instructed not only their own people, but many Christian students, in the Hebrew literature, about the year 1054. Within two hundred years after their admission or establishment by the Conqueror, they were banished the kingdom. This circumstance was highly favorable to the circulation of their learning in England. The suddenness of their dismissal obliged them, for present subsistence, and other reasons, to sell their movable goods of all kinds, among which were large quantities of Rabbinical books. The monks in various parts availed themselves of the distribution of these treasures. At Huntingdon and Stamford there was a prodigious sale of their effects, containing immense stores of Hebrew manuscripts, which were immediately purchased by Gregory of Huntingdon, prior of the abbey of Ramsey. Gregory speedily became an adept in the Hebrew, by means of these valuable acquisitions, which he bequeathed to his monastery about the year 1250. Other members of the same convent, in consequence of these advantages, are said to have been equal proficient in the same language, soon after the death of Prior Gregory; among whom were Robert Dodford, librarian of Ramsey, and Laurence Holbeck, who compiled a Hebrew lexicon. At Oxford, great multitudes of their books fell into the hands of Roger Bacon, or were bought by his brethren, the Franciscan friars of that university.”¹ The general expulsion of the Jews from England did not take place till the year 1290, in the reign of Edward I.; but they had been repeatedly subjected to sudden violence, both from the populace and from the government, before that grand catastrophe.

¹ Hist. of Eng. Poet., i. cxxxvi.

LAST AGE OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN ENGLAND.

THE French language, however, was still in common use among us down to the latter part of the reign of Edward III. It is well remarked by Pinkerton that we are to date the cessation of the general use of French in this country from the breaking out of "the inveterate enmity" between the two nations in the reign of that king.¹ Higden, as we have seen, writing before this change had taken place, tells us that French was still in his day the language which the children of gentlemen were taught to speak from their cradle, and the only language that was allowed to be used by boys at school; the effect of which was, that even the country-people generally understood it and affected its use. The tone, however, in which this is stated by Higden indicates that the public feeling had already begun to set in against these customs, and that, if they still kept their ground from use and wont, they had lost their hold upon any firmer or surer stay. Accordingly, about a quarter of a century or thirty years later, his translator Trevisa finds it necessary to subjoin the following explanation or correction: — "This maner was myeche yused tofore the first moreyn [before the first murrain or plague, which happened in 1349], and is siththe som dele [somewhat] ychaungide. For John Cornwaile, a maister of gramar, chaungide the lore [learning] in gramar scole and construction of [from] Frensch into Englisch, and Richard Penceriche lerned that maner teching of him, and other men of Penceriche. So that now, the yere of owre Lord a thousand thre hundred foure score and fyve, of the secunde King Rychard after the Conquest nyne, in alle the gramer scoles of England children leveth Frensch, and construeth and lerneth an [in] Englisch, and haveth thereby avauntage in oon [one] side and desavauntage in another. Her [their] avauntage is, that thei lerneth her [their] gramer in lasse tyme than children were wont to do; desavauntage is, that now children of gramer scole kunneth [know] no more Frensch than can her lifte [knows their left] heele; and that is harm for hem [them], and [if] thei schul passe the see and

¹ Essay on the Origin of Scottish Poetry, prefixed to *Ancient Scottish Poems*, 1786, vol. i. p. lxiii. Some curious remarks upon the peculiar political position in which England was held to stand in relation to France in the first reigns after the Conquest may be read in Gale's Preface to his *Scriptores Quindecim*.

travaile in strange londes, and in many other places also. Also gentilmen haveth now mych ylefte for to teche her [their] children Frensch.”¹

A few years before this, in 1362 (the 36th of Edward III.), was passed the statute ordaining that all pleas pleaded in the king's courts should be pleaded in the English language, and entered and enrolled in Latin; the pleadings, or oral arguments, till now having been in French, and the enrolments of the judgments sometimes in French, sometimes in Latin. The reasons assigned for this change in the preamble of the act are, “because it is often showed to the king by the prelates, dukes, earls, barons, and all the commonalty, of the great mischiefs which have happened to divers of the realm, because the laws, customs, and statutes of this realm be not commonly holden and kept in the same realm, for that they be pleaded, shewed, and judged in the French tongue, which is much unknown in the said realm, so that the people which do implead, or be impleaded, in the king's court, and in the courts of other, have no knowledge nor understanding of that which is said for them or against them by their sergeants and other pleaders; and that reasonably the said laws and customs the rather shall be perceived and known, and better understood, in the tongue used in the said realm, and by so much every man of the said realm may the better govern himself without offending of the law, and the better keep, save; and defend his heritage and possessions; and in divers regions and countries, where the king, the nobles, and other of the said realm have been, good governance and full right is done to every person, because that their laws and customs be learned and used in the tongue of the country.”

Yet, oddly enough, this very statute (of which we have here quoted the old translation) is in French, which, whatever might be the case with the great body of the people, continued down to a considerably later date than this to be the mother-tongue of our Norman royal family, and probably also that generally spoken at court and at least in the Upper House of Parliament. Ritson asserts that there is no instance in which Henry III. is known to have expressed himself in English. “King Edward I. generally,” he continues, “or, according to Andrew of Wyntoun, constantly,

¹ As quoted by Tyrwhitt, from Harl. MS. 1900, in *Essay on the Language, &c.* of Chaucer.

spoke the French language, both in the council and in the field, many of his sayings in that idiom being recorded by our old historians. When, in the council at Norham, in 1291-2, Anthony Beck had, as it is said, proved to the king, by reason and eloquence, that Bruce was too dangerous a neighbor to be king of Scotland, his Majesty replied, *Par le sang de dieu, vous aves bien eschanté*, and accordingly adjudged the crown to Baliol; of whom, refusing to obey his summons, he afterwards said, *A ce fol felon tel folie fais? S'il ne vould venir à nous, nous viendrons à lui.*¹ There is but one instance of his speaking English; which was when the great sultan sent ambassadors, after his assassination, to protest that he had no knowledge of it. These, standing at a distance, adored the king, prone on the ground; and Edward said in English (*in Anglico*), *You, indeed, adore, but you little love, me.* Nor understood they his words, because they spoke to him by an interpreter.² King Edward II., likewise, who married a French princess, used himself the French tongue. Sir Henry Spelman had a manuscript, in which was a piece of poetry entitled *De le roi Edward le fiz roi Edward, le chanson qu'il fist mesmes*, which Lord Orford was unacquainted with. His son Edward III. always wrote his letters or despatches in French, as we find them preserved by Robert of Avesbury; and in the early part of his reign even the Oxford scholars were confined in conversation to Latin or French.³ . . . There is a single instance preserved of this monarch's use of the English language. He appeared in 1349 in a tournament at Canterbury with a white swan for his impress, and the following motto embroidered on his shield:—

‘ Hay, hay, the wythe swan!
By Godes soul I am thy man!’⁴

Lewis Beaumont, bishop of Durham, 1317, understood not a word of either Latin or English. In reading the bull of his appointment, which he had been taught to spell for several days before, he stum-

¹ For these two speeches, the latter of which, by the by, he points as if he did not understand it, Ritson quotes the *Scotichronicon* (Fordun), ii. 147, 156.

² For this anecdote Ritson quotes Hemingford (in Gale), p. 591.

³ The authority for this last statement is a note in Warton's *Hist. of Eng. Poet.* i. 6 (edit. of 1824).

⁴ “ See Warton's *Hist. of Eng. Poet.* ii. 251 (i. 86, in edit. of 1824). He had another, ‘ It is as it is;’ and may have had a third, ‘ Ha St. Edward! Ha St. George!’ ”

bled upon the word *metropolitice*, which he in vain endeavored to pronounce; and, having hammered over it a considerable time, at last cried out, in his mother tongue, *Seit pour dite! Par Seynt Lowys il ne fu pas curteis qui ceste parole ici escrit.*¹ The first instance of the English language which Mr. Tyrwhitt had discovered in the parliamentary proceedings was the confession of Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, in 1398. He might, however, have met with a petition of the mercers of London ten years earlier (*Rot. Parl.* iii. 225). The oldest English instrument produced by Rymer is dated 1368 (vii. 526); but an indenture in the same idiom betwixt the abbot and convent of Whitby, and Robert the son of John Bustard, dated at York in 1343,² is the earliest known."³

ANGLO-NORMAN POETS.

FRENCH metrical romances and other poetry, accordingly, continued to be written in England, and in many instances by Englishmen, throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Of the Anglo-Norman poets of this period one of the most famous is a lady, Marie, who describes herself as of France, but who appears to have resided in England in the time of Henry III. Her poems — consisting principally of *Lais*,⁴ or lays, the subjects of which she professes to have found in the Bas Breton, or Celtic tongue of Britany, and of *Fables* in the manner of Æsop, translated, she says, from an English version made by a king of England, by which she probably means a collection attributed to Alfred the Great, although another theory is that she refers to a work by Henry I. — were first brought into notice by Tyrwhitt (*Introductory Discourse to the Canterbury Tales of Chaucer*, notes 24 and 29): they

¹ "Robert de Graystones, *Anglia Sacra*, i. 761 — 'Take it as said! By St. Lewis, he was not very civil who wrote this word here.'"

² "Charlton's *History of Whitby*, 247."

³ *Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy*, pp. lxxv.-lxxxvi. We have not thought it necessary to preserve Ritson's peculiar spelling, adopted, apparently, on no principle except that of deviating from the established usage.

⁴ The derivation of this word remains, we believe, an unsolved puzzle, or at least a subject of dispute, among etymologists. One conjecture would make it to be the same word with *lie*.

were afterwards made the subject of a paper by the Abbé de la Rue, in the *Archæologia* (vol. xiii. pp. 35-67, published in 1797); and they have since been published by M. B. de Roquefort under the title of *Poésies de Marie de France, ou Recueil de Lais, Fables, et autres productions de cette femme célèbre*, 2 vols. 8vo., Paris, 1820. An account, including nearly a complete translation, of the *Lais*, which are twelve in number (besides two which M. de Roquefort has printed, apparently without any authority for assigning them to Marie), is given by Ellis in his *Early English Metrical Romances* (Appendix ii. to Introduction, pp. 143-200);¹ and the reader may also consult what has been written about Marie by Ritson, in a note to the romance of *Emare* (*Ancient English Metrical Romances*, iii. 330), by Mr. Price, in a long and elaborate note upon Warton (*Hist. of Eng. Poet.*, i. lxxiv.-lxxxvi), and by the Abbé de la Rue (in his *Essais Historiques*, iii. 47-100). Le Grand d'Aussy has given prose versions or paraphrases of forty-three of Marie's *Fables* in his work entitled *Fabliaux ou Contes du xii^{me} et du xiii^{me} Siècles*, &c.

Marie is mentioned as his contemporary by Denis Pyram, or Pyramus, who was also probably a native of France, but lived at the court of Henry III., and was in his earlier years the author of many *serventois*, anacreontic songs, and other gay pieces, but whose only remaining compositions are two religious poems written in the sobriety and penitence of his old age: the first, on the life and martyrdom of St. Edmond, in 3286 verses; the second, in 714 verses, on the miracles of the same royal saint.²

Another *trouveur* of this date was no less a person than the famous Grosstête, bishop of Lincoln, already mentioned. Grosstête, who was an Englishman, a native of Suffolk, is the author of a religious romance of 1748 lines on the favorite subject of the Fall and Restoration of Man, which is sometimes called the *Chastel d'Amour* (by which expression the Virgin Mary is meant), sometimes the *Roman des Romans*; and there is also attributed to him another French poem of much greater length, which M. de la Rue thinks is the same that is preserved in one of the royal manuscripts at the British Museum (MS. Reg. 16 E. ix.), and is in that copy

¹ He has also printed, in vol. iii. pp. 291-307, an account, communicated by Sir Walter Scott, of an early English translation of one of them, the *Lai le Freisne*, contained in the *Anchinleek MS.* in the *Advocates' Library*, Edinburgh.

² See De la Rue, *Essais Historiques*, iii. 101-106.

entitled *Traité des Péchés et des Vertus*, although spoken of by other copyists as the *Manuel*. It consists of more than 7000 verses.

The title by which Grostête's second work is commonly referred to is the *Manuel des Péchés*; but the only known French poem bearing this title appears to be the work of a later writer, William of Wadington, who lived in the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century. It is a translation, but with much additional matter, from a Latin poem entitled *Floretus*, which was printed both in folio at London, and in 4to. at Caen, in the same year, 1512.¹ Wadington's *Manuel*, which contains nearly 10,000 verses,² exists in several manuscripts; of which two in the Harleian collection have at the end a farewell address to the reader, explaining his object in undertaking the translation. It was, he says, with a view of making the beauties of the *Floretus* be felt by a people who ran eagerly after everything written in French verse, and that the work might be understood by great and small; which proves, observes the Abbé de la Rue, that the knowledge of the French language was then generally diffused in England. Wadington also asks his readers to pardon the faults he may have committed, whether in expression or in regard to the laws of rhyme, on the ground that, being an Englishman by birth, it was impossible that he should write French verse with perfect purity and correctness.

A peculiar subject which engaged many of the French poets of the thirteenth century was the history of Alexander the Great, about a dozen *trouveurs* of France and England are enumerated who devoted themselves to this singular chapter of the romance of chivalry, and several of their performances still survive, although they can scarcely in any case be assigned with certainty to their proper authors. One *Roman d'Alexandre* is attributed, at least in some copies, to a Thomas of Kent, who is placed by some authorities in the twelfth century;³ by others, about the beginning of the fourteenth;⁴ and who, it has been suggested, may possibly be the author of the French romance of *Le Roi Horn*, and also the Thomas referred to by Robert de Brunne as the original narrator

¹ De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 226. In a paper in the *Archæologia*, vol. xiii. pp. 230, &c. (read in 1798, published in 1800), this date is given 1520.

² De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 231. In the *Archæologia* (vol. xiii.) he says nearly 6000

³ See M. Vanpraet, *Catalogue de la Vallière*, ii. 160.

⁴ De la Rue, *Essais*, ii. 352.

of the story of Sir Tristrem, which upon this supposition must have first appeared in Norman-French.¹ Another celebrated early French romance is that of Havelok le Danois — founded on a well-known story of the Saxon era, relating to the town of Grimsby in Lincolnshire — which has been very ably edited for the Roxburgh Club by Sir Frederick Madden, along with the somewhat shorter relation of the same adventures which is found in Gaimar's continuation of Wace's Brut, and a much longer English poem on the same subject.² M. de la Rue, however, seems to have shown that the learned editor is mistaken in attributing to the separate Roman (which extends to 1106 lines) the priority in point of time over the version given by Gaimar (containing 818 lines); and to have proved that it belongs not to the earlier part of the twelfth, but to the thirteenth century.³

Other *trouveurs* of this period, connected with England either by birth, residence, or the subjects of their poetry, are:— Chardry, supposed to have been born in Gloucestershire in the thirteenth century, the author of several religious romances, — one (of 2924 verses) on the lives of Saint Barlaam and St. Josaphat, another (of 1750 verses) on the legend of the Seven Sleepers, a third (of about 2000 verses) entitled *Le Petit Plet*, being a dispute between an old and a young man on the happiness and misery of human life; ⁴ Adam de Ros, an English monk of the same age, from whom we have a poem on the legend of the descent of St. Paul to the infernal regions; ⁵ Hélie of Winchester, the translator of the Distichs of Cato, for the use, as he says, of those of the English who, not understanding Latin, spoke only the Romance (or French); ⁶

¹ See Remarks on Sir W. Scott's Sir Tristrem (known to be by Sir Frederick Madden) in *Gent. Mag.* for October, 1833 (vol. ciii., part ii., p. 308); and also the Introduction to Havelok by the same gentleman, p. xlvi.

² The Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane, accompanied by the French text; with an introduction, notes, and a glossary. 4to. London, 1828. See also Examination of the Remarks on the Glossary to the ancient Metrical Romance of Havelok the Dane, in a Letter to Francis Douce, Esq., F. A. S., by S. W. Singer, addressed to Henry Petrie, Esq., Keeper of his Majesty's Records in the Tower of London, by the Editor of Havelok. 4to. Lond. 1829. The French Romance, with a translation of part of Sir Frederick Madden's Introduction, was republished, in crown 8vo., at Paris, in 1833, by M. Francisque Michel, with the title of *Lai d'Havelok le Danois; treizième Siècle*. The publication is dedicated to the Abbé de la Rue, by "son admirateur et son ami."

³ *Essais Historiques*, iii. 114-120.

⁴ See De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 127-138.

⁵ *Id.* 139-145.

⁶ *Id.* 150, 151; see also Tyrwhitt, *Essay*, note 55.

the anonymous author of a continuation of Wace's *Brut*, in the common octosyllabic verse, in which he brings down the history, in a fierce anti-Norman spirit, from the death of Cadwallader at the close of the seventh century to the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Henry III. (A. D. 1240), telling, among other things not elsewhere to be found, a remarkable story of a prophetic revelation made to the Conqueror touching the fates of his three sons; ¹ Pierre du Ries, a Norman, described as a writer of true poetical genius, who is the author of the romance of *Anseis de Carthage*, one of the Paladins of Charlemagne, in 10,850 verses, of the *Roman de Beuves de Hamton et de s'amie Josiane, fille du Roi d'Armenie* (our English *Bevis of Hampton*), in 18,525 verses, and of a continuation of a romance on the subject of Judas Machabeus begun by Gautier de Belleperche; ² Godfrey of Waterford, an Irish Dominican monk, the author of a verse translation of the pretended Trojan History of Dares Phrygius, and also of several other versions of Latin works into French prose; ³ Robert Bikez, the writer, in the latter part of the thirteenth century, of the *Lai du Corn*, founded on a very popular Arthurian fiction; ⁴ two anonymous writers of the same age, to each of whom we owe a short poem on the Purgatory of St. Patrick (one of about 1800, and the other of about 760 verses); ⁵ Walter of Exeter, a Franciscan monk of Cornwall, to whom is attributed the romance of *Guy de Warwick, et de Felice fille du Comte de Bukingham* (extending to nearly 11,500 verses); and Peter de Langtoft, a canon of the priory of St. Augustine at Bridlington, in Yorkshire, who has left us a translation of the British History of Geoffrey of Monmouth, a continuation of the English story in the same style from the arrival of the Saxons to the reign of Edward I., a Life of that King, a translation of Herbert de Bosham's Latin Life of Becket, and one or two shorter pieces, all in French verse. ⁶

¹ See De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 157-169; also in *Archæologia*, xiii. 242-246.

² *Id.* 170-179.

³ *Id.* p. 211.

⁴ See Tyrwhitt, *Discourse*, note 24; Warton, *Hist.* ii. 432; and De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 216.

⁵ De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 245. Upon this subject see *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, an Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell, and Paradise, current during the Middle Ages; by Thomas Wright, Esq. 8vo. Lond. 1844.

⁶ De la Rue, *Essais*, iii. 234-239.

FRENCH PROSE ROMANCES.—FROISSART.

Down to the end of the twelfth century verse was probably the only form in which romances, meaning originally any compositions in the Romance or French language, then any narrative compositions whatever, were written; in the thirteenth, a few may have appeared in prose; but before the close of the fourteenth prose had become the usual form in which such works were produced, and many of the old metrical romances had been recast in this new shape. The early French prose romances, however, do not, like their metrical predecessors, belong in any sense to the literature of this country: many of them were no doubt generally read for a time in England as well as in France; but we have no reason for believing that any of them were primarily addressed to the English public, or were written in England or by English subjects, and even during the brief space that they continued popular they seem to have been regarded as foreign importations. Their history, therefore, is no part of our present subject. But there is one remarkable product of the French literature of the fourteenth century which must be made an exception, the Chronicle of the inimitable Sire Jean Froissart. This work, indeed, has, in everything except the language in which it is written, nearly as much of an English as of a French interest. Froissart was a native of Valenciennes, where he appears to have been born about 1337; but the four Books of his Chronicle — which relates principally to English affairs, though the narrative embraces also the course of events in France, Flanders, Scotland, and other countries — comprehend the space from 1326 to 1400, or the whole of the reigns of our Edward III. and Richard II. For the first thirty years of this space he intimates that his authority was a previous writer, Jean le Bel, canon of Liège, whom he greatly praises for his diligence and accuracy; and some years ago the Chronicle of Le Bel, which was supposed to have perished, was discovered in the library of the old Dukes of Burgundy at Brussels, when it turned out that Froissart's first eighty chapters are almost a literal transcript from his predecessor. Froissart, however, is rather of authority as a painter of manners than as an historian of events; for his passion for the marvellous and the decorative was so strong, that the simple fact, we fear, would have had little chance of acceptance with him in

any case when it came into competition with a good story. In his own, and in the next age, accordingly, his history was generally reckoned and designated a romance. Caxton, in his *Boke of the Ordre of Chevalrye or Knighthood*, classes it with the romances of Lancelot and Percival; and indeed the *Roman au Chroniques* seems to have been the title by which it was at first commonly known. On the other hand, however, it is fair to remember that a romance was not in those days held to be necessarily a fiction. Froissart's *Chronicle* is certainly the truest and most lively picture that any writer has bequeathed to us of the spirit of a particular era; it shows "the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." In a higher than the literal sense, the most apocryphal incidents of this most splendid and imaginative of gossips are full of truth; they cast more light upon the actual men and manners that are described, and bring back to life more of the long-buried past, than the most careful details of any other historian. The popularity of Froissart's *Chronicle* has thrown into the shade his other productions; but his highest fame in his own day was as a writer of poetry. His greatest poetical work appears to have been a romance entitled *Meliador, or the Knight of the Sun of Gold*; and he also wrote many shorter pieces, *chants royaux*, ballads, *rondeaux*, and pastorals, in what was then called the *New Poetry*, which, indeed, he cultivated with so much success that he has by some been regarded as its inventor.¹ On his introduction to Richard II., when he paid his last visit to England in 1396, he presented that monarch, as he tells us, with a book beautifully illuminated, engrossed with his own hand, bound in crimson velvet, and embellished with silver bosses, clasps and golden roses, comprehending all the pieces of *Amours* and *Moralities* which he had composed in the twenty-four preceding years. Richard, he adds, seemed much pleased, and examined the book in many places; for he was fond of reading as well as speaking French.

¹ See Warton, *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, ii. 173, 300. — "It is a proof of the decay of invention among the French in the beginning of the fourteenth century, that about that period they began to translate into prose their old metrical romances. . . . At length, about the year 1380, in the place of the *Provincial*, a new species of poetry succeeded in France, consisting of *Chants Royaux*, *Balades*, *Rondeaux*, and *Pastorales*. This was distinguished by the appellation of the *New Poetry*."

RESURRECTION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

BUT for the last fifty years of the fourteenth century the French language had been rapidly losing the position it had held among us from the middle of the eleventh, and becoming among all classes in England a foreign tongue. We have already produced the testimonies of Higden writing immediately before the commencement of this change, and of Trevisa after it had been going on for about a quarter of a century; to these may now be added what Chaucer writes, probably within ten years after the date (1385) which Trevisa expressly notes as that of his statement. In the Prologue to his Testament of Love, a prose work, which seems to have been far advanced, if not finished, in 1392,¹ the great father of our English poetry, speaking of those of his countrymen who still persisted in writing French verse, expresses himself thus:—“Certes there ben some that speke thyr poysy mater in Frenche, of whyche speche the Frenche men have as good a fantasye as we have in hearing of French mennes Englyshe.” And afterwards he adds, “Let, then, clerkes endyten in Latyn, for they have the propertye in science and the knowinge in that facultye, and lette Frenchmen in theyr Frenche also endyte theyr queynt termes, for it is kyndly [natural] to theyr mouthes; and let us shewe our fantasyes in suche wordes as we learneden of our dames tonge.” French, it is evident from this, although it might still be a common acquirement among the higher classes, had ceased to be the mother-tongue of any class of Englishmen, and was only known to those to whom it was taught by a master. So, the Prioress in the Canterbury Tales, although she could speak French “ful fayre and fetisly,” or neatly, spoke it only

“After the seole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frenche of Paris was to hire [her] unknowe.”²

¹ See Tyrwhitt's Account of the works of Chaucer, prefixed to his Glossary.

² It is impossible to believe with Sir Harris Nicolas, in his otherwise very clear and judicious Life of Chaucer (8vo. Lond. 1843; additional note, p. 142), that Chaucer perhaps here meant to intimate that the prioress could not speak French at all, on the ground that the expression “French of Stratford-at-Bow” is used in a tract published in 1586 (Ferne's Blazon of Gentry), to describe the language of English heraldry. In the first place the phrase is not there “a colloquial paraphrase for *English*,” but for the mixed French and English, or, as it might be regarded, Anglicized or corrupted French, of our heralds. But, at any rate, can it

From this, as from many other passages in old writers, we learn that the French taught and spoken in England had, as was indeed inevitable, become a corrupt dialect of the language, or at least very different from the French at Paris. But, as the foreign tongue lost its hold and declined in purity, the old Teutonic speech of the native population, favored by the same circumstances and course of events which checked and depressed its rival, and having at last, after going through a process almost of dissolution and putrefaction, begun to assume a new organization, gradually recovered its ascendancy.

We have already examined the first revolution which the language underwent, and endeavored to explain the manner in which it was brought about. It consisted in the disintegration of the grammatical system of the language, and the conversion of it from an inflectional and synthetic into a comparatively non-inflected and analytic language. The vocabulary, or what we may call the substance of the language, was not changed; that remained still purely Gothic, as it always had been; only the old form or structure was broken up or obliterated. There was no mixture or infusion of any foreign element; the language was as it were decomposed, but was not adulterated, and the process of decomposition may be regarded as having been the work of the eleventh century, and as having been begun by the Danish Conquest and consummated by the Norman.

This first revolution which the language underwent is to be carefully distinguished from the second, which was brought about by the combination of the native with a foreign element, and consisted essentially in the change made in the vocabulary of the language by the introduction of numerous terms borrowed from the French. Of this latter innovation we find little trace till long after the completion of the former. For nearly two centuries after the Conquest the English seems to have been spoken and written (to the small extent to which it was written) with scarcely any intermixture of Norman. It only, in fact, began to receive such intermixture after it came to be adopted as the speech of that part of

be supposed for a moment that Chaucer would take so roundabout and fantastic a way as this of telling his readers so simple a fact, as that his prioress could speak her native tongue? He would never have spent three words upon such a matter, much less three lines.

the nation which had previously spoken French. And this adoption was plainly the cause of the intermixture. So long as it remained the language only of those who had been accustomed to speak it from their infancy, and who had never known any other, it might have gradually become changed in its internal organization, but it could scarcely acquire any additions from a foreign source. What should have tempted the Saxon peasant to substitute a Norman term, upon any occasion, for the word of the same meaning with which the language of his ancestors supplied him? As for things and occasions for which new names were necessary, they must have come comparatively little in his way; and, when they did, the capabilities of his native tongue were sufficient to furnish him with appropriate forms of expression from its own resources. The corruption of the English by the intermixture of French vocables must have proceeded from those whose original language was French, and who were in habits of constant intercourse with French customs, French literature, and everything else that was French, at the same time that they, occasionally at least, spoke English. And this supposition is in perfect accordance with the historical fact. So long as the English was the language of only a part of the nation, and the French, as it were, struggled with it for mastery, it remained unadulterated; — when it became the speech of the whole people, of the higher classes as well as of the lower, then it lost its old Teutonic purity, and received a larger alien admixture from the alien lips through which it passed. Whether this was a fortunate circumstance, or the reverse, is another question. It may just be remarked, however, that the English, if it had been left to its own spontaneous and unassisted development, would probably have assumed a character resembling rather that of the Dutch or the Flemish than that of the German of the present day.

The commencement of this second revolution, which changed the very substance of the language, may most probably be dated from about the middle of the thirteenth century, or about a century and a half after the completion of the first, which affected, not the substance or vocabulary of the language, but only its form or grammatical system.

SECOND ENGLISH:—

COMMONLY CALLED *SEMI-SAXON*.

THE chief remains that we have of English verse for the first two centuries after the Conquest have been enumerated by Sir Frederic Madden in a comprehensive paragraph of his valuable Introduction to the romance of Havelock, which we will take leave to transcribe:—“The notices by which we are enabled to trace the rise of our Saxon poetry from the Saxon period to the end of the twelfth century are few and scanty. We may, indeed, comprise them all in the Song of Canute recorded by the monk of Ely [Hist. Elyens. p. 505 apud Gale], who wrote about 1166; the words put into the mouth of Aldred, archbishop of York, who died in 1069 [W. Malmesb. de Gest. Pontif. l. i. p. 271]; the verses ascribed to St. Godric, the hermit of Finchale, who died in 1170 [Rits. Bibliogr. Poet.]; the few lines preserved by Lambarde and Camden attributed to the same period [Rits. Anc. Songs, Diss. p. xxviii.]; and the prophecy said to have been set up at Here in the year 1189, as recorded by Benedict Abbas, Roger Hoveden, and the Chronicle of Lanercost [Rits. Metr. Rom. Diss. p. lxxiii.]. To the same reign of Henry II. are to be assigned the metrical compositions of Layamon [MS. Cott. Cal. A. ix., and Otho C. xiii.], and Orm [MS. Jun. 1], and also the legends of St. Katherine, St. Margaret, and St. Julian [MS. Bodl. 34], with some few others, from which we may learn with tolerable accuracy the state of the language at that time, and its gradual formation from the Saxon to the shape it subsequently assumed. From this period to the middle of the next century nothing occurs to which we can affix any certain date; but we shall probably not err in ascribing to that interval the poems ascribed to John de Guldevorde [MSS. Cott. Cal. A. ix., Jes. Coll. Oxon. 29], the Biblical History [MS. Bennet Cant. R. 11] and Poetical Paraphrase of the Psalms [MSS. Cott. Vesp. D. vii., Coll. Benn. Cant. O. 6, Bodl. 921] quoted by Warton, and the Moral Ode published by Hickes [MSS. Digby 4, Jes. Coll. Oxon. 29]. Between the years 1244 and 1258, we know, was written the versification of part of a meditation of St. Augustine, as proved by the age of the prior who gave the MS. to the Durham Library [MS. Eccl. Dun. A. iii. 12

and Bodl. 42]. Soon after this time also were composed the earlier Songs in Ritson and Percy (1264), with a few more pieces which it is unnecessary to particularize. This will bring us to the close of Henry III.'s reign and beginning of his successor's, the period assigned by our poetical antiquaries to the romances of Sir Tristrem, Kyng Horn, and Kyng Alesaunder."¹

The verse that has been preserved of the song composed by Canute as he was one day rowing on the Nen, while the holy music came floating on the air and along the water from the choir of the neighboring minster of Ely, — a song which we are told by the historian continued to his day, after the lapse of a century and a half, to be a universal popular favorite,² — is very nearly such English as was written in the fourteenth century. This interesting fragment properly falls to be given as the first of our specimens: —

Merie sungen the muneches binnen Ely
 Tha Cnut Ching rew there by:
 Roweth, enihtes, noer the lant,
 And here we thes muneches saeng.

That is, literally, —

Merry (sweetly) sung the monks within Ely
 That (when) Cnute King rowed thereby:
 Row, knights, near the land,
 And hear we these monks' song.

Being in verse and in rhyme, it is probable that the words are reported in their original form; they cannot, at any rate, be much altered.

The not very clerical address of Archbishop Aldred to Ursus, Earl of Worcester, who refused to take down one of his castles the ditch of which eneroached upon a monastic churchyard, consists, as reported by William of Malmesbury (who by-the-by praises its elegance) of only two short lines: —

Hatest thou³ Urse?
 Have thou God's curse.

¹ The Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane; Introduction, p. xlix. We have transferred the references, enclosed in brackets, from the bottom of the page to the text.

² Quæ usque hodie in choris publice cantantur, et in proverbii memorantur.

³ That is, Hightest thou (art thou called)? Malmesbury's Latin translation is,

The hymn of St. Godric has more of an antique character. It is thus given by Ritson, who professes to have collated the Royal MS. 5 F. vii., and the Harleian MS. 322, and refers also to Matt. Parisiensis Historia, pp. 119, 120, edit. 1640, and to (MS. Cott.) Nero D. v. :—

Sainte Marie [clane] virgine,
 Moder Jhesu Cristes Nazarene,
 On fo [or fong], schild, help thin Godric,
 On fang bring hegilich with the in Godes riche.
 Sainte Marie, Christe's bur,
 Maidens clenhad, moderes flur,
 Dilie min sinne [or sennen], rix in min mod,
 Bring me to winne with the selfd God.

“By the assistance of the Latin versions,” adds Ritson, “one is enabled to give it literally in English, as follows:—Saint Mary [chaste] virgin; mother of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, take, shield, help thy Godric; take, bring him quickly with thee into God's kingdom. Saint Mary, Christ's chamber, purity of a maiden, flower of a mother, destroy my sin, reign in my mind, bring me to dwell with the only God.”

Two other short compositions of the same poetical eremite are much in the same style. One is a couplet said to have been sung to him by the spirit or ghost of his sister, who appeared to him after her death and thus assured him of her happiness:—

Crist and Sainte Marie swa on scamel me iledde
 That ic on this erde ne silde with mine bare fote itredde.

Which Ritson translates:—“Christ and Mary, thus supported, have me brought, that I on earth should not with my bare foot tread.”

The other is a hymn to St. Nicholas:—

Sainte Nicholaes, Godes druth,
 Tymbre us faire scone hus.
 At thi burth, at thi bare,
 Sainte Nicholaes, bring us wel there.

“That is,” says Ritson, “Saint Nicholas, God's lover, build us a

“Vocaris Ursus: habes Dei maledictionem.” But the first line seems to be interrogative.

fair beautiful house. At thy birth, at thy bier, Saint Nicholas,
bring us safely thither."

As for the rhymes given by Lambarde and Camden as of the twelfth century, they can hardly in the shape in which we have them be of anything like that antiquity: they are, in fact, in the common English of the sixteenth century. Lambarde (in his *Dictionary of England*, p. 36) tells us that a rabble of Flemings and Normans brought over in 1173 by Robert, Earl of Leicester, when they were assembled on a heath near St. Edmond's Bury, "fell to dance and sing,

Hoppe Wylikin, hoppe Wylykin,
Inglan is thyne and myne, &c."

Camden's story is that Hugh Bigott, Earl of Norfolk, in the reign of Stephen, used to boast of the impregnable strength of his castle of Bungey after this fashion:—

"Were I in my castle of Bungey,
Upon the river of Waveney,
I would ne care for the king of Cockeney."

THE HERE PROPHECY.

WHAT Sir Frederick Madden describes as "the prophecy said to have been set up at Here in the year 1189" is given by Ritson as follows:—

Whan thu sees in Here hert yreret,
Than sulen Engles in three be ydelet:
That an into Yrland al to late waie,
That other into Puille mid prude bileve,
The thridde into Airhahen herd all wreken drechegen.

These lines, which he calls a "specimen of English poetry, apparently of the same age" (the latter part of the 12th century), Ritson says are preserved by Benedictus Abbas, by Hoveden, and by the *Chronicle of Lanercost*; and he professes to give them, and the account by which they are introduced, from "the former," by which he means the first of the three. But in truth the verses do

not occur as he has printed them in any of the places to which he refers. Benedictus Abbas (p. 622) has two versions of them, the second of which he introduces by the word "rectius" (more correctly); there is a third in the printed Hoveden; what Ritson has mistaken for the Lanercost Chronicle is an imperfect manuscript of Hoveden (Cotton MS. Claud. D. vii. fol. 101), in which they occur very nearly as printed in his Hoveden by Savile, — the only difference of any importance being, that the MS. has in the fourth line "bi leue," whereas Savile (both in the London edition 1596, fol. 386 r^o, and in the Francfort edition 1601, p. 678) has "bi sene." Ritson's transcript is evidently taken either from the manuscript or the printed Hoveden: it is quite unlike either of the versions given by Benedictus. But it is a very inaccurate transcript: to pass over minor variations, all the four originals, for instance, have "sal" or "sale" before "into Yrland" in the third line; and the last line stands nowhere as Ritson has given it: — in the first copy of Benedictus it is, "The thirde in hayre haughen hert alle ydreghe;" in the second it is, "The thride in hire athen hert alle wreke y-dreghe;" in the MS. Hoveden it is, "The thridde into airhahen herd alle Wrek y drehegen" (or perhaps "drehegea"); in the printed Hoveden it is, "The thridde into Airhahen herd all wreke y drehegen." The line in any of the four forms in which we have it, appears to be entirely unintelligible; and indeed the verses are manifestly corrupt throughout, although a sort of sense may be made out of most of the others. "l'uille" is "Apulia"; and the "wreke" in the last line may have something to do with a law about *wrecks* which both Benedict and Hoveden immediately go on to state that Richard proclaimed at this time, A. D. 1190, after his successful military operations against King Tancred in Sicily and Calabria (or Apulia); but what is "Airhahen"? or where, can any one tell, is the town of "Here," of which Ritson and others who quote or refer to verses speak so familiarly? Over this name the second version in Benedict has the word "Host" printed, with a point of interrogation, as if intended for a gloss. But the most remarkable circumstance of all is, that there is no ground at all for supposing, as is done by Ritson and Sir Frederic Madden, that the verses were ever inscribed or set up upon any house at "Here" or elsewhere. What is said both by Benedict and Hoveden (who employ nearly the same words) is simply that the figure of a hart was set upon the pinna-

cle of the house, in order, as was believed, that the prophecy contained in the verses might be accomplished, — which prophecy, we are told immediately before, had been found engraven in ancient characters upon stone tables in the neighborhood of the place. It is clearly intended to be stated that the prophecy was much older than the building of the house, and the erection of the figure of a stag, in the year 1190. This is sufficiently conveyed in Ritson's own translation. What he means, therefore, by saying, "As the inscription was set up when the house was built, before the death of Henry the Second, in 1189," is not obvious. Benedict says that the house was built by Ranulfus, or Ralph (not "Randal," as Ritson translates it) Fitzstephen (Ranulfo, filio Stephani); Hoveden, by William; which latter Ritson, we do not know upon what authority, intimates is the correct name. Both chroniclers state that the place, which was a royal town (*villam regis Angliæ*), had been given to Fitzstephen by King Henry, that is, probably, Henry II., as Ritson assumes; but this, we repeat, determines nothing as to the age of the verses, which were, or were supposed to be, of much earlier date than either the erection of the house or the grant of the property.

THE BRUT OF LAYAMON.

LAYAMON, or, as he is also called, Laweman, — for the old character represented in this instance by our modern *y* is really only a guttural (and by no means either a *j* or a *z*, by which it is sometimes rendered), — tells us himself that he was a priest, and that he resided at Ernley, near Radstone, or Redstone, which appears to have been what is now called Arley Regis, or Lower Arley, on the western bank of the Severn, in Worcestershire. He seems to say that he was employed in the services of the church at that place: — "ther he bock radde" (there he book read). And the only additional information that he gives us respecting himself is, that his father's name was Leovenath (or Lenca, as it is given in the later of the two texts).

His Brut, or Chronicle of Britain (from the arrival of Brutus to the death of King Cadwalader in A. D. 689), is in the main, though

with many additions, a translation of the French Brut d'Angleterre of Wace, which is itself, as has been stated above, a translation, also with considerable additions from other sources, of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin *Historia Britonum*, which again professes, and probably with truth, to be translated from a Welsh or Breton original. So that the genealogy of the four versions or forms of the narrative is:—first, a Celtic original, believed to be now lost; secondly, the Latin of Geoffrey of Monmouth; thirdly, the French of Wace; fourthly, the English of Layamon. The Celtic or British version is of unknown date; the Latin is of the earlier, the French of the latter, half of the twelfth century; and that of Layamon would appear to have been completed in the first years of the thirteenth.* We shall encounter a second English translation from Wace's French before the middle of the fourteenth.

The existence of Layamon's Chronicle had long been known, but it had attracted very little attention till comparatively recent times. It is merely mentioned even by Warton and Tyrwhitt,—the latter only remarking (in his *Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer*), that, “though the greatest part of this work of Layamon resembles the old Saxon poetry, without rhyme or metre, yet he often intermixes a number of short verses of unequal lengths, but rhyming together pretty exactly, and in some places he has imitated not unsuccessfully the regular octosyllabic measure of his French original.” George Ellis, in his *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, originally published in 1790, was, we believe, the first to introduce Layamon to the general reader, by giving an extract of considerable length, with explanatory annotations, from what he described as his “very curious work,” which, he added, never had been, and probably never would be, printed. Subsequently another considerable specimen, in every way much more carefully and learnedly edited, and accompanied with a literal translation throughout into the modern idiom, was presented by Mr. Guest in his *History of English Rhythms*, 1838 ii. (113–123). But now the whole work has been edited by Sir Frederic Madden, for the Society of Antiquaries of London, in three volumes 8vo., 1847. This splendid publication, besides a Literal Translation, Notes, and a Grammatical Glossary, contains the Brut in two texts, separated from each other by an interval apparently of about half a century, and, whether regarded in reference to the philological, to say nothing of the historical, value and importance of Layamon's work, or to

the admirable and altogether satisfactory manner in which the old chronicle is exhibited and illustrated, may fairly be characterized as by far the most acceptable present that has been made to the students of early English literature in our day.

His editor conceives that we may safely assume Layamon's English to be that of North Worcestershire, the district in which he lived and wrote. But this western dialect, he contends, was also that of the southern part of the island, having in fact originated to the south of the Thames, whence, he says, it gradually extended itself "as far as the courses of the Severn, the Wye, the Tame, and the Avon, and more or less pervaded the counties of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire, and Oxfordshire," — besides prevailing "throughout the channel counties from east to west," — notwithstanding that several of the counties that have been named, and that of Worcester especially, had belonged especially to the non-Saxon kingdom of Mercia. "The language of Layamon," he further holds, "belongs to that transition period in which the groundwork of Anglo-Saxon phraseology and grammar still existed, although gradually yielding to the influence of the popular forms of speech. We find in it, as in the later portion of the Saxon Chronicle, marked indications of a tendency to adopt those terminations and sounds which characterize a language in a state of change, and which are apparent also in some other branches of the Teutonic tongue." As showing "the progress made in the course of two centuries in departing from the ancient and purer grammatical forms, as found in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts," he mentions "the use of *a* as an article; — the change of the Anglo-Saxon terminations *a* and *an* into *e* and *en*, as well as the disregard of inflexions and genders; — the masculine forms given to neuter nouns in the plural; — the neglect of the feminine terminations of adjectives and pronouns, and confusion between the definite and indefinite declensions; — the introduction of the preposition *to* before infinitives, and occasional use of weak preterites of verbs and participles instead of strong; — the constant occurrence of *en* for *on* in the plurals of verbs, and frequent elision of the final *e*; — together with the uncertainty in the rule for the government of prepositions." In the earlier text one of the most striking peculiarities is what has been termed the *nummation*, defined by Sir Frederic as "consisting of the addition of a final *n* to certain cases of nouns and adjectives, to some tenses of verbs, and to several

other parts of speech." The western dialect, of which both texts, and especially the earlier, exhibit strong marks, is further described as perceptible in the "termination of the present tense plural in *th*, and infinitives in *i*, *ie*, or *y*; the forms of the plural personal pronouns, *heo*, *heore*, *heom*; the frequent occurrence of the prefix *i* before past participles; the use of *v* for *f*; and prevalence of the vowel *u* for *i* or *y*, in such words as *dude*, *huddle*, *hulle*, *putte*, *hure*, &c." "But," it is added, "on comparing the two texts carefully together, some remarkable variations are apparent in the later, which seem to arise, not from its having been composed at a more recent period, but from the infusion of an Anglian or Northern element into the dialect." From these indications the learned editor is disposed to think that the later text "may have been composed or transcribed in one of the counties conterminous to the Anglian border," and he suggests that "perhaps we might fix on the eastern side of Leicestershire as the locality."

One thing in the English of Layamon that is eminently deserving of notice with reference to the history of the language is the very small amount of the French or Latin element that is found in it. "The fact itself," Sir F. Madden observes, "of a translation of Wace's poem by a priest of one of the midland counties is sufficient evidence how widely the knowledge of the writings of the *trouvères* was dispersed, and it would appear a natural consequence, that not only the outward form of the Anglo-Norman versification, but also that many of the terms used in the original would be borrowed. This, however, is but true in a very trifling degree, compared with the extent of the work; for, if we number the words derived from the French (even including some that may have come directly from the Latin), we do not find in the earlier text of Layamon's poem so many as fifty, several of which were in usage, as appears by the Saxon Chronicle, previous to the middle of the twelfth century. Of this number the later text retains about thirty, and adds to them rather more than forty which are not found in the earlier version; so that, if we reckon ninety words of French origin in both texts, containing together more than 56,800 lines, we shall be able to form a tolerably correct estimate how little the English language was really affected by foreign converse, even as late as the middle of the thirteenth century."¹

Layamon's poem extends to nearly 32,250 lines, or more than

¹ Preface, xxiii.

double the length of Wace's Brut. This may indicate the amount of the additions which the English Chronicler has made to his French original. That, however, is only one, though the chief, of several preceding works to which he professes himself to have been indebted. His own account is: —

He nom tha Englisca boc
 Tha makede Seint Beda;
 An other he nom on Latin,
 Tha makede Seinte Albin,
 And the feire Austin,
 The fulluht broute hider in.
 Boc he nom the thridde,
 Leide ther amidden,
 Tha makede a Frenchis clerc,
 Wace was ihoten,
 The wel conthe writen,
 And he hoe yef thare aethelen
 Aelienor, the wes Henries quene,
 Thes heyes kinges.
 Layamon leide theos boc,
 And tha leaf wende.
 He heom leoffliche bi-heold;
 Lithe him beo Drihten.
 Fetheren he nom mid fingren,
 And fiede on boc-felle,
 And tha sothe word
 Sette to-gathere,
 And tha thre boc
 Thrunde to ane.

That is, literally: —

He took the English book
 That Saint Bede made;
 Another he took in Latin,
 That Saint Albin made,
 And the fair Austin,
 That baptism brought hither **in**.
 The third book he took,
 [And] laid there in midst,
 That made a French clerk,
 Wace was [he] called,
 That well could write,

And he it gave to the noble
 Eleanor, that was Henry's queen,
 The high king's.
 Layamon laid [before him] these books,
 And the leaves turned.
 He them lovingly beheld ;
 Merciful to him be [the] Lord.
 Feather (pen) he took with fingers,
 And wrote on book-skin,
 And the true words
 Set together,
 And the three books
 Compressed into one.

His English book was no doubt the translation into the vernacular tongue, commonly attributed to King Alfred, of Bede's Ecclesiastical History, which Layamon does not seem to have known to have been originally written in Latin. What he says about his Latin book is unintelligible. St. Austin died in A. D. 604; and the only Albin of whom anything is known was Albin abbot of St. Austin's at Canterbury, who is mentioned by Bede as one of the persons to whom he was indebted for assistance in the compilation of his History; but he lived more than a century after St. Austin (or Augustine). Some Latin chronicle, however, Layamon evidently had; and his scholarship, therefore, extended to an acquaintance with two other tongues in addition to the now obsolete classic form of his own.

The principal, and indeed almost the only, passage in Layamon's poem from which any inference can be drawn as to the precise time when it was written, is one near the end (p. 31, 979-80) in which, speaking of the tax called Rome-feoh, Rome-scot, or Peter-pence, he seems to express a doubt whether it will much longer continue to be paid —

Drihte wat hu longe
 Theo lagen scullen ilaeste
 (The Lord knows how long
 The law shall last).

This his learned editor conceives to allude to a resistance which it appears was made to the collection of the tax by King John and the nobility in the year 1205; and that supposition, he further suggests, may be held to be fortified by the manner in which Queen

Eleanor, who had retired to Aquitaine on the accession of John, and died abroad at an advanced age in 1204, is spoken of in the passage quoted above from what we may call the Preface, written, no doubt, after the work was finished — “Aelienor, the *wes* Henries quene.”

“The structure of Layamon’s poem,” Sir Frederic observes, “consists partly of lines in which the alliterative system of the Anglo-Saxons is preserved, and partly of couplets of unequal length rhiming together. Many couplets, indeed, occur which have both of these forms, whilst others are often met with which possess neither. The latter, therefore, must have depended wholly on accentuation, or have been corrupted in transcription. The relative proportion of each of these forms is not to be ascertained without extreme difficulty, since the author uses them everywhere intermixed, and slides from alliteration to rhyme, or from rhyme to alliteration, in a manner perfectly arbitrary. The alliterative portion, however, predominates on the whole greatly over the lines rhiming together, even including the imperfect or assonant terminations, which are very frequent.” Mr. Guest, Sir Frederic notes, has shown by the specimen which he has given with the accents marked in his *English Rhythms* (ii. 114–124), “that the rhiming couplets of Layamon are founded on the models of accentuated Anglo-Saxon rhythms of four, five, six, or seven accents.”

Layamon’s poetical merit, and also his value as an original authority, are rated rather high by his editor. His additions to and amplifications of Wace, we are told, consist in the earlier part of the work “principally of the speeches placed in the mouths of different personages, which are often given with quite a dramatic effect.” “The text of Wace,” it is added, “is enlarged throughout, and in many passages to such an extent, particularly after the birth of Arthur, that one line is dilated into twenty; names of persons and localities are constantly supplied, and not unfrequently interpolations occur of entirely new matter, to the extent of more than an hundred lines. Layamon often embellishes and improves on his copy; and the meagre narrative of the French poet is heightened by graphic touches and details, which give him a just claim to be considered, not as a mere translator, but as an original writer.”

“It is a remarkable circumstance,” Sir Frederic afterwards remarks, “that we find preserved in many passages of Layamon’s

poem the spirit and style of the earlier Anglo-Saxon writers. No one can read his descriptions of battles and scenes of strife without being reminded of the Ode on Athelstan's victory at Brunanburh. The ancient mythological genders of the sun and moon are still unchanged; the memory of the *Witena-gemot* has not yet become extinct; and the neigh of the *haengest* still seems to resound in our ears. Very many phrases are purely Anglo-Saxon, and, with slight change, might have been used in Cædmon or Ælfric. A foreign scholar and poet, versed both in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian literature, has declared, that, tolerably well read as he is in the rhiming chronicles of his own country, and of others, he has found Layamon's beyond comparison the most lofty and animated in its style, at every moment reminding the reader of the splendid phraseology of Anglo-Saxon verse." This is the Rev. N. F. S. Grundtvig, of Copenhagen, in a prospectus which he put forth in 1830, containing proposals for publishing Layamon and other ancient English works.

We cannot do better than give as our specimen of Layamon's poetry King Arthur's account of his dream, to which both Sir Frederic Madden and Sharon Turner have called attention. "The dream of Arthur as related by himself to his companions in arms," Sir Frederic observes, "is the creation of a mind of a higher order than is apparent in the creeping rhimes of more recent chronicles." It runs thus:—

To niht a mine slepe,
 [To night in my sleep]
 Ther ich laei on bure,
 [Where I lay in bower (chamber)]
 Me imaette a sweuen;
 [I dreamt¹ a dream]
 Ther uore ich ful sari aem.
 [Therefore I full sorry am]
 Me imette that mon me hof
 [I dreamt² that men raised me]
 Uppen are halle.
 [Upon a hall]
 Tha halle ich gon bestriden,
 [The hall I gan bestride]
 Swule ich wolde riden
 [So as I would ride]

¹ Rather, There met me, there occurred to me ?

² It occurred to me ?

Alle tha lond tha ich ah
 [All the land that I owned]
 Alle ich ther ouer sah.
 [All I there over-saw]
 And Walwain sat biuoren me ;
 [And Walwain sat before me]
 Mi sweord he bar an honde
 [My sword he bare in hand].
 Tha com Moddred faren ther
 [Then came Modred to fare (go) there]
 Mid unimete uolke.
 [With unmeasured (unnumbered) folk]
 He bar an his honde
 [He bare in his hand]
 Ane wiax stronge.
 [An axe strong]
 He bigon to hewene
 [He began to hew]
 Hardliche swithe,
 [Hardly exceedingly]
 And tha postes for-heou alle
 [And the posts thoroughly-hewed all]
 Tha heolden up the halle.
 [That held up the hall]
 Ther ich isey Wenheuer eke,
 [There I saw Wenheuer (Guinever, the Queen) eke]
 Wimmonen leofuest me :
 [Of women loveliest to me]
 Al there muche halle rof
 [All the great (nickle) hall roof]
 Mid hire honden heo to-droh.
 [With her hands she drew (down)]
 Tha halle gon to haelden,
 [The hall gan to tumble]
 And ich haeld to grunden,
 [And I tumbled to ground]
 That mi riht aerm to-brac.
 [That my right arm broke]
 Tha seide Modred, Haue that !
 [Then said Modred, Have that]
 Adun ueol tha halle
 [Adown fell the hall]
 And Walwain gon to ualle,
 [And Walwain gan to fall]
 And feol a there eorthe ;
 [And fell on the earth]

His aermes brekeen beine.

[His arms brake both]

And ich igrap mi sweord leofe

[And I grasped my dear sword]

Mid mire leoft honde,

[With my left hand]

And smaet of Modred is haft,

[And smote off Modred his head]

That hit wond a thene ueld ;

[That it rolled (wended) on the field]

And tha quene ich al to-snathde,

[And the queen I all cut to pieces (snedded)]

Mid deore mine sweorde,

[With my dear sword]

And seodthen ich heo adun sette

[And then I her adown set]

In ane swarte putte.

[In a black pit]

And al mi uole riche

[And all my rich (great) people]

Sette to fleme,

[Set to flight]

That nuste ich under Criste

[That I wist not under Christ]

Whar heo bicomen weoren.

[Where they were become (gone)]

Buten mi seolf ich gond atstonder

[But myself I gan stand]

Uppen ane wolden

[Upon a wold (or weald)]

And ich ther wondrien agon

[And I there gan to wander]

Wide yeond than moren.

[Wide over the moors]

Ther ich isah gripes

[There I saw gripes (griffons)]

And grisliche fugheles.

[And grisly fowls (birds)]

Tha com an guldene leo

[Then came a golden lion]

Lithen ouer dune.

[To glide over *the* down]

Deoren swithe hende,

[A beast (deer) very handsome]

Tha ure Drihten make.

[That our Lord made]

Tha leo me orn foren to,
 [The lion ran forward to me]
 And iueng me bi than midle,
 [And took me by the middle]
 And forth hire gun yeongen
 [And forth herself gan move]
 And to there sae wende.
 [And to the sea went]
 And ich isaeh thae vthen
 [And I saw the waves]
 I there sae 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 sae comen,
 [When we in sea came]
 Tha vthen me hire binomen.
 [The waves *from* me her took]
 Com ther an fise lithe,
 [Came there a fish to glide]¹
 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 to awake]
 Swithe ich gon to quakien ;
 [Greatly I gan to quake]
 Tha gon ich to binien
 [Then gan I to tremble]
 Swule ich al fur burne.
 [As *if* I all *with* fire burned]
 And swa ich habbe al niht
 [And so I have all night]
 Of mine sweuene swithe ithoht ;
 [Of my dream much thought]
 For ich what to iwisse
 [For I wot to certainty]

¹ That is, A fish approached. Unless we should understand *lithe* to be an epithet of the fish. But the later text, "Com thar a fise swemme" is against that.

Agan is al mi blisse ;
 [Agone is all my bliss]
 For a to mine liue
 [For aye to (throughout) my life]
 Soryen ich mot driye.
 [Sorrow I must endure]
 Wale that ich nabbe here
 [Welaway (alas) that I have not here]
 Wenhauer mine quene !
 [Wenhaver, my queen].

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Here is evidently a considerable amount of true poetic life in the conception, and also, as far as the apparent rudeness of the language will admit, — if we ought not perhaps rather to say as far as the imperfect knowledge of its laws now attainable enables us to form a judgment, — considerable care and aptness of expression. The conclusion of the address, in particular, is worked up to no contemptible height of artistic elegance, as well as pathos. Let the strange antiquated spelling only be regulated according to the system with which we are all at present familiar, and, if we will accept such rhymes as *night* and *thought*, *here* and *queen*, — and also sometimes, perhaps, consent to be satisfied without rhyme at all in consideration of certain alliterative artifices, the beauty of which, it must be confessed, has now become of somewhat difficult appreciation, — we shall not find it deficient in harmony, any more than in a graceful and expressive simplicity of diction : —

And sway I hab all night
 Of min-e sweeven swythe ythought ;
 For I wot to ywiss
 Agone is all my bliss ;
 For aye to min-e liv-e
 Sorien I mote dri-e.
 Wail-e ! that I nab here
 Wenhavere min-e queen !

This will represent pretty nearly the manner in which the lines would probably be read by Layamon and his contemporaries.

The philological interest and importance of this work of Layamon's are greatly enhanced by the fortunate circumstance of its having come down to us in two texts, the one evidently somewhat

more recent than the other. Both have been most judiciously given by Sir Frederic Madden, — to whom, indeed, we may be said to be chiefly indebted for the preservation of the latter one, the manuscript containing which was so greatly injured by the deplorable fire that was allowed to seize upon the Cottonian Collection in the early part of last century as to be regarded as having been rendered almost entirely illegible and useless till he took the reparation of its fragments in hand, and had them bound and inlaid, after they had been collected and partially restored, about the year 1827, under the superintendence of the Rev. J. Forshall, his predecessor as keeper of the MSS. in the British Museum. Of about 27,000 lines of which this second edition, as it may be called, is calculated to have consisted (for it is slightly condensed from the first,) not quite 2400 are supposed to be wholly lost, and only about 1000 more are in a partially injured state. So that, of the 32,250 lines, of which the poem in its more extended form consists, we have still between 23,000 and 24,000 perfect in both editions, — an amount of material for comparison which leaves us hardly anything to regret in the loss of the 3000 or 4000 that have perished. Fortunately the earlier edition appears to be complete. It is contained in the Cott. MS. Caligula A. ix., the handwriting of which is of the early part of the thirteenth century; the other in the MS. Otho C. xiii., the handwriting of which is supposed to be of the latter part of the same century. The first text may be regarded as giving us probably the west country English of about the year 1200, the second that of 1250.

The later text for the most part follows the earlier line for line, though with occasional omissions; the differences which it exhibits are confined to the substitution of more modern forms for such vocables, constructions, and modes of expression as had gone out of use or of fashion since the poem first appeared. Unfortunately the manuscript has suffered considerably in the part containing Arthur's dream; but many lines are still entire. The first six, for instance, stand thus:—

To niht in mine bedde
 Thar ich lay in boure,
 Me imette a swenen;
 Thar fore ich sori ham.
 Me mette that men me sette
 Vppen one halle.

And here are the concluding six lines : —

For ich wot al mid iwisse
 Agon his al min blisse ;
 For auere to mine lifue
 Sorewe ich mot drihe.
 Wele that ich nadde her
 Mine cweane Gwenayfer !

It ought to be observed that, although we have given throughout the *u* and *v* exactly as they stand in the printed edition, these are really only two ways of writing what was regarded as the same letter, and that in both texts sometimes the *u* is to be sounded like our modern *v*, sometimes the *v* like our modern *u*. Thus, *sweuten* was pronounced *sweven*, *uore vore*, *uppen uppen*, *auere auere*, &c.



THE ORMULUM.

ANOTHER metrical work of considerable extent, that known as the Ormulum, from Orm, or Ormin, which appears to have been the name of the writer, has been usually assigned to the same, or nearly the same, age with the Brut of Layamon. It exists only in a single manuscript, which there is some reason for believing to be the author's autograph, now preserved in the Bodleian Library among the books bequeathed by the great scholar Francis Junius, who appears to have purchased it at the Hague in 1659 at the sale of the books of his deceased friend Janus Ulitius, or Vlitius (van Vliet), also an eminent philologist and book-collector. It is a folio volume, consisting of ninety parchment leaves, besides twenty-nine others inserted, upon which the poetry is written in double columns, in a stiff but distinct hand, and without division into verses, so that the work had always been assumed to be in prose till its metrical character was pointed out by Tyrwhitt in his edition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, 1775. Accordingly no mention is made of it by Warton, the first volume of whose History was published in 1774. But it had previously been referred to by Hickes and others ; and it has attracted a large share of the attention of all recent investigators of the history of the language.

It has now been printed in full, under the title of *The Ormulun*; Now first edited from the Original Manuscript in the Bodleian, with Notes and a Glossary, by Robert Meadows White, D. D., late Fellow of St. Mary Magdalene College, and formerly Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Oxford; 2 vols. 8vo. Oxford, at the University Press, 1852.

The Ormulun is described by Dr. White as being "a series of Homilies, in an imperfect state, composed in metre without alliteration, and, except in very few cases, also without rhyme; the subject of the Homilies being supplied by those portions of the New Testament which were read in the daily service of the Church." The plan of the writer is, we are further told, "first to give a paraphrastic version of the Gospel of the day, adapting the matter to the rules of his verse, with such verbal additions as were required for that purpose. He then adds an exposition of the subject in its doctrinal and practical bearings, in the treatment of which he borrows copiously from the writings of St. Augustine and Ælfric, and occasionally from those of Beda." "Some idea," it is added, "may be formed of the extent of Ormin's labors when we consider that, out of the entire series of Homilies, provided for nearly the whole of the yearly service, nothing is left beyond the text of the thirty-second." We have still nearly ten thousand long lines of the work, or nearly twenty thousand as Dr. White prints them, with the fifteen syllables divided into two sections, the one of eight, the other of seven syllables, — the latter, which terminates in an unaccented syllable, being prosodically equivalent to one of six, so that the whole is simply our still common alternation of the eight-syllabled and the six-syllabled line, only without either rhyme or even alliteration, which makes it as pure a species of blank verse, though a different species, as that which is now in use.

The list of the texts, or subjects of the Homilies, as preserved in the manuscript, extends to 242, and it appears to be imperfect. Ormin plainly claims to have completed his long self-imposed task. Here is the beginning of the Dedication to his brother Walter, which stands at the head of the work: —

Nu, brotherr Wallterr, brotherr min
 [Now, brother Walter, brother mine]
 Afterr the flaeshes kinde;
 [After the flesh's kind (or nature)]

Annd brotherr min i Crisstenndom
 [And brother mine in Christendom (or Christ's kingdom)]
 Thurrh fulluhht and thurrh trowwthe ;
 [Through baptism and through truth]
 Annd brotherr min i Godess hus,
 [And brother mine in God's house]
 Yet o the thride wise,
 [Yet on (in) the third wise]
 Thurrh thatt witt hafenn takenn ba
 [Though that we two have taken both]
 An reghellboe to folghenn,
 [One rule-book to follow]
 Unnderr kanunnkess had and lif,
 [Under canonic's (canon's) rank and life]
 Swa summ Sannt Awwstin sette ;
 [So as St. Austin set (or ruled)]
 Icc hafe don swa summ thu badd
 [I have done so as thou bade]
 Annd forthedd te thin wille ;
 [And performed thee thine will (wish)]
 Icc hafe wennd inntill Ennglissh
 [I have wended (turned) into English]
 Goddspelless hallghe lare,
 [Gospel's holy lore]
 Affterr thatt little witt tatt me
 [After that little wit that me]
 Min Drihhtin hafethth lenedd.
 [My Lord hath lent]
 Thu thohhtesst tatt itt mihhte well
 [Thou thoughtest that it might well]
 Till mickell frame turnenn
 [To mickle (much) profit turn]
 Yiff Ennglissh folk, forr lufe off Crist,
 [If English folk for love of Christ]
 Itt wolde yerne lernenn,
 [It would earnestly learn]
 Annd follghenn itt, and fillenn itt
 [And follow it, and fulfil it]
 Withth thohht, withth word, withth dede.
 [With thought, with word, with deed]
 Annd forrthi gerrndesst tu thatt ice
 [And because thou desiredst that I]
 Thiss werre the sholde wirrkenn ;
 [This work thee should work]
 Annd ice itt hafe forthedd te,
 [And I it have performed thee]

Acc all thurrh Cristess hellpe ;
 [But all through Christ's help]
 Annd unne birrth bathe thannkenn Crist
 [And us two it becomes both (to) thank Christ,
 Thatt itt iss brohht till ende.
 [That it is brought to end]
 Ice hafe sammmed o thiss boc
 [I have collected on (or in) this book]
 Tha Goddspelless neh alle
 [The Gospels nigh all]
 Thatt sinndenn o the messeboe
 [That are on (or in) the mass-book]
 Inn all the yer att messe.
 [In all the year at mass]
 Annd ayy affterr the Goddspell staunt
 [And aye after the Gospel stands]
 Thatt tatt the Goddspell menethth
 [That that the Gospel meaneth]
 Thatt mann birrth spellenn to the folle
 [That one ought (to) declare to the folk]
 Off theyyre sawle nede ;
 [Of (or for) their soul (or soul's) need]
 Annd yet taer tekenn mare inoh
 [And yet there in addition more enough]
 Thu shallt taeronne findenn
 [Thou shalt thereon (or therein) find]
 Off thatt tatt Cristess hallghe thed
 [Of that that Christ's holy people]
 Birrth trowwenn wel and folghenn.
 [Behove (to) believe well and follow]
 Ice hafe sett her o thiss boc
 [I have set here on (or in) this book]
 Amang Goddspelless wordess,
 [Among (the) Gospel's words]
 All thurrh me sellfenn, manig word
 [All through myself many (a) word]
 The rime swa to fillen ;
 [The rhyme so to fill]
 Ace thu shallt findenn thatt min word
 [But thou shalt find that my word]
 Eyywhaer thaer itt iss ekedd
 [Everywhere there (or where) it is eked (or added)]
 Mayy hellpenn tha thatt redenn itt
 [May help them that read it]
 To sen and tunnderrstandenn
 [To see and to understand]

All thess te bettre hu theyym birrth
 [All this the better how them it behoveth]
 The Goddspel unnderrstannenn.
 [The Gospel (to) understand]

One remarkable feature in this English is evidently something very peculiar in the spelling. And the same system is observed throughout the work. It is found on a slight examination to consist in the duplication of the consonant whenever it follows a vowel having any other than the sound which is now for the most part indicated by the annexation of a silent *e* to the single consonant, or what may be called the *name* sound, being that by which the vowel is commonly named or spoken of in our modern English. Thus *pane* would by Ormin be written *pan*, but *pan pann*; *mean men*, but *men menn*; *pine pin*, but *pin pinn*; *own on*, but *on onn*; *tune tun*, but *tun tunn*. This, as Mr. Guest has pointed out, is, after all, only a rigorous carrying out of a principle which has always been applied to a certain extent in English orthography, — as in *tally*, or *tall*, *berry*, *witty*, *folly*, *dull*, as compared with *tale*, *beer*, *white*, *lone*, *mule*. The effect, however, in Ormin's work is on a hasty inspection to make his English seem much more rude and antique than it really is. The entry of the MS. in the catalogue of Vliet's library, as quoted by Dr. White, describes it as an old Swedish or Gothic book. Other early notices speak of it as semi-Saxon, or half Danish, or possibly old Scottish. Even Hickes appears to have regarded it as belonging to the first age after the Conquest.

Ormin attaches the highest importance to his peculiar system of orthography. Nevertheless, in quoting what he says upon the subject in the subsequent passage of his Dedication we will take the liberty, for the sake of giving a clear and just idea of his language to a reader of the present day, to strip it of a disguise which so greatly exaggerates its apparent antiquity: —

And whase willen shall this book
 [And whoso shall wish this book]
 Eft other sithe writen,
 [After (wards) (an) other time (to) write]
 Him bidde icc that he't write right,
 [Him bid I that he it write right]
 Swa sum this book him teacheth,
 [So as this book him teacheth]

All thwert out after that it is
 [All athwart (or through) out after that (or what) it is]
 Upo this firste bisne.
 [Upon this first example]
 With all suilk rime als here is set
 [With all such rhyme as here is set]
 With all se fele wordes
 [With all so many words]
 And tat he looke well that he
 [And that he look well that he]
 An bookstaff write twies
 [A letter write twice]
 Eywhere there it upo this book
 [Wherever there (or where) it upon this book]
 Is written o that wise.
 [Is written on (or in) that wise]
 Looke he well that he't write sway
 [Look he well that he it write so]
 For he ne may nought elles
 [For he may not else]
 On English writen right te word,
 [On (or in) English write right the word]
 That wite he well to soothe.
 [That wot (or know) he well to (or for) sooth (or truth)]

Thus presented, Ormin's English certainly seems to differ much less from that of the present day than Layamon's. His vocabulary may have as little in it of any foreign admixture; but it appears to contain many fewer words that have now become obsolete; and both his grammar and his construction have much more of a modern character and air. Dr. White has not thought it necessary to subjoin any such translation to his author as Sir Frederic Madden rightly judged was indispensable in the case of Layamon. He confesses, also, that, while the handwriting, the ink, and the material of the manuscript would seem to assign it to the earlier part of the thirteenth century, "the grammatical forms and structure of the language rather indicate a later period." "We meet," he says, "with neglect of gender and number, a frequent use of prepositions substituted for the casual endings of nouns, and the rejection of the prefix *ge* in all those parts of speech which receive it in pure Anglo-Saxon. . . . There is also for the most part a simplicity in grammatical forms and in the construction of sentences." Of the amount of any French or

Latin element that there may be in the vocabulary we do not find that he says anything. But it is evidently very small, probably not greater than we have found it to be in Layamon's work.

The Brut of Layamon was undoubtedly written in the southwest of England; the dialect of the Ormulum is thought to betray a Scandinavian character, and to point to a northeastern, or at least an eastern, county as the part of the kingdom in which and for which it was written. Dr. Latham assigns it to Northumbria. Mr. Guest is "inclined to fix on some county north of Thames, and south of Lincoln." And the late Mr. Garnett, Dr. White tells us, expressed his opinion in a letter to him that "the Ormulum was written a hundred miles or upwards to the south of Durham, and considered Peterborough not an unlikely locality."

On the whole, it may be assumed that, while we have a dialect founded on that of the Saxons specially so called in Layamon, we have a specially Anglian form of the national language in the Ormulum; and perhaps that distinction will be enough, without supposing any considerable difference of date, to explain the linguistic differences between the two. There is good reason for believing that the Anglian part of the country shook off the shackles of the old inflectional system sooner than the Saxon, and that our modern comparatively uninflected and analytic English was at least in its earliest stage more the product of Anglian than of purely Saxon influences, and is to be held as having grown up rather in the northern and northeastern parts of the country than in the southern or southwestern.¹

¹ Ormin's orthography, if minutely examined, might probably be made to throw considerable light upon the pronunciation of our ancestors. From the short extract given above, for example, the following inferences, among others, might be deduced:—The name *Christ* and the commencing syllable of *Christendom* would appear to have been when the Ormulum was composed distinguished in pronunciation in the same manner as they still are, the former taking the long or name sound of the vowel, the latter the short or shut sound. The case is different, however, so far as the evidence of this passage goes, with the name *God* and the commencing syllable of the word *Gospel*, which also then took a *d*; while the *o* of *Gospel* (or *Godspel*) was undoubtedly pronounced, as it still is, with the short sound, the *o* of *God* would appear, at least according to one mode of speaking, to have taken the name sound, so that the word would be pronounced exactly as we now pronounce the word *god*. So in the present day many people distinguish the proper name *Job* by giving the *o* the name sound as in *robe*. This pronunciation is the more deserving of notice, as being in accordance with other evidence opposed to the common notion of there being any connection between *God* and the adjective *good* (which is the *God* of *Gospel*, or *Godspel*, = the good tidings, or *εὐαγγέλιον*). In the English of the period before

THE ANCREN RIWLE.

THERE is also to be mentioned, along with the Brut of Layamon and the Ormulum, a work of considerable extent in prose which has been assigned to the same interesting period in the history of the language, the Ancren Riwle, that is, the Anchorites', or rather Anchoresses' Rule, being a treatise on the duties of the monastic life, written evidently by an ecclesiastic, and probably one in a

the Conquest the two words were always distinguished by the adjective being written with an accent, *gód*; but, the vowel being the same in both, this can hardly be taken to indicate the same distinction which we now make between *God* and *god*. In other passages of the Ormulum, however, we have the sacred name also written with the double *d*, which would seem to show that the present pronunciation was already beginning to drive out the other older one. But this instance must be held to make it somewhat questionable whether, in what is called the Anglo-Saxon form of the language, the accent, at least universally, is to be taken to indicate that the vowel over which it is placed had the name sound. The testimony of the Ormulum, at any rate, is apparently decisive to the fact that, of the two words at present under consideration, the one which used to be written without the accent was pronounced with the name sound, and the other, formerly taking the accent, with the shut sound. *God* was sounded *goad*, and *gód* was sounded *god* or *godd*. This was undoubtedly the case, if Ormin's distinctive spelling here indicates the same thing that it usually does.

Again, *year* and *here* and *read* appear, from the manner in which Ormin writes them, to have all been pronounced in his day as they are at present; and so, no doubt, they then said to *seen* (with the old termination of the infinitive) for our to *see*, not to *sen* (which Ormin would have given as *sen*). But, on the other hand, *yet* and *well* were apparently then pronounced *yæt* and *wæel*, and *have* with the long *a* as in *cave* (the following consonant, besides, being an *f* instead of a *v*). There may be some doubt, perhaps, in regard to the *o* in *brother* and *word* and *book* and *love*, and the *dom* of *Christendom*. All we can say is, that it seems not to have been the ordinary shut sound; it might be going too far to assume that people formerly said *broather* and *woard* and *Christendoam* and *boak* and *loof* (or *leuf*). Probably both the *w* and the *k* were recognized as having a softening effect upon the vowel, so that they might pronounce it rather as we still do in *Worcester* and *Wolverhampton* and *Wolsey* and *worsted* and *wolf* and *woman* and *Bolingbroke* and *Pembroke* and other similar words (some of which have exchanged the *oke* for *ook* in our modern spelling.)

Ormin has evidently taken the greatest pains with his orthography, and it is for the most part very uniform. It may be doubted if any other language possesses a record of its ancient pronunciation at all approaching in distinctness and completeness to what we thus have for the English in the single manuscript in which his work has been preserved, thanks to his singular scrupulosity in this particular. It is probably a unique instance of any considerable knowledge having been transmitted upon positive evidence of a part of human speech which has usually for the greater part perished with those upon whose lips it once lived, and is only at best to be imperfectly recovered, after some generations have passed away, by conjectural speculation, mostly of a very dubious and unsatisfactory character.

position of eminence and authority, for the direction of three ladies to whom it is addressed, and who, with their domestic servants or lay sisters, appear to have formed the entire community of a religious house situated at Tarente (otherwise called Tarrant-Kaines, Kaineston, or Kingston) in Dorsetshire. This work too has now been printed, having been edited for the Camden Society in 1853 by the Rev. James Morton, B.D. It is preserved in four manuscripts, three of them in the Cottonian Collection, the other belonging to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; and there is also in the Library of Magdalen College, Oxford, a Latin text of the greater part of it. The entire work extends to eight Parts, or Books, which in the printed edition cover 215 quarto pages. Mr. Morton, who has appended to an apparently careful representation of the ancient text both a glossary and a version in the language of the present day, has clearly shown, in opposition to the commonly received opinion, that the work was originally written in English, and that the Latin in so far as it goes is only a translation. This, indeed, might have been inferred as most probable in such a case, on the mere ground that we have here a clergyman, however learned, drawing up a manual of practical religious instruction for readers of the other sex, even without the special proofs which Mr. Morton has brought forward. The conclusion to which he states himself to have come, after carefully examining and comparing the text which he prints with the Oxford MS., is, that the Latin is "a translation, in many parts abridged and in some enlarged, made at a comparatively recent period, when the language in which the whole had been originally written was becoming obsolete." In many instances, in fact, the Latin translator has misunderstood his original. Mr. Morton has also thrown great doubts upon the common belief that the authorship of the work is to be ascribed to a certain Simon de Gandavo, or Simon de Ghent, who died bishop of Salisbury in 1315. This belief rests solely on the authority of an anonymous note prefixed to the Latin version of the work preserved in Magdalen College, Oxford; and Mr. Morton conceives that Simon is of much too late a date. It might have been thought that the fact of the work having been written in English would of itself be conclusive against his claim; but the bishop of Salisbury, it seems, was born in London or Westminster; it was only his father who was a native of Flanders. On the whole, Mr. Morton is inclined to substitute in place of Bishop Simon a Richard Poor,

who was successively bishop of Chichester, of Salisbury, and of Durham, and who was a native of Tarente, where also, it seems, he died in 1237. Of this prelate Matthew Paris speaks in very high terms of commendation.

Two other mistakes in the old accounts are also disposed of:— that the three recluses to whom the work is addressed belonged to the monastic order of St. James, and that they were the sisters of the writer. He merely directs them, if any ignorant person should ask them of what order they were, to say that they were of the order of St. James, who in his canonical epistle has declared that pure religion consists in visiting and relieving the widow and the orphan, and in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world; and in addressing them as his dear sisters, “he only,” as Mr. Morton explains, “uses the form of speech commonly adopted in convents, where nuns are usually spoken of as sisters or mothers, and monks as brothers or fathers.”

Upon what is the most important question relating to the work, regarded as a documentary monument belonging to the history of the language, the learned editor has scarcely succeeded in throwing so much light. Of the age of the manuscripts, or the character of the handwriting, not a word is said. It does not even appear whether any one of the copies can be supposed to be of the antiquity assumed for the work upon either the new or the old theory of its authorship. The question is left to rest entirely upon the language, which, it is remarked, is evidently that of the first quarter of the thirteenth century, not greatly differing from that of Layamon, which has been clearly shown by Sir F. Madden to have been written not later than 1205.

The English of the *Ancren Rule* is, indeed, rude enough for the highest antiquity that can be demanded for it. “The spelling,” Mr. Morton observes, “whether from carelessness or want of system, is of an uncommon and unsettled character, and may be pronounced barbarous and uncouth.” The language he considers to be what is commonly called Semi-Saxon, or “Anglo-Saxon somewhat changed; and in the first of the various stages through which it had to pass before it arrived at the copiousness and elegance of the present English.” This statement is perhaps not quite consistent with the doctrine which afterwards seems to be laid down, that no particular effect was produced upon the language of England by the Norman Conquest, that it only after that revolution continued

to go on in the same course of gradual disintegration, or simplification, which it had been running for some centuries, suffering nothing more of change than it would have done if the Normans had never invaded the country. If that were so, how can the stage in which it is supposed to have been found some short time after the Conquest be with propriety spoken of as the *first* of a series? But is it possible to believe that so complete a social revolution as the Conquest, affecting everything else in the country, should have left the language, which is always to so great an extent the expression or reflection of everything else, untouched? The gradual change that may have been proceeding for some time before is not inconsistent with or any disproof of the more sudden and violent change which may have taken place at this crisis, precipitating the ruin of the already decaying original system of the language, just as the shaking of a tree, by a blast of wind or in any other way, would bring down at once a shower of leaves or blossoms, which, although beginning to wither or lose their hold, might still have hung on for a considerable time longer, if the tree had not been thus rudely assailed.

In this work, according to Mr. Morton, the inflections which originally marked the oblique cases of substantive nouns, and also the distinctions of gender, are for the most part discarded. "Yet," he adds, "as these changes are partial and incomplete, enough of the more ancient characteristics of the language is left to justify the inference that the innovations are recent. Not only is *es* of the genitive case retained, but we very often meet with the dative and the accusative in *e* and the accusative in *en*, as *then*, *the*. We also meet occasionally with the genitive plural in *re*, from the Saxon *ra*, and *ne* and *ene*, from *ena*.¹ . . . The cases and genders of adjectives are generally disused, but not always. . . . The moods and tenses of verbs are little altered from the older forms, and in many words they are not changed at all. The infinitive, which in pure Saxon ends invariably in *an*, is changed into *en*." In only three infinitives, *warnie* (to warn), *i-wurthe* (to be), and *windwe* (to winnow), has the final *n* dropped off; nor does the language exhibit any of the other Scandinavian peculiarities which mark what Hickeys calls the Dano-Saxon, or what is known to modern philology as the Anglian dialect. From this, and from its general resemblance

¹ Does not the very title of the book afford us also an instance of a genitive plural in *en*; *ancren* = of anchoresses? This, however, appears to be rare.

to the older text of Layamon, which appears to have been produced on the banks of the Severn, Mr. Morton thinks it most probable that the English we have in the Rule is that of the West of England in the thirteenth century.

In one particular, however, it differs remarkably from Layamon's English. In that, as we have seen, Sir F. Madden found in above 32,000 verses of the older text only about 50 words of French derivation, and only about 90 in all in the 57,000 of both texts; whereas in the present work the infusion of Norman words is described as large. But this, as Mr. Morton suggests, is "owing probably to the peculiar subjects treated of in it, which are theological and moral, in speaking of which terms derived from the Latin would readily occur to the mind of a learned ecclesiastic much conversant with that language, and with the works on similar subjects written in it."

A few sentences from the Eighth or last Part, which treats of domestic matters, will afford a sufficient specimen of this curious work:—

Ye ne schulen eten vleschs ne seim buten ine muchele secnesse; other hwoso is euer feble eteth potage blitheliche; and wunieth ou to lutel drunch. Notheleas, leoue sustren, ower mete and ower drunch haueth ithuht me lesse then ich wolde. Ne ueste ye nenne dei to bread and to watere, bute ye habben leaue. Sum ancre maketh hire bord mid hire gistes withuten. Thet is to muche ureondschipe, uor, of alle ordres theonne is hit unkuindelukest and mest ayeane ancre ordre, thet is al dead to the worlde. Me haueth i-herd ofte siggen thet deade men speken mid ewike men; auh thet heo eten mid ewike men ne nond ich neuer yete. Ne makie ye none gistninges; ne ne tulle ye to the yete non unkuthe harloz; thauh ther nere non other vuel of [hit?] bute hore methlease muth, hit wolde other hwule letten heouendliche thoulites.

[That is, literally:—Ye not shall eat flesh nor lard but in much sickness; or whoso is ever feeble may eat potage blithely; and accustom yourselves to little drink. Nevertheless, dear sisters, your meat and your drink have seemed to me less than I would (have it). Fast ye not no day to bread and to water but ye have leave. Some anchoresses make their board (or meals) with their friends without. That is too much friendship, for, of all orders, then is it most unnatural and most against anchoress order, that is all dead to the world. One has heard oft say that dead men speak with quick (living) men; but that they eat with quick men not

found I never yet. Make not ye no banquetings, nor allure ye not to the gate no strange vagabonds; though there were not none other evil of it but their measureless mouth (or talk), it would (or might) other while (sometimes) hinder heavenly thoughts.]

And again: —

Ye, mine leoue sustren, ne schulen hebben no best, bute kat one. Anere thet haueth eihte thuncheth bet husewif, ase Marthe was, then ancre; ne none wise mei heo beon Marie, mid grithfulnessse of heorte. Vor theonne mot heo thenchen of the kues foddre, and of heorde-monne huire, oluhnen thene heiward, warien hwon me punt hire, and yelden, thauh, the hermes. Wat Crist, this is lodlich thing hwon me maketh in tune of ancre eihte. Thauh, yif eni mot nede hebben ku, loke thet heo none monne ne eilie ne ne hermie; ne thet hire thouht ne beo nout theron i-uestned. Ancre ne ouh nout to hebben no thing thet drawe utward hire heorte. None cheffare ne driue ye. Ancre thet is cheapild, heo cheapeth hire soule the chepmon of helle. Ne wite ye nout in oure huse of other monnes thinges, ne eihte, ne clothes; ne nout ne underuo ye the chirche uestimenz, ne thene caliz, bute yif strenethe hit makie, other muchel eie; vor of swuche witunge is i-kumen muchel vuel oftesithen. Withinnen ower woanes ne lete ye nenne mon slepen. Yif muchel neode mid alle maketh breken ower hus, the hwule thet it euer is i-broken, loke thet ye hebben therinne mid ou one wummon of clene liue deies and nihtes.

Uorthi thet no mon ne i-sihth ou, ne ye i-seoth nenne mon, wel mei dou of ower clothes, beon heo hwite, beon heo blake; but thet heo beon unorne and warme, and wel i-wrouhte, uelles wel i-tawed; and habbeth ase monie ase ou to-neodeth, to bedde and eke to rugge.

Nexst fleshe ne schal mon werien no linene cloth, bute yif hit beo of herde and of greate heorden. Stamin habbe hwose wule; and hwose wille mei beon buten. Ye schulen ligen in on heater, and i-gurd. Ne bere ye non iren, ne here, ne irspiles felles; ne ne beate on ther mide, ne mid schurige i-lethered ne i-leaded; ne mid holie ne mid breres ne ne biblodge hire sulf withuten schriftes leaue; ne ne nime, et enes, to veole disciplines. Ower schone beon greate and warme. Ine sumer ye habbeth leaue uorto gon and sitten baruot; and hosen withuten uaumpes; and ligge inne ham hwoso liketh. . . . Ring ne broche nabbe ye; ne gurdel i-membred, ne glouen, ne no swuch thing thet ou ne deiht forto hebben. . . .

Ye ne schulen senden lettres, ne underuon lettres, ne writen, buten leaue. Ye schulen beon i-dodded four sithen ithe yere, uorto lihten ower heued; and ase ofte i-leten blod; and oftere yif neod is; and hwoso mei beon ther withuten, ich hit mei wel i-tholien.

[Literally: — Ye, my dear sisters, shall not have no beast but (a) cat only. (An) anchoress that hath cattle seems (a) better

housewife, as Martha was, than anchoress, nor no wise may she be Mary with peacefulness of heart. For then must she think of the cow's fodder, and of the herdsman's hire, flatter the heyward (cattle-keeper), defend (herself) when they pound her (put her cattle in the pound), and pay, moreover, the harms (damages). Knoweth Christ, this is (an) ugly thing when they make moan (complaint) in town of anchoresses cattle. Though if any must needs have (a) cow, look that she no man not annoy nor not harm, nor that her thought not be not thereon fastened. (An) anchoress not ought not to have nothing that draweth outward her heart. No chaffering not drive ye (no buying and selling carry ye on). (An) anchoress that is a chafferer, she chaffereth her soul with the chapman of hell. Nor take ye not charge in your house of other men's things, nor cattle, nor clothes; nor not receive ye not (under your care) the church vestments, nor the chalice, but if (unless) strength it make (force compel it), or much fear; for of such charge-taking is come much evil oftentimes. Within your walls let ye not no man sleep. If much need (strong necessity), withal (however), make (cause) to use your house, the while that (so long as) it ever is used look that ye have therein with you a woman of clean life days and nights.

Because that no man neither seeth you, nor ye see no man, well may (ye) do of (with) your clothes, be they white, be they black; but (see) that they be plain and warm and well made, skins well tawed; and have as many as it needeth you, to bed and eke to back.

Next the flesh shall not one wear no linen cloth, but if it be of hards and of great (coarse) canvas. A stamin (shirt of woollen and linen) may have whoso will, and whoso will may be without. Ye shall lie in a garment, and girt. Nor bear (carry) ye not iron, nor hair (hairecloth), nor hedgehog skins; nor beat not yourselves therewith, nor with scourge leathered nor leaded; nor with holly nor with briars not blood not herself (yourselves) without shrift's (shrivers') leave; nor take not, at once, too many disciplines (flagellations). (Let) your shoes be large and warm. In summer ye have leave for to go and sit barefoot; and (to wear) hose without vamps; and whoso liketh may lie in them. . . . Ring nor brooch do not ye have, nor girdle ornamented, nor gloves, nor no such thing that it not behoveth you for to have. . . .

Ye shall not send letters, nor receive letters, nor write without

leave. Ye shall be cropped four times in the year, for to lighten your head; and as often let blood, and oftener if need is; and whoso may be there-without (may dispense with this) I it may well endure.]



METRICAL LEGENDS.—LAND OF COKAYNE.—GULDEVORD.—
WILLE GRIS.—EARLY ENGLISH SONGS.

WITH regard to the metrical Legends of Saints and other pieces, which have been assigned by Hickes and Warton to the twelfth century, it is in the highest degree probable, as already remarked, that none of them belong to an earlier period than the latter part of the thirteenth, and that some are not even of that antiquity. It is impossible, for instance, to believe that the celebrated satirical poem on the Land of Cokayne, which Warton holds to have been “evidently written soon after the Conquest, at least before the reign of Henry the Second,” can, in the form in which we have it, be older than the year 1300, if it be even quite so old.¹ Price has noted² that “a French fabliau bearing a near resemblance to this poem, and possibly the production upon which the English minstrel founded his song, has been published in the new edition of Barbazan’s *Fabliaux et Contes*, Paris 1808, vol. iv. p. 175;” and Sir Frederic Madden has no doubt that the French composition is the original.³ It is undoubtedly of the thirteenth century. The English poem, which he also assumes to be a translation, is given in full by Ellis (*Specimens of Early English Poets*, 4th edit., i. 83–95); and abundant samples of the other fugitive and anonymous poetry which has been attributed to the same age, but the alleged antiquity of which is in many cases equally disputable, may be found in Hickes and in Warton.

As we have had occasion to show that there is no authority in the Lanercost Chronicle for one specimen of early verse cited

¹ In a note to the 1840 edition of Warton’s *History*, i. 8, Mr. Wright says:—“The identical MS. from which Hickes transcribed this poem is in the Harleian Collection, No. 913. I have traced its history satisfactorily. It was written early in the fourteenth century, and this poem is a composition of at the most five or six years earlier.”

² Note on Warton (1824), i. 12.

³ *Ibid.* (1840), i. 8.

thence by Ritson, we may here insert a couplet therein given under the year 1244, which has generally escaped attention. A Norfolk peasant-boy, named William, had left his father's house and set out to seek his fortune, with no companion or other possession but a little pig (porcellus), whence the people used to call him *Willy Grice*;¹ but having in his wanderings in France met with a rich widow, whom he wooed and wed, he became in the end a great man in that country: still he piously remembered his early life of poverty and vagrancy, and among the other ornaments of one of the apartments of his fine house, to which he used to retire every day for an hour's meditation and self-communion, he had himself pictured, leading the pig as he used to do with a string, with this superscription in his native tongue:—

Wille Gris, Wille Gris!
Thinche twat thou was, and qwat thou es.

Some of our earliest songs that have been preserved undoubtedly belong to about the middle of the thirteenth century. The well-known lines beginning "Sumer is i-cumen in," first printed by Warton in the Additions to his History, from the Harleian MS. 978, being the oldest English song that has been found with the musical notes annexed, appear to be of this antiquity;² and so likewise may be some of the other pieces which Warton has quoted from another of the Harleian MSS. (2253). But the compositions of this kind of most certain date are some referring to the public events of the day, and evidently written at the time; such as the ballad about the battle of Lewes (fought in 1264), and others in Percy's Reliques, in Ritson's Ancient Songs, and in Mr. Wright's collection printed for the Camden Society, and entitled The Political Songs of England, from the Reign of John to that of Edward II., 4to. Lond. 1839.

¹ *Grice*, which is of frequent occurrence in Piers Plowman, and continued in use in England at least down to the middle of the sixteenth century is still the common word for a pig in Scotland.

² In a note to the 1840 edition of Warton, Sir F. Madden states that the Harleian MS. 978 is certainly of the middle of the thirteenth century.

EARLY ENGLISH METRICAL ROMANCES.

FROM the thirteenth century also we are probably to date the origin or earliest composition of English metrical romances; at least, none have descended to the present day which seem to have a claim to any higher antiquity. There is no absolutely conclusive evidence that all our old metrical romances are translations from the French; the French original cannot in every case be produced; but it is at least extremely doubtful if any such work was ever composed in English except upon the foundation of a similar French work. It is no objection that the subjects of most of these poems are not French or continental, but British, — that the stories of some of them are purely English or Saxon: this, as has been shown, was the case with the early northern French poetry generally, from whatever cause, whether simply in consequence of the connection of Normandy with this country from the time of the Conquest, or partly from the earlier intercourse of the Normans with their neighbors the people of Armorica, or Bretagne, whose legends and traditions, which were common to them with their kindred the Welsh, have unquestionably served as the fountain-head to the most copious of all the streams of romantic fiction. French seems to have been the only language of popular literature (apart from mere songs and ballads) in England for some ages after the Conquest; if even a native legend, therefore, was to be turned into a romance, it was in French that the poem would at that period be written. It is possible, indeed, that some legends might have escaped the French *trouvères*, to be discovered and taken up at a later date by the English minstrels; but this is not likely to have happened with any that were at all popular or generally known; and of this description, it is believed, are all those, without any exception, upon which our existing early English metrical romances are founded. The subjects of these compositions — Tristrem, King Horn, Havelok, &c. — could hardly have been missed by the French poets in the long period during which they had the whole field to themselves: we have the most conclusive evidence with regard to some of the legends in question that they were well known at an early date to the writers in that language; — the story of Havelok, for instance, is in Gaimar's Chronicle; — upon this general consideration alone, therefore, which is at least

not contradicted by either the internal or historical evidence in any particular case, it seems reasonable to infer that, where we have both an English and a French metrical romance upon the same subject, the French is the earlier of the two, and the original of the other. From this it is, in the circumstances, scarcely a step to the conclusion come to by Tyrwhitt, who has intimated his belief "that we have no English romance prior to the age of Chaucer which is not a translation or imitation of some earlier French romance."¹ Certainly, if this judgment has not been absolutely demonstrated, it has not been refuted, by the more extended investigation the question has since received.

PUBLICATIONS OF PERCY — WARTON — TYRWHITT — PINKERTON — HERBERT — RITSON — ELLIS — SCOTT — WEBER — UTTERTON — LAING — HARTSHORNE — THE ROXBURGHE CLUB — THE BANNATYNE — THE MAITLAND — THE ABBOTSFORD — THE CAMDEN SOCIETY.

THE first account, in any detail, of our early English metrical romances was given by Percy, in the third volume of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, first published in 1765. In this Essay, of twenty-four pages (extended to thirty-eight in the fourth edition of the work, 1794), he gave a list of thirty of these poems, to which, in subsequent editions, he added nine more. Then came the first volume of Warton's *History of English Poetry*, in 1774, with a much more discursive examination at least of parts of the subject, and ample specimens of several romances. Tyrwhitt's edition of the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer followed the next year, with many valuable notices on this as well as other matters belonging to our early literature in the interesting preliminary Essay on the Language and Versification of his author, which is in fact a history of the language down to the end of the fourteenth century. In 1792 Pinkerton inserted the Scotch metrical romance of Gawan and Galogras, from an Edinburgh edition of 1508, in his collection of *Scottish Poems*, reprinted from scarce editions, 3 vols. 8vo., Lond.; and he also gave in his last volume, as one of "three pieces before unpublished," that of Sir Gawan and Sir Galaron of Galloway; which was copied into Sibbald's *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry* (i. pp. xv. &c.), 4 vols. 8vo., Edinb. 1802. In 1798 ap-

¹ Essay on the Language of Chaucer, note 55.

peared *Roberte the Deuyll*, a metrical romance, from an ancient illuminated MS. (8vo., Lond.), printed for I. Herbert; whose name is also at the end of a short prefatory advertisement, in which it is stated that the MS. agreed, word for word, with a remaining fragment of an edition of the poem which appears to have been printed early in the sixteenth century by Wynken de Worde, or Pynson. The volume has a number of engravings, which are very curious, and seem to be fac-similes of the illuminations in the MS.¹ In 1802 Ritson published at London his 3 vols. 8vo. of *Ancient English Metrical Romances*, containing, besides his *Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy*, which fills 220 pages of the first volume, the romances, in their entire length, of *Ywayne and Gawin* (4032 lines); of *Launfal, or Launfal Miles*, a translation from the French of Marie by Thomas Chestre in the reign of Henry VI. (1044 lines); of *Lybeans Disconus*, that is, *Le Beau Desconnu, or The Fair Unknown*, sometimes called *Lybius Disconius* (2130 lines); of *The Geste of Kyng Horn* (1546 lines); of *The Kyng of Tars and the Soudan of Dammas* (1148 lines); of *Emare* (1035 lines); of *Sir Orpheo* (510 lines); of *The Chronicle of Engleland* (1036 lines); of *Le Bone Florence of Rome* (2189 lines); of *The Erle of Tolous* (1218 lines); of *The Squyr of Lowe Degre* (1132 lines); and of *The Knight of Curtesy and the Fair Lady of Fagnell* (500 lines): together with 133 pages of Notes, including the imperfect romance of *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild* (about 1150 lines) from the *Auchinleck MS.* in the *Advocates' Library* at Edinburgh: the whole being followed by a *Glossary*, filling about 80 pages; in commendation of which, however, very little can be said. With the exception of *The Squyr of Lowe Degre*, and *The Knight of Curtesy*, which are from rare black-letter copies of the sixteenth century, all the pieces in this collection of Ritson's are transcribed from manuscripts, most of them unique. A more successful attempt to diffuse a knowledge of this portion of our ancient poetical literature was made by Mr. George Ellis in his *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances*, 3 vols. 8vo., first published in 1805. Besides an *Historical Introduction on the Rise and Progress of Romantic Composition in France and England* — followed by an *Analysis* (by Mr. Douce) of the MS. work of Petrus Alphonsus entitled *De Clericali Disciplina*, and an account, amounting almost

¹ See a note on the legend of Robert the Devil, by Sir F. Madden, in the 1846 edition of Warton, i. 187, and another by Mr. R. Taylor, pp. 207, 208.

to a complete translation, of the twelve Lays of Marie of France — this work, of which a second edition appeared in 1811, contained extended analytical reviews of the romances of Merlin, Morte Arthur, Guy of Warwick, Sir Bevis of Hamptoun, Richard Cœur de Lion, Roland and Ferragus, Sir Otuel, Sir Ferumbras, The History of the Seven Wise Masters, Florence and Blancheflour, Robert of Cysille, Sir Isumbras, Sir Triamour, The Life of Ipomydon, Sir Eglamour of Artôis, Lai le Fraine, Sir Eger, Sir Grahame, and Sir Graysteel, Sir Degore, Roswal and Lillian, and Amys and Amylion. Most of these romances may be considered of later date than those published by Ritson: Mr. Ellis, indeed, on his title-page describes them as “chiefly written during the early part of the fourteenth century.” Meanwhile, in 1804, Walter Scott had published at Edinburgh, in royal 8vo., the romance of Tristrem, from the Auchinleck MS., describing it on his title-page as a work of the thirteenth century, written in Scotland, by Thomas of Ercildoune, popularly called The Rhymer, and maintaining that theory in an elaborate and ingenious Introduction and a large body of curious illustrative annotation. One of the Appendices to this volume, which has been several times reprinted, contained an account of the contents of the Auchinleck MS., consisting of forty-four pieces in all of ancient poetry, complete or imperfect. Scott, it may be remarked, here acknowledges that there can be little doubt of the volume, which consists of 334 leaves of parchment, the writing being in double columns, in a nearly uniform hand of the earlier part of the fourteenth century, having been compiled in England; and many circumstances, he says, lead him to conclude that the MS. has been written in an Anglo-Norman convent. In 1810, Scott’s friend, Mr. Henry Weber, brought out at Edinburgh, in 3 vols. 8vo., his collection entitled *Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries*, published from Ancient MSS.; with an Introduction, Notes, and a Glossary. This work contains the romances of King Alisaunder (8034 lines), Sir Cleges (540 lines), Lay le Freine (402 lines), Richard Coer de Lion (7136 lines), The Lyfe of Ipomydon (2346 lines), Amis and Amiloun (2495 lines), The Proces of the Seuyng Sages (4002 lines), Octouian Imperator (1962 lines), Sir Amadas (778 lines), and the Hunttyng of the Hare (270 lines). The next collection that appeared was that of Mr. Edward Vernon Utterson, entitled *Select Pieces of Early Popular Poetry*; republished principally

from early printed copies in the Black Letter ; 2 vols. 8vo., Lond 1817. It contained the metrical romances or tales of Syr Tryamour (1593 lines), Syr Isenbras (855 lines), Syr Degore (99½ lines), Syr Gowghter (685 lines) ; besides a number of other pieces (occupying the second volume) which cannot be included under that denomination. Next followed Mr. David Laing's three collections : — the first, entitled *Select Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland*, 4to., Edinb. 1822 ; containing twenty-five pieces in all, among which are *The Awntyrs of Arthure at the Terme Wathelyn*, being another copy, from a MS. of the fifteenth century in the library of Lincoln cathedral, of Pinkerton's *Sir Gawan* and *Sir Galaron of Galloway* ; and the tale of *Orfeo and Heurodis* (that is, *Orpheus and Eurydice*), from the *Auchinleck MS.*, being another and very different version of *Ritson's Sir Orpheo* : the second, entitled *Early Metrical Tales*, 8vo., Edinb. 1826 ; containing the *History of Sir Eger*, *Sir Grahame*, and *Sir Graysteel* (2860 lines), *The History of Roswall and Lillian*, which Mr. Laing had already printed separately in 1822 (876 lines), together with other poems and shorter pieces, all from earlier printed copies : the third, entitled *The Knightly Tale of Golagrus and Gawane*, and other *Ancient Poems*, black letter, 4to., 1837 ; being a reprint of a unique volume in the *Advocates' Library*, printed by *W. Chapman and A. Myllar*, in 1508, and containing eleven pieces in all, among which, besides *Golagrus and Gawane*, are *The Tale of Orpheus and Eurydice* (another version, attributed to *Robert Henryson*), and *Sir Eglamour of Artoys*, which is analyzed in *Ellis*. This last-mentioned volume is extremely scarce, only seventy-four copies, most of them more or less damaged, having been saved from a fire at the printer's. The unique volume of which it is a reprint, and which is in a very decayed state, was presented to the *Advocates' Library* by a medical gentleman of *Edinburgh*, about 1788, and is understood to have been picked up somewhere in *Ayrshire*. One of the pieces, *The Porteus of Noblenes*, the last in the collection, is in prose. Then came the *Rev. Charles Henry Hartshorne's Ancient Metrical Tales*, printed chiefly from *Original Sources*, 8vo., Lond. 1829, containing, besides several pieces in other kinds of poetry, *The Romance of King Athelstone*, *Florice and Blanchefour* (apparently from the *Auchinleck MS.*), and a portion of the alliterative romance of *Willyam and the Werwolf*. There have also been printed, by the *Roxburghe Club*, *Le*

Morte Arthure; the Adventures of Sir Launcelot du Lake, 4to., Lond. 1819, from the Harleian MS. 2252, being one of those analyzed by Ellis; Chevelere Assigne — that is, the Chevalier au Cygne, or Knight of the Swan — from the Cotton MS. Cal. A. 2, being a translation of a portion of a French romance, which is also preserved (with a short Introduction and Glossary by Mr. Utterson), 4to., Lond. 1820; The Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane, accompanied by the French text, with an Introduction, Notes, and a Glossary, by Frederic Madden, Esq. (now Sir F. Madden), 4to., Lond. 1828; and The Ancient English Romance of William and the Werwolf, edited, with an Introduction and Glossary, by Sir Frederic Madden, 4to., Lond. 1832: by the Bannatyne Club, The Buik of Alexander the Great, reprinted from the Metrical Romance printed at Edinburgh, by Arbuthnot, about the year 1580, 4to., Edinb. 1834; The Seven Sages, in Scotch metre, by John Rolland of Dalkeith, reprinted from the edition of 1578, 4to., Edinb. 1837; The Scottish Metrical Romance of Lancelot du Lak, from a MS. of the Fifteenth Century (edited by Joseph Stevenson, Esq.), 4to., Edinb. 1839; and Syr Gawayne, a Collection of Ancient Romance Poems, by Scottish and English Authors, relating to that celebrated Knight of the Round Table, with an Introduction, Notes, and a Glossary, by Sir Frederic Madden (including Syr Gawayn and the Grene Knyght, The Awntyrs of Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne, The Knightly Tale of Gologros and Gawane, and an Appendix of shorter pieces), 4to., Lond. 1839: by the Maitland Club, Sir Beves of Hamtoun, a Metrical Romance, now first edited from the Auchinleck MS. (by W. B. D. D. Turnbull, Esq.), 4to., Edinb. 1838: by the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs in conjunction, Clariodus, a Metrical Romance, from a MS. of the Sixteenth Century (edited by Edward Piper, Esq.), 4to., Edinb. 1830: by the Abbotsford Club, the Romances of Rowland and Vernagu, and Otuel, from the Auchinleck MS. (edited by A. Nicholson, Esq.), 4to., 1836; and Arthour and Merlin, a Metrical Romance, from the Auchinleck MS. (edited by Mr. Turnbull), 4to., 1838: and by the Camden Society, Three Early English Metrical Romances, with an Introduction and Glossary, edited by John Robson, Esq., 4to., Lond. 1842; the three Romances (which are edited from a MS. of the fifteenth century, called the Ireland MS. from its former possessor of that name) being The Anturs of Arther at the Tarnewathelan (other versions

of which, as already noticed, have been printed by Pinkerton, Laing, and Madden¹); Sir Amadace (a different version of which is in Weber's Collection); and The Avowynge of King Arther, Sir Gawan, Sir Kaye, and Sir Bawdewyn of Bretan, which is here printed for the first time.

HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH METRICAL ROMANCE.

ALTHOUGH, however, it thus appears that a very considerable body of our early romantic poetry has now been made generally accessible, it is to be observed that only a small proportion of what has been printed is derived from manuscripts of even so early a date as the fourteenth century, and that many of the volumes which have just been enumerated are merely reimpressions of

¹ Mr. Robson (who is rather sparing of distinct referenees) says (Introduction, p. xii.) that this romance was first printed by Pinkerton in his SCOTTISH BALLADS; remarking again (p. xvi.) that "Pinkerton published it as a Scottish ballad." The collection, in fact, in which Pinkerton published it, as mentioned above, was entitled Scottish Poems, 1792. The curious notice of this proceeding by Ritson, to which Mr. Robson refers, occurs in his Ancient English Metrical Romances, vol. iii. p. 230, in a note on Ywaine and Gawin, where he says, "Two other romances on the same subject, but in a dialect and metre peculiar to Scotland, are printed in Pinkerton's Scottish Poems; the one from an edition at Edinburgh in 1508, the other from a MS., the property of the present editor, which the said Pinkerton came by very dishonestly." It appears from a letter of Ritson's, dated December 26, 1792, published in the Gentleman's Magazine for January, 1793 (vol. xliii. p. 32), that he was then in possession of the MS., which had belonged to his friend Mr. Baynes, of Gray's Inn, and that his complaint against Pinkerton was, that the latter had printed the poem from a transcript made by a third party many years before, which transcript the gentleman who made it declared he had never considered fit for the press; assuring Ritson, moreover, on his refusal to allow a collation of the original, for which Pinkerton had applied, that the piece should not be printed by the latter at all. Pinkerton, in his Preface, or Preliminaries (vol. i. p. xxx.), merely says that the poem "was copied many years ago by a learned friend, from a MS. belonging to Mr. Baynes, of Gray's Inn, who was a noted collector of romances of chivalry." The MS. afterwards got into the possession of the late Mr. Douce, and is now, with the rest of his collection, in the Bodleian Library. In another place (p. xviii.) Mr. Robson observes, "Sir Walter Scott, where he alludes to this poem in his MINSTRELSY, asserts that it is not prior to the reign of James the Fifth of Scotland; but in his Introduction to SIR TRISTREM he is satisfied that it was written long before the conclusion of the thirteenth century." The passages in which Scott advances these contradictory opinions are in the MINSTRELSY, iv. 147, and SIR TRISTREM, p. 57 (Poetical Works, edition of 1833).

compositions which cannot be traced, at least in the form in which we have them, beyond the sixteenth. Of the undoubted produce of the thirteenth century in this kind of writing we have very little, if we except the romances of Kyng Horn, Sir Tristrem, Haveloc, and Sir Gawaine, with perhaps two or three others in Ritson and Weber. It is probable, indeed, that many of the manuscripts of later date are substantially transcripts from earlier ones; but in such cases, even when we have the general form of the poems as first written tolerably well preserved, the language is almost always more or less modernized. The history of the English metrical romance appears shortly to be, — that at least the first examples of it were translations from the French; — that there is no evidence of any such having been produced before the close of the twelfth century; — that in the thirteenth century were composed the earliest of those we now possess in their original form; — that in the fourteenth the English took the place of the French metrical romance with all classes, and that this was the era alike of its highest ascendancy and of its most abundant and felicitous production; — that in the fifteenth it was supplanted by another species of poetry among the more educated classes, and had also to contend with another rival in the prose romance, but that, nevertheless, it still continued to be produced, although in less quantity and of an inferior fabric, — mostly, indeed, if not exclusively, by the mere modernization of older compositions, — for the use of the common people; — and that it did not altogether cease to be read and written till after the commencement of the sixteenth. From that time the taste for this earliest form of our poetical literature (at least counting from the Norman Conquest) lay asleep in the national heart till it was reawakened in our own day by Scott, after the lapse of three hundred years. But the metrical romance was then become quite another sort of thing than it had been in its proper era, throughout the whole extent of which, while the story was generally laid in a past age, the manners and state of society described were, notwithstanding, in most respects those of the poet's and of his readers' or hearers' own time. This was strictly the case with the poems of this description which were produced in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries; and even in those which were accommodated to the popular taste of a later day much more than the language had to be partially modernized to preserve them in favor. When this

could no longer be done without too much violence to the composition, or an entire destruction of its original character, the metrical romance lost its hold of the public mind, and was allowed to drop into oblivion. There had been very little of mere antiquarianism in the interest it had inspired for three centuries. It had pleased principally as a picture or reflection of manners, usages, and a general spirit of society still existing, or supposed to exist. And this is perhaps the condition upon which any poetry must ever expect to be extensively and permanently popular. We need not say that the temporary success of the metrical romance, as revived by Scott, was in great part owing to his appeal to quite a different, almost an opposite, state of feeling.

We give no specimens of our early English metrical romances, because no extracts such as we could afford room for from one or two of them could do much, or almost anything, to convey a notion of the general character of these compositions. Although written in verse, they are essentially not so much poems as histories, or narrative works. At least, what poetry is in them lies almost always in the story rather than in anything else. The form of verse is manifestly adopted chiefly as an aid to the memory in their recitation. Even the musical character which the romance poetry is supposed originally to have had, if it ever was attempted to be maintained in long compositions of this description (which it is difficult to believe), appears very early to have been abandoned. Hence, when reading became a more common accomplishment, and recitation fell into comparative disuse, the verse came to be regarded as merely an impediment to the free and easy flow of the story, and was, by general consent, laid aside. Such being the case, it is easy to understand that an old metrical romance is hardly to be better represented by extracts than an architectural structure would be by a bit of one of the walls. Even the more ornamented or animated passages derive most of their effect from the place they occupy, or the connection in which they stand with the rest. The only way, therefore, of exhibiting any of these compositions intelligibly or fairly is to print the whole, or at the least, if only portions of the story are produced in the words of the original, to give the rest of it — somewhat abridged, it may be — in modern language. This latter method has been very successfully followed by Ellis in his *Specimens*, which work will be found to take a general survey of nearly the whole field of

fiction with which our early English metrical romances are conversant.

Another thing to be observed of these compositions is, that they are in very few cases ascribed to any particular writer. Nor have they, in general, any such peculiarity of style as might mark and distinguish their authorship. A few only may be accounted exceptions, — among them the romance of *Tristrem*, — and, if so, we may understand what Robert de Brunne means when he appears to speak of its English as strange and quaint; but usually their style is merely that of the age in which they were written. They differ from one another, in short, rather in the merit of the story itself than by anything in the manner of telling it. The expression and the rhyme are both, for the most part, whatever comes first to hand. The verse, irregular and rugged enough withal, is kept in such shape and order as it has by a crowd of tautologies, expletives, and other blank phrases serviceable only for filling up a gap, and is altogether such verse as might apparently be almost improvised or chanted extempore. These productions, therefore, are scarcely to be considered as forming any part of our literature, properly so called, interesting as they are on many accounts, — for the warm and vigorous imagination that often revels in them, for their vivid expression of the feelings and modes of thought of a remote age, for the light they throw upon the history of the national manners and mind, and even of the language in its first rude but bold essays to mimic the solemnities of literary composition.



METRICAL CHRONICLE OF ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER.

NEARLY what Biography is to History are the metrical romances to the versified Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, a narrative of British and English affairs from the time of Brutus to the end of the reign of Henry III., which, from events to which it alludes, must have been written after 1297.¹ All that is known of the author is that he was a monk of the abbey of Gloucester. His Chronicle was printed — “faithfully, I dare say,” says Tyrwhitt,

¹ This has been shown by Sir F. Madden in his Introduction to *Haveloc the Dane*, p. lii.

“but from incorrect manuscripts” — by Hearne, in 2 vols. 8vo., at Oxford, in 1724; and a reimpression of this edition was produced at London in 1810. The work in the earlier part of it may be considered a free translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Latin History; but it is altogether a very rude and lifeless composition. “This rhyming chronicle,” says Warton, “is totally destitute of art or imagination. The author has clothed the fables of Geoffrey of Monmouth in rhyme, which have often a more poetical air in Geoffrey’s prose.” Tyrwhitt refers to Robert of Gloucester in proof of the fact that the English language had already acquired a strong tincture of French; Warton observes that the language of this writer is full of Saxonisms, and not more easy or intelligible than that of what he calls “the Norman Saxon poems” of Kyng Horn and others which he believes to belong to the preceding century.

Robert of Gloucester’s Chronicle, as printed, is in long lines of fourteen syllables, which, however, are generally divisible into two of eight and six, and were perhaps intended to be so written and read. The language appears to be marked by the peculiarities of West Country English. Ample specimens are given by Warton and Ellis; we shall not encumber our limited space with extracts which are recommended by no attraction either in the matter or manner. We will only transcribe, as a sample of the language at the commencement of the reign of Edward I., and for the sake of the curious evidence it supplies in confirmation of a fact to which we have more than once had occasion to draw attention, the short passage about the prevalence of the French tongue in England down even to this date, more than two centuries after the Conquest: —

“Thus come lo! Engelonde into Normannes honde,
 And the Normans ne couthe speke tho bote her owe speche,
 And speke French as dude atom, and here chyl dren dude al so teche,
 So that heymen of thys lond, that of her blod come,
 Holdeth alle thulke speche that hii of hem nome.
 Vor bote a man couthe French, me tolt of hym well late:
 Ac lowe men holdeth to Englyss and to her kunde speche yute.
 Ich wene ther be ne man in world contreyes none
 That ne holdeth to her kunde speche, but Engelond one.
 Ac wel me wot vor to conne bothe wel yt ys,
 Vor the more that a man con the more worth he ys.”

That is, literally:— Thus lo! England came into the hand of the Normans: and the Normans could not speak then but their own speech, and spoke French as they did at home, and their children did all so teach; so that high men of this land, that of their blood come, retain all the same speech that they of them took. For, unless a man know French, one talketh of him little. But low men hold to English, and to their natural speech yet. I imagine there be no people in any country of the world that do not hold to their natural speech, but in England alone. But well I wot it is well for to know both; for the more that a man knows, the more worth he is.

A short composition of Robert of Gloucester's on the Martyrdom of Thomas à Beket was printed by the Percy Society in 1845.

ROBERT MANNYNG, OR DE BRUNNE.

ALONG with this chronicle may be mentioned the similar performance of Robert Mannyng, otherwise called Robert de Brunne (from his birthplace,¹ Brunne, or Bourne, near Deping, or Market Deeping, in Lincolnshire), belonging as it does to a date not quite half a century later. The work of Robert de Brunne is in two parts, both translated from the French: the first, coming down to the death of Cadwalader, from Wace's Brut; the second, extending to the death of Edward I., from the French or Romance chronicle written by Piers, or Peter, de Langtoft, a canon regular of St. Austin, at Bridlington, in Yorkshire, who has been mentioned in a former page,² and who appears to have lived at the same time with De Brunne. Langtoft, whose chronicle, though it has not been printed, is preserved in more than one manuscript, begins with Brutus; but De Brunne, for sufficient reasons it is probable, preferred Wace for the earlier portion of the story, and only took to his own countryman and contemporary when deserted by his older Norman guide. It is the latter part of his work, however, which, owing to the subject, has been thought most valuable

¹ See a valuable note on De Brunne in Sir Frederic Madden's *Haveloc*, Introduction, p. xiii.

² See *ante*, p. 187.

or interesting in modern times; it has been printed by Hearne, under the title of Peter Langtoft's Chronicle (as illustrated and improved by Robert of Brunne), from the death of Cadwalader to the end of K. Edward the First's reign; transcribed, and now first published, from a MS. in the Inner Temple Library, 2 vols. 8vo., Oxford, 1725; [reprinted London, 1810.] This part, like the original French of Langtoft, is in Alexandrine verse of twelve syllables; the earlier part, which remains in manuscript, is in the same octosyllabic verse in which its original, Wace's chronicle, is written. The work is stated in a Latin note at the end of the MS. to have been finished in 1338. Ritson (*Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 33) is very wroth with Warton for describing De Brunne as having "scarcely more poetry than Robert of Gloucester;"—"which only proves," Ritson says, "his want of taste or judgment." It may be admitted that De Brunne's chronicle exhibits the language in a considerably more advanced state than that of Gloucester, and also that he appears to have more natural fluency than his predecessor; his work also possesses greater interest from his occasionally speaking in his own person, and from his more frequent expansion and improvement of his French original by new matter; but for poetry, it would probably require a "taste or judgment" equal to Ritson's own to detect much of it. It is in the Prologue prefixed to the first part of his Chronicle that the famous passage occurs about the romance of Sir Tristrem, its strange or quaint English, and its authors, Thomas and Ercildoune (assumed to be the same person), and Kendale, which has given rise to so much speculation and controversy. De Brunne is also the author of two other rhyming translations: one, of the Latin prose treatise of his contemporary, the Cardinal Bonaventura, *De Cœna et Passione Domini, et Pœnis S. Mariæ Virginis*, which title he converts into *Medytaciuns of the Soper of our Lorde Jhesu*, and also of his *Passyum*, and eke of the *Peynes of hys swete Modyr mayden Marye*; the other a very free paraphrase of what has commonly been described as the *Manuel de Péché* (or *Manual of Sin*) of Bishop Grostête, but is, in fact, the work with the same title written by William de Wadington.¹ Copious extracts from these, and also from other translations of which it is thought that De Brunne may possibly be the author, are given by Warton, who, if he has not sufficiently

¹ See *ante*, p. 185; and notes by Price and Madden to Warton, i. 56.

appreciated the poetical merits of this writer, has at any rate awarded him a space which ought to satisfy his most ardent admirers.¹

ROLLE, OR HAMPOLE. — DAVIE.

OTHER obscure writers in verse of the earlier part of the fourteenth century were Richard Rolle, often called Richard Hampole, or of Hampole, a hermit of the order of St. Augustine, who lived in or near the nunnery of Hampole, four miles from Doncaster, and after his death, in 1349, was honored as a saint, and who is the author, or reputed author, of various metrical paraphrases of parts of Scripture, and other prolix theological effusions, all of which that are preserved (Ritson has enumerated seventeen of them) slumber in manuscript, and are not likely to be disturbed; and Adam Davie, who rather preceded Rolle, being reckoned the only poet belonging to the reign of Edward II., and to whom are also attributed a number of religious pieces, preserved only in one manuscript, much damaged, in the Bodleian, besides the metrical romance of the Life of Alexander, of which two copies exist, one in the Bodleian, the other in the Library of Lincoln's Inn; but there is every reason for believing that this last-mentioned work, which is printed in Weber's collection under the title of *Kyng Alisaunder*, and is one of the most spirited of our early romances, is by another author. There is no ground for assigning it to Davie except the circumstance of the Bodleian copy being bound up with his *Visions, Legends, Scripture Histories*, and other much more pious than poetical lucubrations; and its style is as little in his way as its subject.

LAWRENCE MINOT.

PUTTING aside the authors of some of the best of the early metrical romances, whose names are generally or universally unknown, perhaps the earliest writer of English verse who deserves

¹ *Hist. of Eng. Poet.*, i. pp. 55-70.

the name of a poet is Lawrence Minot, who lived and wrote about the middle of the fourteenth century, and of the reign of Edward III. His ten poems in celebration of the battles and victories of that king, preserved in the Cotton MS. Galba E. ix., which the old catalogue had described as a manuscript of Chaucer, the compiler having been misled by the name of some former proprietor, Richard Chawfer, inscribed on the volume, were discovered by Tyrwhitt while collecting materials for his edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, in a note to the *Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer* prefixed to which work their existence was first mentioned. This was in 1775. In 1781 some specimens of them were given (out of their chronological place) by Warton in the third volume of his *History of Poetry*. Finally, in 1796, the whole were published by Ritson under the title of *Poems written anno MCCCIII.*, by Lawrence Minot; with *Introductory Dissertations on the Scottish Wars of Edward III.*, on his claim to the throne of France, and *Notes and Glossary*, 8vo., London; and a reprint of this volume appeared in 1825. Of the 250 pages, or thereby, of which it consists, only about 50 are occupied by the poems, which are ten in number, their subjects being the *Battle of Halidon Hill* (fought 1333); the *Battle of Bannockburn* (1314), or rather the manner in which that defeat, sustained by his father, had been avenged by Edward III.; Edward's first *Invasion of France* (1339); the *Sea-fight in the Swine, or Zwin*¹ (1340); the *Siege of Tournay* (the same year); the *Landing of the English King at La Hogue*, on his Expedition in 1346; the *Siege of Calais* (the same year); the *Battle of Neville's Cross* (the same year); the *Sea-fight with the Spaniards off Winchelsea* (1350); and the *Taking of the Guisnes* (1352). It is from this last date that Ritson, somewhat unwarrantably, assumes that all the poems were written in that year. As they are very various in their form and manner, it is more probable that they were produced as the occasions of them arose, and therefore that they ought rather to be assigned to the interval between 1333 and 1352. They are remarkable, if not for any poetical qualities of a high order, yet for a precision and selectness, as well as a force, of expression, previously, so far as is known, unexampled in English verse. There is a true martial tone and spirit too in them, which reminds us of the best of our old heroic ballads, while it is better sustained, and accompanied

¹ To the south of the Isle of Cadsand, at the mouth of the West Scheldt.

with more refinement of style, than it usually is in these popular and anonymous compositions. As a sample we will transcribe the one on Edward's first expedition to France, omitting a prologue, which is in a different measure, and modernizing the spelling where it does not affect the rhyme or rhythm:—

Edward, owre comely king,
 In Brabànd has his woning ¹
 With many comely knight;
 And in that land, truely to tell,
 Ordains he still for to dwell
 To time ² he think to fight.

Now God, that is of mightés mast,³
 Grant him grace of the Holy Ghast
 His heritage to win;
 And Mary Moder, of mercy free,
 Save our king and his meny ⁴
 Fro sorrow, shame, and sin.

Thus in Brabànd has he been,
 Where he before was seldom seen
 For to prove their japes;⁵
 Now no langer will he spare,
 Bot unto France fast will he fare
 To comfort him with grapes.

Furth he fared into France;
 God save him fro mischance,
 And all his company!
 The noble Duke of Brabànd
 With him went into that land,
 Ready to live or die.

Then the rich flower de lice ⁶
 Wan there full little price;
 Fast he fled for feared:
 The right heir of that countree
 Is comen,⁷ with all his knightes free,
 To shake him by the beard.

¹ Dwelling.
⁶ Jeers.

² Till the time.
⁶ Fleur de lis.

³ Most of might.
⁷ Come.

⁴ Followers

Sir Philip the Valays¹
 Wit his men in tho days
 To battle had he thought :²
 He bade his men them purvey
 Withouten langer delay ;
 But he ne held it nought.

He brought folk full great won,³
 Aye seven agains⁴ one,
 That full well weaponed were,
 Bot soon when he heard ascry⁵
 That king Edward was near thereby,
 Then durst he nought come near.

In that morning fell a mist,
 And when our Englishmen it wist,
 It changed all their cheer ;
 Our king unto God made his boon,⁶
 And God sent him good comfort soon ;
 The weader wex full clear.

Our king and his men held the field
 Stalworthly with spear and shield,
 And thought to win his right ;
 With lordes and with knightes keen,
 And other doughty men bydeen⁷
 That war full friek⁸ to fight.

When Sir Philip of France heard tell
 That king Edward in field wald⁹ dwell,
 Then gained him no glee :¹⁰
 He traisted of no better boot,¹¹
 Bot both on horse and on foot
 He hasted him to flee.

¹ Philip VI. de Valois, King of France.

² The meaning seems to be, "informed his men in those days that he had a oesigr to fight." Unless, indeed, *wit* be a mistranscription of *with*.

³ Number.

⁴ Against.

⁵ Report.

⁶ Prayer, request. — *Rits*. Perhaps, rather, vow or *bond*.

⁷ Perhaps "besides." The word is of common occurrence, but of doubtful or various meaning.

⁸ Were full eager.

⁹ Would (was dwelling).

¹⁰ The meaning seems to be, "then no glee, or joy, was given him" (*accessit ei*).

¹¹ He trusted in no better expedient, or alternative.

It seemed he was feared for strokes
 When he did fell his greate oaks
 About ¹ his pavilioùn ;
 Abated was then all his pride,
 For langer there durst he nought bide ;
 His boast was brought all down.

The king of Beme ² had cares cold,
 That was full hardy and bold
 A steed to umstride : ³
 He and the king als ⁴ of Naverne ⁵
 War fair feared ⁶ in the fern
 Their hevids ⁷ for to hide.

And leves ⁸ well it is no lie,
 And field hat ⁹ Flemangry ¹⁰
 That king Edward was in,
 With princes that were stiff and bold,
 And dukes that were doughty told ¹¹
 In battle to begin.

The princes, that were rich on raw, ¹²
 Gert ¹³ nakers ¹⁴ strike, and trumps blaw,
 And made mirth at their might,
 Both alblast ¹⁵ and many a bow
 War ready railed ¹⁶ upon a row,
 And full frek for to fight.

Gladly they gave meat and drink,
 So that they suld the better swink, ¹⁷
 The wight ¹⁸ men that there were.
 Sir Philip of France fled for doubt,
 And hied him hame with all his rout :
 Coward ! God Give him care !

For there then had the lily flower
 Lorn all halcely ¹⁹ his honour,

¹ About.² Bohemia.³ Bestride.⁴ Also.⁶ Navarre.⁶ Were fairly frightened.⁷ Heads.⁸ Believe.⁹ Was called.¹⁰ The village of La Flamengrie¹¹ Reckoned.¹² Apparently, "arranged richly clad in a row."¹³ Caused¹⁴ Tymbals.¹⁵ Arblast, or crossbow.¹⁶ Placed¹⁷ Should the better labor.¹⁸ Stout.¹⁹ Lost wholly

That so gat fled¹ for feard ;
 Bot our king Edward come full still²
 When that he trowed no harm him till,³
 And kepted him in the beard.⁴

ALLITERATIVE VERSE. — PIERS PLOUGHMAN.

It may be observed that Minot's verses are thickly sprinkled with what is called *alliteration*, or the repetition of words having the same commencing letter, either immediately after one another, or with the intervention only of one or two other words generally unemphatic or of subordinate importance. Alliteration, which we find here combined with rhyme, was in an earlier stage of our poetry employed, more systematically, as the substitute for that decoration, — the recurrence, at certain regular intervals, of like beginnings, serving the same purpose which is now accomplished by what Milton has contemptuously called "the jingling sound of like endings." To the English of the period before the Conquest, until its very latest stage, rhyme was unknown, and down to the tenth century our verse appears to have been constructed wholly upon the principle of alliteration. Hence, naturally, even after we had borrowed the practice of rhyme from the French or Romance writers, our poetry retained for a time more or less of its original habit. In Layamon, as we have seen, alliterative and rhyming couplets are intermixed; in other cases, as in Minot, we have the rhyme only pretty liberally bespangled with alliteration. At this date, in fact, the difficulty probably would have been to avoid alliteration in writing verse; all the old customary phraseologies of poetry had been moulded upon that principle; and indeed alliterative expression has in every age, and in many other languages as well as our own, had a charm for the popular ear, so that it has always largely prevailed in proverbs and other such traditional forms of words, nor is it yet by any means altogether discarded as an occasional embellishment of composition, whether in

¹ Got put to flight ?

² Came back quietly at his ease.

³ When he perceived there was no harm intended him.

⁴ Perhaps, "kept his beard untouched."

verse or in prose. But there is one poetical work of the fourteenth century, of considerable extent, and in some respects of remarkable merit, in which the verse is without rhyme, and the system of alliteration is almost as regular as what we have in the poetry of the times before the Conquest. This is the famous Vision of Piers Ploughman, or, as the subject is expressed at full length in the Latin title, *Visio Willielmi de Petro Ploughman*, that is, The Vision of William concerning Piers or Peter Ploughman. The manuscripts of this poem, which long continued to enjoy a high popularity, are very numerous, and it has also been repeatedly printed: first in 1550, at London, by Robert Crowley, "dwelling in Elye rentes in Holburne," who appears to have produced three successive impressions of it in the same year; again in 1561, by Owen Rogers, "dwelleng neare unto great Saint Bartelmewes gate, at the sygne of the Spred Egle;" next in 1813, under the superintendence of the late Thomas Dunham Whitaker, LL. D.; lastly, in 1842, under the care of Thomas Wright, Esq., M. A., F. R. S., &c. The early editions, and also Dr. Whitaker's, are in quarto and in black letter. Mr. Wright's is in the common type, and in the much more commodious form of two volumes duodecimo; and, furnished as it is with an introduction, notes, and a glossary, all very carefully and learnedly compiled, is as superior in all other respects as it is in cheapness and convenience for perusal to Dr. Whitaker's costly and cumbrous publication. Whitaker, moreover, whose acquirements in this department of study were very slender, has selected a text widely differing from the common one, and which has evidently no claim to the preference with which he has honored it; that given by Mr. Wright (who has added in the notes the most important of the variations exhibited by Dr. Whitaker's edition) differs very little, except in greater accuracy, from that first printed by Crowley, while it is derived from what appears to be "the best and oldest manuscript now in existence." Dr. Whitaker's notes and glossary are contemptible; and his running paraphrase, which accompanies the text, will be found much more frequently to slur over, when it does not mistake, the obscure passages of the original, than to explain, or attempt to explain, them.

Of the author of Piers Ploughman scarcely anything is known. He has commonly been called Robert Langland: but there are grounds for believing that his Christian name was William, and it

is probable that it is himself of whom he speaks under that name throughout his work. He is supposed to have been a monk, and he seems to have resided in the West of England, near the Malvern Hills, where he introduces himself at the commencement of his poem as falling asleep "on a May morwenynge," and entering upon his dreams or visions. The date may be pretty nearly fixed. In one place there is an allusion to the treaty of Bretigny made with France in 1360, and to the military disasters of the previous year which led to it; in another passage mention is made of a remarkable tempest which occurred on the 15th of January, 1362, as of a recent event. "It is probable," to quote Mr. Wright, "that the poem of Piers Ploughman was composed in the latter part of this year, when the effects of the great wind were fresh in people's memory, and when the treaty of Bretigny had become a subject of popular discontent."¹ We may assume, at least, that it was in hand at this time.

We cannot attempt an analysis of the work. It consists, in Mr. Wright's edition, where the long line of the other editions is divided into two, of 14,696 verses, distributed into twenty sections, or *Passus* as they are called. Each *passus* forms, or professes to form, a separate vision; and so inartificial or confused is the connection of the several parts of the composition (notwithstanding Dr. Whitaker's notion that it had in his edition "for the first time been shown that it was written after a regular and consistent plan"), that it may be regarded as being in reality not so much one poem as a succession of poems. The general subject may be said to be the same with that of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the exposition of the impediments and temptations which beset the crusade of this our mortal life; and the method, too, like Bunyan's, is the allegorical; but the spirit of the poetry is not so much picturesque, or even descriptive, as satirical. Vices and abuses of all sorts come in for their share of the exposure and invective; but the main attack throughout is directed against the corruptions of the church, and the hypocrisy and worldliness, the ignorance, indolence, and sensuality, of the ecclesiastical order. To this favorite theme the author constantly returns with new affection and sharper zest from any less high matter which he may occasionally take up. Hence it has been commonly assumed that he must have himself belonged to the ecclesiastical profession, that he was probably a

¹ Introduction, p. xii.

priest or monk. And his Vision has been regarded not only as mainly a religious poem, but as almost a puritanical and Protestant work, although produced nearly two centuries before either Protestantism or Puritanism was ever heard of. In this notion, as we have seen, it was brought into such repute at the time of the Reformation that three editions of it were printed in one year. There is nothing, however, of anti-Romanism, properly so called, in Langland, either doctrinal or constitutional; and even the anti-clerical spirit of his poetry is not more decided than what is found in the writings of Chaucer, and the other popular literature of the time. In all ages, indeed, it is the tendency of popular literature to erect itself into a power adverse to that of the priesthood, as has been evinced more especially by the poetical literature of modern Europe from the days of the Provençal troubadours. In the Canterbury Tales, however, and in most other works where this spirit appears, the puritanism (if so it is to be called) is merely one of the forms of the poetry; in Piers Ploughman the poetry is principally a form or expression of the puritanism.

The rhythm or measure of the verse in this poem must be considered as accentual rather than syllabical — that is to say, it depends rather upon the number of the accents than of the syllables. This is, perhaps, the original principle of all verse; and it still remains the leading principle in various kinds of verse, both in our own and in other languages. At first, probably, only the accented syllables were counted, or reckoned of any rhythmical value; other syllables upon which there was no emphasis went for nothing, and might be introduced in any part of the verse, one, two, or three at a time, as the poet chose. Of course it would at all times be felt that there were limits beyond which this license could not be carried without destroying or injuring the metrical character of the composition; but these limits would not at first be fixed as they now for the most part are. The elementary form of the verse in Piers Ploughman demands a succession of four accented syllables — two in the first hemistich or short line, and two in the second; but, while each of those in the first line is usually preceded by either one or two unaccented syllables, commonly only one of those in the second line is so preceded. The second line, therefore, is for the most part shorter than the first. And they also differ in regard to the alliteration: it being required that in the first both the accented or emphatic syllables, which are generally initial syl-

lables, should begin with the same letter, but that in the second only the first accented syllable should begin with that letter. This is the general rule ; but, either from the text being corrupt or from the irregularity of the composition, the exceptions are very numerous.¹ We may merely add, that, although in our extracts we shall for the convenience of printing, and for the greater intelligibility, follow Mr. Wright's edition, as in other respects, so in the bisection of the long line of the manuscripts and the other editions into two short ones, only marking the structural distinction between the first and second, which he does not, we suspect that the true prosody requires these short lines to be regarded rather as hemistichs than as entire verses, and sometimes only as false hemistichs — that is to say, that the correct prosodical division would be, not in all cases where he has placed it, but occasionally in the middle of the word with which he closes his first line. But this is a matter of little moment. We shall adopt the plan of modernizing the spelling in all cases in which there can be no doubt that the pronunciation is not thereby affected.

The poem begins as follows : —

In a summer season,
 When soft was the sun,
 I shoop me into shrowds²
 As I a sheep³ were ;
 In habit as an hermit
 Unholy of werkes,⁴
 Went wide in this world
 Wonders to hear ;
 Ac⁵ on a May morwening
 On Malvern hills
 Me befel a ferly,⁶
 Of fairy me thought.
 I was weary for-wandered,⁷

Mr Wright observes that, when alliterative poetry was written in the fifteenth century, the writers, instead of three, “not unfrequently inserted four or five alliterative words in the same [long] line, which would certainly have been considered a defect in the earlier writers.” But this defect, if it be one, is very frequent in *Piers Ploughman*. It occurs, for instance, in the two commencing lines of the poem, at least as printed in Mr. Wright's edition.

² I put myself into clothes.

³ A shepherd.

⁴ Whitaker's interpretation is, “in habit, not like an anchorite who keeps his cell, but like one of those unholy hermits who wander about the world to see and hear wonders.” He reads, “That went forth in the world,” &c.

⁵ And.

⁶ Wonder.

⁷ Worn out with wandering.

And went me to rest
 Under a brood¹ bank,
 By a burn's² side ;
 And as I lay and leaned,
 And looked on the waters,
 I slombered into a sleeping,
 It swayed so mury.³
 Then gan I meten⁴
 A marvellous sweven,⁵
 That I was in a wilderness,
 Wist I never where ;
 And, as I beheld into the east
 On high to the sun,
 I seigh⁶ a tower on a toft⁷
 Frieliche ymaked,⁸
 A deep dale beneath,
 A donjon therein,
 With deep ditches and darke,
 And dreadful of sight.
 A fair field full of folk
 Found I there between,
 Of all manner of men,
 The mean and the rich,
 Werking⁹ and wandering
 As the world asketh.
 Some putten hem¹⁰ to the plough,
 Playden full seld,¹¹
 In setting and sowing
 Swonken¹² full hard,
 And wonnen that wasters
 With gluttony destroyeth.¹³
 And some putten hem to pride,
 Apparelled hem thereafter,
 In countenance of clothing
 Comen deguised,¹⁴
 In prayers and penances
 Putten hem many,¹⁵

¹ Broad.² Stream's.⁸ It sounded so pleasant.⁴ Mect.⁵ Dream.⁶ Saw.⁷ An elevated ground.⁸ Handsomely built.⁹ Working.¹⁰ Put them.¹¹ Played full seldom.¹² Labored.¹³ Wan that which wasters with gluttony destroy.¹⁴ Came disguised. Whitaker reads, "In countenance and in clothing."¹⁵ Many put them, applied themselves to, engaged in.

All for the love of our Lord
 Liveden full strait,¹
 In hope to have after
 Heaven-riche bliss ;²
 As anchors and heremites³
 That holden hem in hir⁴ cells,
 And coveten nought in country
 To carryen about,
 For no likerous liflode
 Hir likame to please.⁵
 And some chosen chaffer :⁶
 They cheveden⁷ the better,
 As it seemeth to our sight
 That swich me thriveth.⁸
 And some murths to make
 As minstralles con,⁹
 And geten gold with hir glee,¹⁰
 Guiltless, I lieve.¹¹
 Ae japers and jaugellers¹²
 Judas' children,
 Feignen hem fantasies
 And fools hem maketh,
 And han hir¹³ wit at will
 To werken if they wold.
 That Poul preacheth of hem
 I wol nat preve¹⁴ it here :
 But *qui loquitur turpiloquium*¹⁵
 Is Jupiter's hine.¹⁶
 Bidders¹⁷ and beggars
 Fast about yede,¹⁸
 With hir bellies and hir bags
 Of bread full y-crammed,
 Faiteden¹⁹ for hir food,
 Foughten at the ale :
 In gluttony, God wot,

¹ Lived full strictly.² The bliss of the kingdom of heaven.³ Anchorites and eremites or hermits.⁴ Hold them in their.⁵ By no likerous living their body to please.⁶ Merchandise.⁷ Achieved their end.⁸ That such men thrive.⁹ And some are skilled to make mirths, or amusements, as minstrels.¹⁰ And get gold with their minstrelsy.¹¹ Believe.¹² But jesters and jugglers.¹³ Have their.¹⁴ Will not prove.¹⁵ Whoso speaketh ribaldry.¹⁶ Our modern *hind*, or servant.¹⁷ Petitioners.¹⁸ Went.¹⁹ Flattered.

Go they to bed,
 And risen with ribaudry,¹
 Tho Roberd's knaves ;²
 Sleep and sorry slewth³
 Sueth⁴ hem ever.
 Pilgrims and palmers
 Plighthen hem togider⁵
 For to seeken Saint Jame
 And saintes at Rome :
 They wenten forth in hir way⁶
 With many wise tales,
 And hadden leave to lien⁷
 All hir life after.
 I seigh some that seiden⁸
 They had y-sought saints :
 To each a tale that they told
 Hir tongue was tempered to lie⁹
 More than to say sooth,
 It seemed by hir speech.
 Hermits on an heap,¹⁰
 With hooked staves,
 Wenten to Walsingham,
 And hir wenches after ;
 Great loobies and long,
 That loath were to swink,¹¹
 Clothed hem in copes
 To be knowen from other,
 And shopen hem¹² hermits
 Hir ease to have.
 I found there freres,
 All the four orders,
 Preaching the people
 For profit of hem selve :
 Glosed the gospel
 As hem good liked ;¹³

¹ Rise with ribaldry.

² Those Robertsmen — a class of malefactors mentioned in several statutes of the fourteenth century. The name may have meant originally Robin Hood's men, as Whitaker conjectures.

³ Sloth.

⁵ Gather them together.

⁷ To lie.

⁹ In every tale that they told their tongue was trained to lie.

¹⁰ In a crowd.

¹² Made themselves.

⁴ Pursue.

⁶ They went forth on their way.

⁸ I saw some that said.

¹¹ Labor.

¹³ As it seemed to them good.

For covetise of copes¹
 Construed it as they would.
 Many of these master freres
 Now clothen hem at liking,²
 For hir money and hir merchandize
 Marchen togeders.
 For sith charity hath been chapman,
 And chief to shrive lords,
 Many ferlies han fallen³
 In a few years :
 But holy church and hi⁴
 Hold better togeders,
 The most mischief on mould⁵
 Is mounting well fast.
 There preached a pardoner,
 As he a priest were ;
 Brought forth a bull
 With many bishops' seals,
 And said that himself might
 Assoilen hem all,
 Of falsehede of fasting,⁶
 Of avowes y-broken.
 Lewed⁷ men leved⁸ it well,
 And liked his words ;
 Comen up kneeling
 To kissen his bulls :
 He bouched⁹ hem with his brevet,¹⁰
 And bleared hir eyen,¹¹
 And raught with his ragman¹²
 Ringes and brooches.

Here it will be admitted, we have both a well-filled canvas and a picture with a good deal of life and stir in it. The satiric touches are also natural and effective ; and the expression clear, easy, and not deficient in vigor. We will now present a portion of the Fifth Passus, which commences thus : —

¹ Covetousness of copes or rich clothing.

² Clothe themselves to their liking.

³ Many wonders have happened.

⁴ Unless holy church and they.

⁵ The greatest mischief on earth.

⁶ Of breaking fast-days.

⁷ Ignorant.

⁸ Loved.

⁹ Stopped their mouths.

¹⁰ Little brief.

¹¹ Bedimmed their eyes.

¹² Reached, drew in, with his catalogue or roll of names ?

The king and his knights
 To the kirk went,
 To hear matins of the day,
 And the mass after.
 Then waked I of my winking,
 And wo was withal
 That I ne had slept sadder¹
 And y-seighen² more.
 Ac ere I had faren³ a furlong
 Faintise me hent,⁴
 That I ne might ferther a foot
 For de-faut of sleeping,
 And sat softly adown,
 And said my believe,
 And so I babbled on my beads,
 They brought me asleep.
 And then saw I much more
 Than I before of told ;
 For I seigh the field full of folk
 That I before of said,
 And how Reason gan arrayen him
 All the reaum to preach,⁵
 And with a cross afore the king
 Comsed⁶ thus to teachen : —
 He preved that these pestilences⁷
 Were for pure sin,
 And the south-western wind
 On Saturday at even⁸
 Was pertlich⁹ for pure pride,
 And for no point else.
 Pyries¹⁰ and plum-trees
 Were puffed to the earth,
 In ensample that the segges¹¹
 Sholden do the better ;
 Beeches and broad oaks
 Were blownen to the ground,

¹ Sounder.² Seen.⁸ But ere I had walked⁴ Faintness seized me. ⁵ To preach to all the realm. ⁶ Commenced.⁷ The three great pestilences which desolated England and the rest of Europe in the reign of Edward III. occurred in 1348-1349, 1361-1362, and 1369.⁸ The great tempest of Saturday, Jan. 15, 1362.⁹ Manifestly.¹⁰ Pear-trees.¹¹ Men, people.

Turned upward hir tails,
 In tokening of dread
 That deadly sin ere doomsday
 Shall for-done ¹ hem all.

The account of Reason's sermon is continued at great length ;
 after which the repentance of his auditors is narrated as follows : —

Pernel Proudheart
 Plat her ² to the earth,
 And lay long ere she loked,
 And " Lord, Mercy," cried,
 And bi-highte ³ to him
 That us all made
 She should unsowen her serk ⁴
 And set there an hair,
 To affaiten ⁵ her flesh,
 That fierce was to sin.

.
 Envy with heavy heart
 Asked after shrift,
 And carefully *mea culpa*
 He comsed ⁶ to shew.
 He was as pale as a pellet,⁷
 In the palsy he seemed ;
 And clothed jn a kaury maury ⁸
 I couth it nought describe,
 In kirtle and courtepy,⁹
 And a knife by his side ;
 Of a frere's frock
 Were the fore-sleeves ;
 And as a leek that had y-lay
 Long in the sun,
 So looked he with lean cheeks
 Lowering foul.
 His body was to-bollen ¹⁰ for wrath
 That he boot ¹¹ his lips ;
 And wringing he yede ¹² with the fust ; ¹³

¹ Undo, ruin.² Threw herself down.³ Promised.⁴ Shirt.⁵ Tame.⁶ Commenced.⁷ Snowball.

⁸ In Cole's Dictionary this is given as a Dutch word, and interpreted "mock-garments." Wright, in his Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English, has *caury* worm-eaten. But see *post*, p. 263.

⁹ A short coat.¹⁰ Was swollen.¹¹ Bit.¹² Went.¹³ Fist.

To wreaken himself he thought
 With werks or with words
 When he seigh his time.
 Each a werd that he warp ¹
 Was of a nedder's ² tongue ;
 Of chiding and of chalinging
 Was his chief liflode ; ³
 With backbiting and bismear ⁴
 And bearing of false witness.
 " I wold been y-shrive," quod this shrew,
 " And ⁵ I for shame durst ;
 I wold be gladder, by God,
 That Gib had mischance
 Than though I had this wouk ⁶ y-won
 A wey ⁷ of Essex cheese.
 I have a neighbor by me ;
 I have annoyed him oft,
 And lowen ⁸ on him to lords
 To doon him lese his silver, ⁹
 And made his friends be his foon ¹⁰
 Thorough my false tongue :
 His grace and his good haps
 Grieven me full sore.
 Between many and many
 I make debate oft,
 That both life and limb
 Is lost thorough my speech.
 And when I meet him in market
 That I most hate,
 I hailse him hendly ¹¹
 As I his friend were ;
 For ¹² he is doughtier than I
 I dare do none other ;
 Ac ¹³ had I mastery and might
 God wot my will !
 And when I come to the kirk,
 And should kneel to the rood,
 And pray for the people

¹ Each word that he uttered.² An adder's.³ Livelihood (way of living).⁴ Reproach, besmearing.⁵ If, an.⁶ Week.⁷ 256 pounds.⁸ Lied?⁹ To make him lose his money¹⁰ Foes.¹¹ I salute him politely.¹² Because.¹³ But.

As the priest teacheth,
 For pilgrims and for palmers,
 For all the people after,
 Then I cry on my knees
 That Christ give hem sorrow
 That bearen away my boll
 And my broke shete.¹
 Away fro the auter² then
 Turn I mine eyen,
 And behold Ellen
 Hath a new coat:
 I wish then it were mine,
 And all the web after.
 And of men's lesing³ I laugh;
 That liketh mine heart:
 And for hir winning I weep,
 And wail the time,
 And deem that they doon ill
 There I do well werse.⁴
 Whoso under-nymeth⁵ me hereof,
 I hate him deadly after.
 I wold that each a wight
 Were my knave;⁶
 For whoso hath more than I,
 That angereth me sore.
 And thus I live loveless,
 Like a luther⁷ dog,
 That all my body bolneth⁸
 For bitter of my gall.
 I might nought eat many years
 As a man ought,
 For envy and evil will
 Is evil to defy.⁹
 May no sugar nor sweet thing
 Assuage my swelling?
 Ne no *diapenidion*¹⁰
 Drive it fro mine heart?

¹ That bore away my bowl and *shut* my brook.

² Altar.

³ Losing.

⁴ Where I do still worse (*bien plus pis*).

⁵ Mr. Wright translates *undertakes, takes possession of*. Here, perhaps, the meaning is, takes me up in speech, checks me for that.

⁶ Servant.

⁷ Vicious.

⁸ Swelleth.

⁹ Ill to digest.

¹⁰ Electuary.

Ne neither shrift ne shame,
 But whoso shrape ¹ my maw ? ”
 “ Yes, readily,” quod Repentance,
 And rad him to the best ; ²
 “ Sorrow of sins
 Is salvation of souls.”
 “ I am sorry,” quod that segge ; ³
 “ I am but seld other ; ⁴
 And that maketh me thus meagre
 For ⁵ I ne may me venge.
 Amonges burgesses have I be
 Dwelling in London,
 And gart ⁶ backbiting be a broker
 To blame men’s ware :
 When he sold and I nought,
 Then was I ready
 To lie and to lower on my neighbour,
 And to lack his chaffer.⁷
 I woll amend this if I may,
 Thorough might of God Almighty.”

The cases of Wrath, Covetousness, Gluttony, and Sloth follow at equal or greater length ; and then comes the passage in which Piers Ploughman is first mentioned. The people having been persuaded by the exhortations of Repentance and Hope to set out in quest of Truth, —

A thousand of men tho ⁸
 Thringen togeders,
 Cried upward to Christ,
 And to his clean moder,
 To have grace to go with them
 Truthe to seek.
 Ae ⁹ there was wight none so wise
 The way thider couth,¹⁰
 But blustreden ¹¹ forth as beasts
 Over bankes and hills ;
 Till late was an long

¹ Unless one should scrape. It may perhaps be doubted if these last three couplets are intended to be taken interrogatively.

² Counsell'd him for the best.

³ Man.

⁴ I am seldom otherwise.

⁵ Because.

⁶ Caused

⁷ To disparage his merchandise.

⁸ Then.

⁹ But.

¹⁰ Knew.

¹¹ Wandered along aimlessly

That they a leed¹ met,
 Apparelled as a paynim
 In pilgrimes' wise.
 He bar a burden y-bound
 With a broad list,
 In a with-wind wise²
 Y-wounden about ;
 A bowl and a bag
 He bar by his side,
 And hundred of ampuls³
 On his hat setten,
 Signs of Sinai,
 And shells of Galice,
 And many a crouch⁴ on his cloak,
 And keyes of Rome,
 And the Vernicle⁵ before,
 For⁶ men shold know
 And see by his signs
 Whom he sought had.
 The folk frayned⁷ him first
 Fro whennes he come.
 "From Sinai," he said,
 "And from our Lord's sepulchre :
 In Bethlem and in Babiloyn,
 I have been in both ;
 In Armony⁸ and Alisandre,
 In many other places.
 Ye may see by my signs,
 That sitten on mine hat,
 That I have walked full wide
 In weet and in dry,
 And sought good saints
 For my soul's health."
 "Knowestow aught a corsaint⁹
 That men call Truth ?
 Coudestow aught wissen us the way¹⁰
 Where that wye¹¹ dwelleth ?"
 "Nay, so me God help,"

¹ Person.² Withy-wand wise.³ *Ampulle*, small vessels of holy water or oil ?⁴ Cross.⁵ The Veronica, or miraculous picture of Christ.⁶ In order that.⁷ Questioned.⁸ Armenia.⁹ Knowest thou of any relic.¹⁰ Couldst thou tell us aught of the way.¹¹ Man.

Said the gome¹ then,
 "I seigh never palmer
 With pike ne with scrip
 Asken after him ere
 Till now in this place."

Then the narrative goes on, as printed and pointed by Mr. Wright, who has no note upon the passage, —

"Peter," quod a ploughman,
 And put forth his head,
 "I know him as kindly
 As clerk doth his bookes :
 Conscience and kind² wit
 Kenned³ me to his place,
 And diden me suren him sickerly⁴
 To serven him for ever,
 Both to sow and to set
 The while I swink⁵ might.
 I have been his follower
 All this fifty winter,
 Both y-sowen⁶ his seed
 And sued⁷ his beasts,
 Within and withouten
 Waited his profit.
 I dig and I delve,
 I do that Truth hoteth :⁸
 Some time I sow
 And sometime I thresh ;
 In tailors' craft and tinkers' craft
 What Truth can devise ;
 I weave and I wind
 And do what Truth hoteth," &c.

It is difficult to understand what meaning we are to give to the word "Peter," understood as part of the Ploughman's speech. Whitaker's interpretation is "One Peter, a ploughman, now put forth his head;" and in a note upon the passage, which in his edition occurs in the eighth *passus*, and stands "Peter quoth a Ploughman," he says, "As Piers Ploughman, who now first

¹ Man.² Natural.³ Showed.⁴ And did assure (determine or fix) me to him securely (firmly)⁵ Labor.⁶ Sowed.⁷ Tended.⁸ Ordereth.

appears, is evidently the speaker, we must, notwithstanding the arrangement of the words, understand them to mean, ‘Quoth Peter a ploughman.’” But it is evident that this sense cannot be got out of the words as they stand.¹ The line is possibly corrupt; and indeed the whole passage, though one on which so much of the structure of the poem hinges, exhibits other traces of having suffered from the carelessness or ignorance of the transcribers. It differs widely throughout in the two editions. But everything relating to the personage from whom the work takes its name would almost seem to be designedly involved in confusion and obscurity. The Ploughman ends his speech, of which we have quoted the commencement, by telling his auditors that, if they wish to know where Truth dwells, he is ready to show them the way to his residence; upon which, proceeds the story, —

“Yea, leve² Piers,” quod these pilgrims,
 And proffered him hire,
 For to wend with hem
 To Truth’s dwelling-place.
 “Nay, by my soul’s help,”³ quod Piers,
 And gan for to swear,
 I nold fang a ferthing,

¹ From its position the word *Peter* would almost seem to be nothing more than an exclamation. It does not appear to have been noticed that we have the same form of expression in two passages of Chaucer’s *House of Fame*; in book II., l. 526, where, to the question of the eagle,

“And what sown is it like? quod he,”

the author answers,

“Peter! like the beating of the sea,
 Quod I, against the roches halow;” —

and again in book III., l. 910, where it is used by the eagle in addressing the author (elsewhere called *Geffrey*, see II. 221) —

“Peter! that is now mine intent,
 Quod he to me.”

Perhaps “Peter! quod a Ploughman” means no more than what we find a few pages after: —

“Quod Perkin the Ploughman,
 By Saint Peter of Rome!” — l. 3799.

Besides, the Ploughman, we believe, is never afterwards called *Peter*; but always either *Piers* or *Perkin*.

² Dear.

³ Should not this be *helth*, or *health*? The Saxon character for *th* is very apt to be mistaken for a *p*.

For Saint Thomas' shrine ;¹
 Truth wold love me the lass²
 A long time thereafter.
 Ac if you wilneth to wend well³
 This is the way thider : —
 Ye moten⁴ go thorough Meekness,
 Both men and wives,
 Till ye come into Conscience," &c.

The personage who thus speaks is afterwards constantly designated Piers, or sometimes Perkin, the Ploughman, and he makes a considerable figure throughout the sixth and seventh *Passus* ; after which we hear little more of him till we come to the sixteenth. In the eighteenth *Passus* "the character of Piers the Ploughman," according to Mr. Wright's view (Introduction, p. xxiv.), "is identified with that of the Saviour." Whitaker, who generally calls him "the mysterious personage," conceives (Introductory Discourse, p. xxviii.) that Piers in the latter part of the poem is intended to be the representative of the Church. Taking the church as meaning, not the clergy or the ecclesiastical system, but the body of the faithful, it would not perhaps be impossible to understand Piers as sustaining that character throughout the work.

PIERS PLOUGHMAN'S CREED.

The popularity of Langland's poem appears to have brought alliterative verse into fashion again even for poems of considerable length ; several romances were written in it, such as that of William and the Werwolf, that of Alexander, that of Jerusalem, and others ; and the use of it was continued throughout the greater part of the fifteenth century. But the most remarkable imitation of the Vision is the poem entitled Piers the Ploughman's Creed, which appears to have been written about the end of the fourteenth century. It was first printed separately at London, in 4to. by Reynold Wolfe, in 1553 ; then by Rogers, along with the Vision, in 1561. In modern times it has also been printed separately, in 1814, as a companion to Whitaker's edition of the Vision ; and, along with the Vision, in Mr. Wright's edition of 1842. The

¹ I would not take a farthing, if you were to offer me all the wealth of St Thomas's shrine.

² Less.

³ But if you wish to go well.

⁴ Must.

Creed is the composition of a follower of Wyclif, and an avowed opponent of Romanism. Here, Mr. Wright observes, "Piers Ploughman is no longer an allegorical personage: he is the simple representative of the peasant rising up to judge and act for himself — the English *sans-culotte* of the fourteenth century, if we may be allowed the comparison." The satire, or invective, in this effusion (which consists only of 1697 short lines), is directed altogether against the clergy, and especially the monks or friars; and Piers or Peter is represented as a poor ploughman from whom the writer receives that instruction in Christian truth which he had sought for in vain from every order of these licensed teachers. The language is quite as antique as that of the Vision, as may appear from the following passage, in which Piers is introduced: —

Then turned I me forth,
 And talked to myself
 Of the falschede of this folk,
 How faithless they weren.
 And as I went by the way
 Weeping for sorrow,
 I see a seely¹ man me by
 Upon the plough hongen.²
 His coat was of a clout³
 That eary⁴ was y-called;
 His hood was full of holes,
 And his hair out;
 With his knopped shoon⁵
 Clouted full thick,
 His ton⁶ toteden⁷ out
 As he the lond treaded:
 His hosen overhongen his hoc-shynes⁸
 On everich a side,
 All beslomered⁹ in fen¹⁰
 As he the plough followed.

¹ Simple.² Hung, bent, over.³ Cloth.⁴ Is not this the same word that we have in *caury maury* (*vid. sup.* p. 255)? It would seem to be the name of a kind of cloth.⁵ Knobbed shoes.⁶ Toes.⁷ Peeped.⁸ Neither of Mr. Wright's explanations seems quite satisfactory: "crooked shins;" or "the shin towards the *lock* or ankle"?⁹ Bedaubed.¹⁰ Mud.

Twey¹ mittens as meter²
 Made all of clouts,
 The fingers weren for-weard³
 And full of fen honged.
 This whit⁴ wasled⁵ in the feen⁶
 Almost to the ancle:
 Four rothieren⁷ him beforñ,
 That feeble were worthy;⁸
 Men might reckon each a rib⁹
 So rentful¹⁰ they weren.
 His wife walked him with,
 With a long goad,
 In a cutted coat
 Cutted full high,
 Wrapped in a winnow¹¹ sheet
 To wearen her fro weders,¹²
 Barefoot on the bare ice,
 That the blood followed.
 And at the lond's end¹³ lath¹⁴
 A little crum-bolle,¹⁵
 And thereon lay a little child
 Lapped in clouts,
 And tweyn of twey years old¹⁶
 Opon another side.
 And all they songen¹⁷ o¹⁸ song,
 That sorrow was to hearen;
 They crieden all o cry,
 A careful note.
 The seely man sighed sore,
 And said, "Children, beth¹⁹ still."
 This man looked opon me,
 And leet the plough stonden;²⁰
 And said, "Seely man,
 Why sighest thou so hard?

¹ Two.

² Mr. Wright suggests *fitter*; which does not seem to make sense.

³ Were worn out.

⁴ Wight.

⁵ Dirtied himself.

⁶ Fen, mud.

⁷ Oxen (the Four Evangelists).

⁸ Become? Perhaps the true reading is *forthy*, that is, *for that*.

⁹ Each rib.

¹⁰ Meagre?

¹¹ Winnowing.

¹² The meaning seems to be, "to protect her from the weather."

¹³ The end of the field.

¹⁴ Lieth?

¹⁵ Mr. Wright explains by "crum-bowl."

¹⁶ Two of two years old.

¹⁷ Sang.

¹⁸ One.

¹⁹ Be.

²⁰ Let the plough stand.

Gif thee lack lifelode,¹
 Lene thee ich will ²
 Swich ³ good as God hath sent:
 Go we, leve brother."⁴

Alliterative verse, the most ancient form of our poetry, would seem to have been revived, and brought into fashion or favor again for a time, after having been long disused, by its successful employment in the Visions of Piers Ploughman, and the popularity of that work. Both Warton in his History, and Percy in an Essay published in the second volume of his Reliques, have noticed several other alliterative poems, in addition to the Creed, which, although not all strictly speaking to be regarded as imitations of Langland's performance, probably owed their existence mainly to the example he had set. In some of them the alliteration is carried much further than in the Visions, the jingle, or juggle, of like *beginnings*, as Milton might have called it, being introduced, not according to a rule only in certain places of the verse, but apparently to the utmost extent that the writer found possible by availing himself of all the resources of his vocabulary. Here, for instance, is the commencing stanza of a Hymn to the Virgin, given by Warton:—

Hail beo yow, Marie, moodur and may,⁵
 Mylde, and meke, and merciabe; ⁶
 Heyl, folliche⁷ fruit of sothfast fay,⁸
 Agayn uche stryf⁹ studefast and stable!
 Heil, sothfast soul in uche a say,¹⁰
 Undur the son¹¹ is non so able.
 Heil, logge¹² that ur lord in lay,
 The formast that never was founden in fable!¹³
 Heil, trewe, trouthfull, and tretable!¹⁴
 Heil, cheef i chosen of chastite!¹⁵
 Heil, homely, hende,¹⁶ and amyable
 To preye for us to thi sone so fre!

¹ If livelihood lack, or be wanting to, thee.

² Give or lend thee I will.

³ Such.

⁴ Let us go, dear brother.

⁵ Mother and maid.

⁶ Merciful.

⁷ Baptismal?

⁸ Truth-fast faith.

⁹ Against each strife steadfast.

¹⁰ In each assay, or trial.

¹¹ The sun.

¹² Lodge.

¹³ The foremost that ever was found in story?

¹⁴ Tractable.

¹⁵ Chosen (ychosen) chief of chastity.

¹⁶ Gentle, courteous.

THIRD ENGLISH.

(MIXED OR COMPOUND ENGLISH.)

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

THE Vision of Piers Ploughman is our earliest poetical work of any considerable extent that may still be read with pleasure; but not much of its attraction lies in its poetry. It interests us chiefly as rather a lively picture (which, however, would have been nearly as effective in prose) of much in the manners and general social condition of the time, and of the new spirit of opposition to old things which was then astir; partly, too, by the language and style, and as a monument of a peculiar species of versification. Langland, or whoever was the author, probably contributed by this great work to the advancement of his native tongue to a larger extent than he has had credit for. The grammatical forms of his English will be found to be very nearly, if not exactly, the same with those of Chaucer's; his vocabulary, if more sparingly admitting the non-Teutonic element, still does not abjure the principle of the same composite constitution; nor is his style much inferior in mere regularity and clearness. So long a work was not likely to have been undertaken except by one who felt himself to be in full possession of the language as it existed: the writer was no doubt prompted to engage in such a task in great part by his gift of ready expression; and he could not fail to gain additional fluency and skill in the course of the composition, especially with a construction of verse demanding so incessant an attention to words and syllables. The popularity of the poem, too, would diffuse and establish whatever improvements in the language it may have introduced or exemplified. In addition to the ability displayed in it, and the popular spirit of the day with which it was animated, its position in the national literature naturally and deservedly gave to the Vision of Piers Ploughman an extraordinary influence; for it has the distinction (so far as is either known or probable) of being the earliest original work, of any magnitude, in the present form of the language. Robert of Gloucester and

Robert de Brunne, Langland's predecessors, were both, it may be remembered, only translators or paraphrasts.

If Langland, however, is our earliest original writer, Chaucer is still our first great poet, and the true father of our literature, properly so called. Compared with his productions, all that precedes is barbarism. But what is much more remarkable is that very little of what has followed in the space of nearly five centuries that has elapsed since he lived and wrote is worthy of being compared with what he has left us. He is in our English poetry almost what Homer is in that of Greece, and Dante in that of Italy, — at least in his own sphere still the greatest light.

Although, therefore, according to the scheme of the history of the language which has been propounded, the third form of it, or that which still subsists, may be regarded as having taken its commencement perhaps a full century before the date at which we are now arrived, and so as taking in the works, not only of Langland, but of his predecessors from Robert of Gloucester inclusive, our living English literature may be most fitly held to begin with the poetry of Chaucer. It will thus count an existence already of above five centuries. Chaucer is supposed to have been born about the beginning of the reign of Edward III. — in the year 1328, if we may trust what is said to have been the ancient inscription on his tombstone; so that he had no doubt begun to write, and was probably well known as a poet, at least as early as Langland. They may indeed have been contemporaries in the strictest sense of the word, for anything that is ascertained. If Langland wrote the Creed of Piers Ploughman, as well as the Vision, which (although it has not, we believe, been suggested) is neither impossible nor very unlikely, he must have lived to as late, or very nearly as late, a date as Chaucer, who is held to have died in 1400. At the same time, as Langland's greatest, if not only, work appears to have been produced not long after the middle of the reign of Edward III., and the composition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales not to have been begun till about the middle of that of Richard II., the probability certainly is, regard being had to the species and character of these poems, each seemingly impressed with a long experience of life, that Langland, if not the earlier writer, was the elder man.

The writings of Chaucer are very voluminous; comprising, in so far as they have come down to us, in verse, The Canterbury

Tales; the Romaunt of the Rose, in 7701 lines, a translation from the French Roman de la Rose of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun; Troilus and Creseide, in Five Books, on the same subject as the Filostrato of Boccaccio; the House of Fame, in Three Books; Chaucer's Dream, in 2235 lines; the Book of the Duchess (sometimes called the Dream of Chaucer), 1334 lines; the Assembly of Fowls, 694 lines; the Flower and the Leaf, 595 lines; the Court of Love, 1442 lines; together with many ballads and other minor pieces: and in prose (besides portions of the Canterbury Tales), a translation of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*; the Testament of Love, an imitation of the same treatise; and a Treatise on the Astrolabe, addressed to his son Lewis in 1391, of which, however, we have only two out of five parts of which it was intended to consist. All these works have been printed, most of them more than once; and a good many other pieces have also been attributed to Chaucer which are either known to be the compositions of other poets, or of which at least there is no evidence or probability that he is the author. Only the Canterbury Tales, however, have as yet enjoyed the advantage of anything like careful editing. Tyrwhitt's elaborate edition was first published, in 4 vols. 8vo., in 1775, his Glossary to all the genuine works of Chaucer having followed in 1778; and another edition, presenting a new text, and also accompanied with notes and a Glossary, was brought out by Mr. T. Wright for the Percy Society in 1847.

In his introductory Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer, Tyrwhitt observes, that at the time when this great writer made his first essays the use of rhyme was established in English poetry, not exclusively (as we have seen by the example of the Vision of Piers Ploughman), but very generally, "so that in this respect he had little to do but to imitate his predecessors." But the metrical part of our poetry, the learned editor conceives, "was capable of more improvement, by the polishing of the measures already in use, as well as by the introduction of new modes of versification." "With respect," he continues, "to the regular measures then in use, they may be reduced, I think, to four. First, the long Iambic metre, consisting of not more than fifteen nor less than fourteen syllables, and broken by a cæsura at the eighth syllable. Secondly, the Alexandrine metre, consisting of not more than thirteen syllables nor less than twelve, with a cæsura at the sixth. Thirdly, the Octosyllable metre, which was in reality

the ancient dimeter Iambic. Fourthly, the stanza of six verses, of which the first, second, fourth, and fifth were in the complete octosyllable metre, and the third and last catalectic, — that is, wanting a syllable, or even two." The first of these metres Tyrwhitt considers to be exemplified in the *Ormulum*, and probably also in the *Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, if the genuine text could be recovered; the second, apparently, by Robert de Brunne, in imitation of his French original, although his verse in Hearne's edition is frequently defective: the third and fourth were very common, being then generally used in lighter compositions, as they still are. "In the first of these metres," he proceeds, "it does not appear that Chaucer ever composed at all (for I presume no one can imagine that he was the author of *Gamelyn*), or in the second; and in the fourth we have nothing of his but the *Rhyme of Sire Thopas*, which, being intended to ridicule the vulgar romancers, seems to have been purposely written in their favorite metre. In the third or octosyllable metre he has left several compositions, particularly an imperfect translation of the *Roman de la Rose*, which was probably one of his earliest performances, *The House of Fame*, the *Dethe of the Duchesse Blanche*, and a poem called his *Dreme*: upon all which it will be sufficient here to observe in general, that, if he had given no other proofs of his poetical faculty, these alone must have secured to him the pre-eminence above all his predecessors and contemporaries in point of versification. But by far the most considerable part of Chaucer's works is written in that kind of metre which we now call the *Heroic*, either in distichs or stanzas; and, as I have not been able to discover any instance of this metre being used by any English poet before him, I am much inclined to suppose that he was the first introducer of it into our language." It had been long practised by the writers both in the northern and southern French; and within the half century before Chaucer wrote it had been successfully cultivated, in preference to every other metre, by the great poets of Italy, — Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Tyrwhitt argues, therefore, that Chaucer may have borrowed his new English verse either from the French or from the Italian.

That the particular species of verse in which Chaucer has written his *Canterbury Tales* and some of his other poems had not been used by any other English poet before him, has not, we believe, been disputed, and does not appear to be disputable, at

least from such remains of our early poetical literature as we now possess. Here, then, is one important fact. It is certain, also, that the French, if not likewise the Italian, poets who employed the decasyllabic (or more properly hendecasyllabic¹) metre were well known to Chaucer. The presumption, therefore, that his new metre is, as Tyrwhitt asserts, this same Italian or French metre of ten or eleven syllables (our present heroic verse), becomes very strong.

Moreover, if Chaucer's verse be not constructed upon the principle of syllabical as well as accentual regularity, when was this principle, which is now the law and universal practice of our poetry, introduced? It will not be denied to have been completely established ever since the language acquired in all material respects its present form and pronunciation, — that is to say, at least since the middle of the sixteenth century: if it was not by Chaucer at the end of the fourteenth, by whom among his followers in the course of the next hundred and fifty years was it first exemplified?

At present it is sufficient to say that no one of his successors throughout this space has hinted that any improvement, any change, had been made in the construction of English verse since Chaucer wrote. On the contrary, he is generally recognized by them as the great reformer of our language and our poetry, and as their master and instructor in their common art. By his friend

¹ In the Italian language, at least, the original and proper form of the verse appears to have consisted of *eleven* syllables; whence the generical name of the metre is *endecasillabo*, and a verse of *ten* syllables is called *endecasillabo trouco*, and one of *twelve*, *endecasillabo sdrucchiolo*. But these variations do not affect the prosodical character of the verse, which requires only that the tenth should be in all cases the last *accented* syllable. The modern English heroic, or, as we commonly call it, ten-syllabled verse, still admits of being extended by an eleventh or even a twelfth *unaccented* syllable; although, from the constitution of our present language as to syllabic emphasis, such extension is with us the exception, not the rule, as it is (at least to the length of eleven syllables) in Italian. It may be doubted whether Chaucer's type or model line is to be considered as decasyllabic or hendecasyllabic; Tyrwhitt was of opinion that the greater number of his verses, when properly written and pronounced, would be found to consist of eleven syllables; and this will seem probable, if we look to what is assumed, on the theory of his versification which we are considering, to have been the pronunciation of the language in his day. At the same time many of his lines evidently consist (even on this theory) of ten syllables only; and such a construction of verse for ordinary purposes is become so much more agreeable to modern usage and taste that his poetry had better be so read whenever it can be done, even at the cost of thereby somewhat violating the exactness of the ancient pronunciation.

and disciple Occleve he is called “the first finder of our fair language.” So Lydgate, in the next generation, celebrates him as his master — as “chief poet of Britain” — as

— “he that was of making sovereign,
Whom all this lande of right ought prefer,
Sith of our langage he was the lode-ster” —

and as —

“The noble rhethor poet of Britain,
That worthy was the laurer to have
Of poetrye, and the palm attain ;
That made first to distil and rain
The gold dew-drops of speech and eloquence
Into our tongue through his excellence,
And found the flowres first of rhetoric
Our rude speech only to enlumine,” &c.

A later writer, Gawin Douglas, sounds his praise as —

“Venerable Chaucer, principal poet but ¹ peer,
Heavenly trumpet, orlege,² and regulere;³
In eloquence balm, conduct,⁴ and dial,
Milky fountain, clear strand, and rose rial,”⁵

in a strain, it must be confessed, more remarkable for enthusiastic vehemence than for poetical inspiration. The learned, and at the same time elegant, Leland, in the next age describes him as the writer to whom his country’s tongue owes all its beauties : —

“Anglia Chaucerum veneratur nostra poetam,
Cui veneres debet patria lingua suas ;”

and again, in another tribute, as having first reduced the language into regular form : —

“Linguam qui patriam redegit illam
In forman.”

And such seems to have been the unbroken tradition down to Spenser, who, looking back through two centuries, hails his great predecessor as still the “well of English undefiled.”

If now we proceed to examine Chaucer’s verse, do we find it actually characterized by this regularity, which indisputably has at

¹ Without.

² Horologe, clock or watch.

³ Regulator.

⁴ Condiment.

⁵ Royal.

least from within a century and a half of his time been the law of our poetry? Not, if we assume that the English of Chaucer's time was read in all respects precisely like that of our own day. But are we warranted in assuming this? We know that some changes have taken place in the national pronunciation within a much shorter space. The accentuation of many words is different even in Shakspeare and his contemporaries from what it now is: even since the language has been what we may call settled, and the process of growth in it nearly stopped, there has still been observable a disposition in the accent or syllabic emphasis to project itself with more precipitation than formerly, to seize upon a more early enunciated part in dissyllables and other polysyllabic words than that to which it was wont to be attached. For example, we now always pronounce the word *aspect* with the accent on the first syllable; in the time of Shakspeare it was always accented on the last. We now call a certain short composition an *éssay*; but only a century ago it was called an *essáy*: "And write next winter," says Pope, "more essays on man." Probably at an earlier period, when this change was going on more actively, it was part of that general process by which the Teutonic, or native, element in our language eventually, after a long struggle, acquired the ascendancy over the French element; and, if so, for a time the accentuation of many words would be unfixed, or would oscillate between the two systems, — the French habit of reserving itself for the final syllable, and the native tendency to cling to a prior portion of the word. This appears to have been the case in Chaucer's day: many words are manifestly in his poetry accented differently from what they are now (as is proved, upon either theory of his prosody, when they occur at the end of a verse), and in many also he seems to vary the accent — pronouncing, for instance, *lángage* in one line, *langáge* in another — as suits his convenience. But again, under the tendency to elision and abbreviation which is common to all languages in a state of growth, there can be no doubt that, in the progress of the English tongue, from its first subjection to literary cultivation in the middle of the thirteenth century to its final settlement in the middle of the seventeenth, it dropt and lost altogether many short or unaccented syllables. Some of these, indeed, our poets still assert their right to revive in pressing circumstances: thus, though we now almost universally elide or suppress the *e* before the terminating *d* of the preterites

and past participles of our verbs, it is still sometimes called into life again to make a distinct syllable in verse. Two centuries ago, when perhaps it was generally heard in the common speech of the people (as it still is in some of our provincial dialects), and when its suppression in reading prose would probably have been accounted an irregularity, it was as often sounded in verse as not, and the license was probably considered to be taken when it was elided. The elision, when it took place, was generally marked by the omission of the vowel in the spelling. If we go back another century, we find the pronunciation of the termination as a distinct syllable to be clearly the rule and the prevailing practice, and the suppression of the vowel to be the rare exception. But even at so late a date as the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, other short vowels as well as this were still occasionally pronounced, as they were almost always written. Both the genitive or possessive singular and the nominative plural of nouns were, down to this time, made by the addition not of *s* only, as now, but of *es* to the nominative singular; and the *es* makes a distinct syllable sometimes in Shakspeare, and often in Spenser. In Chaucer, therefore, it is only what we should expect that it should generally be so pronounced: it is evident that originally, or when it first appeared in the language, it always was, and that the practice of running it and the preceding syllable together, as we now do, has only been gradually introduced and established.

Up to this point Tyrwhitt's theory of Chaucer's versification may be said to be admitted on all hands. It is allowed that in reading Chaucer's verses we should generally sound as distinct syllables the *ed* at the end of verbs and the *es* when it is the plural or possessive termination of a noun; and also that we must give many words a different accentuation from what they now possess. But this is not enough to make the verse in all cases syllabically regular.

The deficiencies of Chaucer's metres, Tyrwhitt contends, are to be chiefly supplied by the pronunciation of what he calls "the *e* feminine;" by which he means the *e* which still terminates so many of our words, but is now either totally silent and ineffective in the pronunciation, or only lengthens or otherwise alters the sound of the preceding vowel—in either case is entirely inoperative upon the syllabication. Thus, such words as *large*, *strange*,

time, &c., he conceives to be often dissyllables, and such words as *Romaine*, *sentence*, often trisyllables, in Chaucer. Some words also he holds to be lengthened a syllable by the intervention of such an *e*, now omitted both in speaking and writing, in the middle — as in *jug-e-ment*, *command-e-ment*, *vouch-e-safe*, &c.

Wallis, the distinguished mathematician, in his *Grammar of the English Language* (written in Latin, and published about the middle of the seventeenth century), had suggested, that the origin of this silent *e* probably was, that it had originally been pronounced, though somewhat obscurely, as a distinct syllable, like the French *e* feminine, which still counts for such in the prosody of that language. Wallis adds, that the surest proof of this is to be found in our old poets, with whom the said *e* sometimes makes a syllable, sometimes not, as the verse requires. “With respect to words imported directly from France,” observes Tyrwhitt, “it is certainly quite natural to suppose that for some time they retained their native pronunciation.” “We have not indeed,” he continues, “so clear a proof of the original pronunciation of the Saxon part of our language; but we know, from general observation, that all changes of pronunciation are generally made by small degrees; and, therefore, when we find that a great number of those words which in Chaucer’s time ended in *e* originally ended in *a*, we may reasonably presume that our ancestors first passed from the broader sound of *a* to the thinner sound of *e* feminine, and not at once from *a* to *e* mute. Besides, if the final *e* in such words was not pronounced, why was it added? From the time that it has confessedly ceased to be pronounced it has been gradually omitted in them, except where it may be supposed of use to lengthen or soften the preceding syllable, as in *hope*, *name*, &c. But according to the ancient orthography, it terminates many words of Saxon original where it cannot have been added for any such purpose, as *herte*, *childe*, *olde*, *wilde*, &c. In these, therefore, we must suppose that it was pronounced as *e* feminine, and made part of a second syllable, and so, by a parity of reason, in all others in which, as in these, it appears to have been substituted for the Saxon *a*.” From all this Tyrwhitt concludes that “the pronunciation of the *e* feminine is founded on the very nature of both the French and Saxon parts of our language,” and therefore that “what is generally considered as an *e* mute, either at the end or in the middle of words, was anciently pronounced, but obscurely,

like the *e* feminine of the French." In a note, referring to an opinion expressed by Wallis, who, observing that the French very often suppressed this short *e* in their common speech, was led to think that the pronunciation of it would perhaps shortly be in all cases disused among them, as among ourselves, he adds: "The prediction has certainly failed; but, notwithstanding, I will venture to say that when it was made it was not unworthy of Wallis's sagacity. Unluckily for its success, a number of eminent writers happened at that very time to be growing up in France, whose works, having since been received as standards of style, must probably fix for many centuries the ancient usage of the *e* feminine in poetry, and of course give a considerable check to the natural progress of the language. If the age of Edward III. had been as favorable to letters as that of Louis XIV.; if Chaucer and his contemporary poets had acquired the same authority here that Corneille, Molière, Racine, and Boileau have obtained in France; if their works had been published by themselves, and perpetuated in a genuine state by printing; I think it probable that the *e* feminine would still have preserved its place, in our poetical language at least, and certainly without any prejudice to the smoothness of our versification."

In supporting his views by these reasons, Tyrwhitt avoids having recourse to any arguments that might be drawn from the practice of Chaucer himself, — that being in fact the matter in dispute; but his main proposition, to the extent at least of the alleged capacity of the now silent final *e* to make a distinct syllable in Chaucer's day, appears to be demonstrated by some instances in the poet's works. Thus, for example, in the following couplet from the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, unless the word *Rome* which ends the first line be pronounced as a dissyllable, there will be no rhyme: —

"That straight was comen from the court of Rome;
Full loud he sang — Come hither, love, to me."

So again, in the Canon Yeoman's Tale, we have the following lines: —

"And when this alchymister saw his time,
Ris'th up, Sir Priest, quod he, and stondesth by me,"

in the first of which *time* must, evidently in like manner be read

as a word of two syllables. The same rhyme occurs in a quatrain in the Second Book of the *Troilus and Creseide*:—

“ All easily now, for the love of Marte,
 Quod Pandarus, for every thing hath time,
 So long abide, till that the night departe
 For all so sicker as thou liest here by me.”

Finding *Rome* and *time* to be clearly dissyllables in these passages, it would seem that we ought, as Tyrwhitt remarks (Note on Prol. to Cant. Tales, 674), to have no scruple so to pronounce them and other similar words wherever the metre requires it.

Such is the outline of Tyrwhitt's theory, which, it must be admitted, is at least extremely plausible, and which was long universally assented to. Of late, however, it has been attacked from several quarters, and on various grounds. The question is one which is of fundamental and central importance in the history of our language and literature, and which therefore may not unprofitably detain us for a few pages more.

The first person, we believe, who intimated a distinct dissent from Tyrwhitt's conclusions was the late Dr. Nott, in an elaborate Dissertation on the State of English Poetry before the Sixteenth Century, prefixed to his edition of *The Works of the Earl of Surrey*, 4to., Lon. 1815. Dr. Nott's object is to prove that the present system of our versification, the principle of which is syllabical as well as accentual regularity, was the invention of Surrey in the middle of the sixteenth century, and that down to that date our verses of every kind were all what he is pleased to call “rhythmical and not metrical;” — that is, as he explains the expression, “they did not consist, as our verses do at present, of a certain number of feet, each foot of two syllables, but they were constructed so as to be recited with a certain rhythmical cadence; for which reason they seem to have been called Verses of cadence.” (Diss. p. cli.)

This nomenclature, at least, is unfortunate. The phrase “verse of cadence” is Lydgate's; but, whatever may be its import, it certainly was not the only kind of verse known in Chancer's time; for in his *House of Fame* (ii. 115), Chancer himself is described in an address to him by the Eagle as having long been given to apply his wit

“ To make bokes, songis, and ditis,

In rhyme or ellis in cadence.”

It is remarkable that this passage, so clearly implying, as it would seem, that, besides verse of cadence, Chaucer was acquainted with a different sort of verse, which he distinguishes by the name of rhyme, should have escaped the attention of Dr. Nott, or should not be anywhere noticed by him. Further, it appears from a passage in the *Troilus and Creseide* (v. 1796), which the learned editor does quote (Diss. clxiii.), that Chaucer himself considered his verse in that work to be metrical: it is where, after having thus gracefully dismissed his finished work, —

“Go, little book! go, little tragedy!
 There God my Maker yet ere that I die
 So send me might to make some comedy:
 But, little book, make thou thee none envie,
 But subject ben unto all poesie,
 And kiss the steps whereas thou seest pace
 Of Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, Stace,” —

he proceeds in the next stanza to express his earnest hope that transcribers and reciters may be withheld from violating his *metre*: —

“And, for there is so great diversity
 In English and in writing of our tongue,
 So pray I to God that none miswrite thee
Ne thee mismetre for defaut of tongue.”

These passages may not be absolutely irreconcilable with the position that Chaucer's verse was not constructed upon the principle of syllabical regularity; but they show that Dr. Nott has not been happy in the selection of his epithets when he affirms that the only kinds of verse known in Chaucer's time were all “verses of cadence” and all “not metrical.” To speak, as he does, of the feet of our present verses as all consisting each of *two* syllables is another obvious error of expression.

Dr. Nott maintains that Chaucer's supposed employment of the final and now silent *e* as a distinct syllable could not have been derived from the similar use of the *e* feminine in French poetry; but he satisfies himself with a mere expression of his conviction on 'his point. “It remains,” he says, “yet to be proved that the use of the *e* feminine, such as is here contended for, was then established in French poetry. It seems clear to me that it was not:

nor do I doubt but that he will arrive at the same conclusion who will give him a fair opportunity to examine dispassionately the early French poets and particularly the manuscript copies of their works." It is probable that the early French verse was anciently written with less regularity than it afterwards acquired; and in the earlier poets of that language, therefore, the prosodical use of what is called the *e* feminine may both seem and be somewhat capricious; but it is a startling assumption that such use is altogether a modern invention. Upon this supposition it behoved Dr. Nott to point out when and by whom so extraordinary an innovation was introduced. It is strange he should not have perceived that his notion attributes to some comparatively recent French poet the very same thing which he properly objects to as unlikely to have happened in the case of Chaucer, — that, in his own words, "if Chaucer really did employ the *e* feminine in his versification in the manner supposed, it must have been a contrivance purely of his own invention," — "a supposition this," he adds, "which, I apprehend, few will be disposed to maintain." (Diss. p. cxliii.)

But the supposition in question is one which nobody has ever advanced with regard to Chaucer. "It appears to me incredible," says Dr. Nott, a few sentences before, "that Chaucer, who was remarkable for his common sense and practical view of things, meaning to form a standard style in language, should begin by introducing a novel mode of pronunciation, which, being contrary to common usage, could not be generally adopted." This is an absurdity of the learned editor's own making. Tyrwhitt does not imagine that Chaucer introduced any novel mode of pronunciation; he conceives that the pronunciation of the language found, according to his view, in Chaucer's poetry was the common pronunciation of the time. If the poetry of Chaucer is to be so read, so undoubtedly is that also of Langland, and Minot, and De Brunne, and Robert of Gloucester, and all our other early English poetry. What Chaucer introduced, and borrowed from the poetry of France or Italy, if he introduced or thence borrowed anything, was not the occasional pronunciation of the final *e* as a distinct syllable, but the general principle of metrical regularity, to which he adapted this and all the other points of the ancient and established national mode of speech. What particular advantage could he have gained by merely multiplying in this or in any other way the number of syllables in the language? It is an odd notion for Dr. Nott to

take up that Chaucer's only object in his supposed reformation of our verse was to contrive some ready way of always spinning out his line into ten or eleven syllables. A method of reducing it within those dimensions would have been found equally convenient, if he had ever thought of resorting to any such unheard of and absurd devices. But it is not necessary for the refutation of the claim set up by Dr. Nott in favor of the Earl of Surrey, that we should suppose Chaucer to have made any change whatever in the principles of English versification. If it be only admitted that his verses are constructed upon the principle of syllabical regularity, it does not matter, for this question, whether those of his predecessors are so or not. His versification may surpass theirs only by this common principle being applied by him with more care, skill, and success than it was by them. He may have made no innovation in the structure of our verse whatever, and borrowed nothing from the poets of France or Italy except only their superior correctness and elegance.

The only one of Dr. Nott's arguments which has much or indeed any apparent force is that which he draws from the manner in which all our early poetry, that of Chaucer included, is stated to be written in the ancient manuscripts. "In all those MSS.," he says, "the cæsura in the middle, and the pause at the end of the line, are pointed out with a precision that leaves no room for conjecture. The points or marks made use of have no reference whatever to punctuation: they never occur but at the place of cæsura in the middle of the line, or at the pause at the end of it; and are often made with red paint, the better to catch the eye. When the mark of cæsura is omitted, an interval is generally left in the middle of the line, between the two hemistichs. The second hemistich frequently begins with a capital, though the introduction of a capital there, instead of assisting, often confuses the sense." (Diss. p. cli.) "An impartial consideration of the subject," he afterwards observes, "and a reference to good MSS., must, I think, lead us to conclude that Chaucer had not a metrical system of numbers in contemplation; but that, on the contrary, he designed his verses to be read, like those of all his contemporaries, with a cæsura and rhythmical cadence." (Id., p. clix.) Again, speaking particularly of the manuscripts of Chaucer's poems, he says, "In these MSS. either the cæsura, or the pause at the end of the line, and sometimes both the pause and the cæsura, are

almost always noted, and that in so careful a manner as makes it questionable whether there be any MS. of good date and authority in which one or both of them is not noted, either by a point or a virgule; though the virgule or point may in some instances have been obliterated. Why this particularity, which must have been designed to answer some practical purpose, should not have been noticed by the several editors of Chaucer's works, I am at a loss to say. The omission is the more remarkable, as it could not have escaped observation that all the MSS. agree in fixing the cæsura in every line, with hardly any variation, at the same place. This is another evident mark of design, amounting to little less than proof that Chaucer not only meant his verses to be rhythmical, but did all he could to settle what their rhythm should be." (Id., p. clxiii.) Finally, he remarks on the subject of the cæsura:—"Its use, and the object proposed by it, is confirmed by the appearance of the early printed editions of Chaucer's works. In the editions subsequent to 1532 the cæsura is almost entirely disused; if it was retained, it seems to have been retained by accident. The reason is obvious. Our English versification had then become metrical. The cæsura was, therefore, no longer wanted for general purposes; it was consequently omitted, though, strictly speaking, in some works it ought to have been retained. But in the editions previous to 1532 the case was different. The rhythmical cadence was then still in use, and therefore the division of the hemistich was still to be continued." (Id., p. clxix.) Surrey's poems were first printed in 1557; but there were editions of Chaucer in 1542, 1546, and 1555, which must be understood according to this statement to be all without the cæsura. Would it not appear, then, that metrical verse, upon Dr. Nott's own showing, had been introduced from fifteen to twenty-five years before Surrey's poems were given to the world? It is true they were written some years before, for Surrey was put to death in January 1547; but they can hardly have been supposed to have been already so widely diffused in manuscript as to have revolutionized the national versification. When the Chaucer of 1542, the first edition without the cæsura, was published, Surrey, according to the common account, was not more than twenty-three or twenty-four years old. Even Dr. Nott does not pretend that he was more than twenty-six.¹

What Dr. Nott calls the pause at the *end* of the line seems to

¹ See Memoir, prefixed to Works, p. x.

have nothing to do with the question he raises in regard to the nature of Chaucer's versification. Of course, it is admitted upon either, and must be admitted upon any, system that a line is such an integral section as may be properly separated by a point or other divisional mark, if it be thought necessary. As poetry is now written, nothing of the kind is required; the limits of the line or verse cannot be more distinctly indicated than they are by each being kept standing by itself; and it is not easy to see what practical purpose could be contemplated by retaining the points at the end of the line after this method was introduced. Probably it was merely a retention from habit of a usage to which transcribers and readers had become accustomed, and which was no doubt very serviceable while verse was written continuously like prose, as it generally or always was in the earliest era of our language. We may, therefore, put aside altogether so much of the above statement as refers to this *final* point or pause. Let us see, then, how the fact stands as to the other and only important mark, that of the *cæsura*, as Dr. Nott calls it, in the middle of each verse. He sets out by telling us that both the *cæsura* in the middle *and* the pause at the end of the line are always pointed out with perfect precision; but this broad assertion is very far from being adhered to when he comes to specify particulars. The next form in which we have the statement is, that, "when the mark of *cæsura* is omitted, an interval is *generally* left in the middle of the line." Then, in still more qualified phrase, we are informed that in the manuscripts of Chaucer's poetry "*either* the *cæsura* *or* the pause at the end of the line, and *sometimes* both, are *almost* always noted." He persists, however, in maintaining the careful manner in which this notation of the pause or pauses has been attended to in all good manuscripts, although he admits that the virgule or point may in some instances have been obliterated; and he affirms, as we have seen, (though not very consistently with his previous admission of its being only in *some* manuscripts that the *cæsura* is noted at all,) "that *all* the manuscripts [of Chaucer] agree in fixing the *cæsura*, in every line, with hardly any variation, at the same place."

Let us now turn to his examples. One will suffice to show how far his statements are borne out, even in their most limited form. The first seven lines of the Canterbury Tales are professed to be given from three different manuscripts. Of one of these, the Lansdowne MS. 907, the account given is, that in this passage the

cæsura or middle pause is not marked at all, either by point or virgule; but that elsewhere we have the lines cut, not uniformly into two portions by a single virgule, but sometimes into two, sometimes into three, sometimes into four portions by a succession of such strokes. This is a phenomenon of which Dr. Nott's theory seems to take no account. All he has to say in regard to it is, that the frequent recurrence of the virgule may be suspected to be intended "to mark some rules in recitation, with which we now are unacquainted." The two other manuscripts, Harl. MSS. 1758 and 7333, as here quoted, differ as to the place of the middle pause in the very first line; and in three of the remaining six lines where the one has only a point the other has both a point and a virgule, in a fourth verse only a virgule, and in a fifth a point followed by a capital letter. But it is hard to say what dependence can be safely placed even upon this apparent amount of agreement. It so happens that the same passage has been printed from the same two manuscripts by Mr. Guest in his *History of English Rhythms* (2 vols. 8vo., London, 1838, vol. i., p. 215), and the variations between his transcripts and those of Dr. Nott are not a little startling. Dr. Nott evidently did not intend to preserve the old spelling, although for the object he had here in view that would have been almost necessary; but some of the liberties he appears to have taken go far beyond the reformation of the antique verse in that particular. In his extract from the MS. 1758, which extends to eight verses, in the first line he might perhaps defend his change of *wit* into *with*, and of *swote* (for sweet) into *sote*; in the third line, *vain* instead of *veyne* (or vein) is probably a typographical erratum; in the fourth, the substitution of *vertu* for *virtue*, though not very intelligible, and indeed the very reverse of what might have been expected, is still not a very wide deviation; but the printing of *had* for *hath* in the second line is an instance of unparadonable inattention; and to transform the eighth line from

"Into the ram his half cours ronne."

as it stands in Mr. Guest's transcript, into

"Hath in the Ram . his half course y-run."

is proceeding to so great a length as to destroy all reliance upon such a mode of pretending to exhibit the testimony of ancient manuscripts, or upon any conclusions so supported. But the discrepancies between the two transcripts of the other MS. bear more

upon the question of the middle pause or cæsura; for, according to Mr. Guest's exhibition of this text, there is in three of the seven lines, the first, second, and sixth, actually no mark of any such pause at all. Mr. Guest states that in this manuscript "the pause, when inserted, is often nothing more than a mere scratch of the pen;" and, so far from regarding either manuscript as a good one, or as carefully written in regard to the divisional point, he describes "the occasional omission or misplacing of the dot as perfectly in keeping with the general inaccuracy" of both. His extract extends to eighteen lines; and in regard to eight of the ten not already examined we are enabled to compare the two Harleian MSS. with another then belonging to the Marquess of Stafford, of which a transcript to that extent is given by Dr. Nott. Passing over other differences, we find that in the Harl. MS. 7333, the middle pause is wanting altogether in the second, fourth, and eighth; that it is also wanting in the third of the Stafford MS.; and that in the fifth it is placed differently in all the three MSS. It is also wanting in the ninth line in the Harl. MS. 1758.

It seems plain that of such confusion and uncertainty as this little or nothing can be made, and that any attempt to exhibit, in printing Chaucer's poetry, the cæsura or middle pause in each verse as noted in the manuscripts would be impracticable, even if it were ever so important. But is this cæsural mark, in fact, of any importance in determining the nature of Chaucer's versification? Mr. Guest holds, as well as Dr. Nott, that each line in Chaucer consists properly of two parts, which the cæsural mark was designed to indicate: "Still, as it seems to me," he observes, after describing the irregularity with which this mark is introduced in the manuscripts, "we can only come to *one* conclusion in examining these manuscripts; namely, that each verse was looked upon as made up of two sections, precisely in the same way as the alliterative couplet of the Anglo-Saxons."¹ Yet Mr. Guest finds no difficulty in reconciling with the principles of syllabical rhythm this fact of the division of each verse by the cæsural mark, which Dr. Nott regards as demonstrative of the rhythm being not syllabical but only accentual.

Nor is there, in truth, anything in the cæsura to decide the matter either one way or the other. The middle pause, as found in the manuscripts of Chaucer, appears to be as consistent with the

¹ History of English Rhythms, i. 216.

syllabical as with the merely accentual scanning of the verse, if the right text be followed. For example, in printing the first eighteen lines of the *Canterbury Tales* with accentual marks, to show in what manner the verse was, as he apprehends, recited, Dr. Nott gives the first line thus:—

“When that April | with his shoures soote;”

marking the three syllables, *when*, *with*, and *shour* as long, the last syllable of *April* and the word *soote* with a grave accent, and the syllables *that*, *his*, and *es* (of *shoures*) as short; the first syllable of *April* being left without any mark. It is not very clear what all the parts of this apparatus of notation are intended to mean; but certainly, however the words so set down may be meant to be read or sung, they are not reducible to the regular metre of our modern heroic verse. It is by no means either certain or probable, however, that *when* is Chaucer's word; the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt is *whanne*, which he regards as a dissyllable, and he has as good a right to select that form, which occurs in some of the manuscripts, as Dr. Nott has to select the monosyllabic form, *when*, or *whan*, from other manuscripts, for the purposes of *his* theory. The next five lines are every one of them, even as printed by Dr. Nott, of perfect metrical regularity; the cæsura is also where it should be upon either system; the only thing that interferes with their being read like any modern English heroic verse is Dr. Nott's own notation of their supposed temporal and accentual character. All that is wanting to make the seventh line a correct modern verse, is to be read *younge* (in two syllables) with Tyrwhitt, instead of *young* with Nott, there being manuscript authority for both forms. The eighth line Dr. Nott prints—

“Hath in the Ram | half his course y-run.”

We doubt whether there be any authority for this form of the verse; but, at any rate, Tyrwhitt's form,

“Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne”

(where *halfe* is a dissyllable), is supported by the Harleian MS. 7333. In the ninth line Nott obtains his text by changing the dissyllabic *smale* of both the Harleian MSS. into the modern monosyllabic *small*. The next three lines are equally regular upon either system. The thirteenth line will scan metrically, even as

given by Nott, provided we reckon *strange* a dissyllable; but we do not know where he has got his text: it does not agree with either of the Harleian MSS., and as little with the Stafford MS as exhibited by himself in another page. The last five lines, again, are regular upon both systems.

Upon the whole it does not appear that the cæsural mark of the manuscripts can be regarded as indicating or proving, at the most, anything more than that, by the rule of the verse, the place where it fell should always be at the termination and never in the middle of a word—a rule which is also generally, though not always, observed in our modern prosody. As far as can be ascertained, the two parts into which, when it is employed, it divides each of Chaucer's lines, are as much the hemistichs of what Dr. Nott calls a metrical, as of what he calls a merely rhythmical, verse.

We do not understand what notion of the harmony of English verse can have led Dr. Nott to quote the following line from the *Canterbury Tales*—

“In her is high beauty withouten pride” —

as one which, unless read rhythmically (as he calls it), has no principle of harmony at all, even if we read *beauty* with the accent on the last syllable. It is in fact a perfectly correct heroic verse according to the strictest laws of our modern prosody. Yet he asserts that, if Chaucer had followed that prosody, he would unquestionably have written the verse —

“In her high beauty is withouten pride” —

thus making it a perfect Iambic decasyllabic line, “by the transposition of a single word.” Let the reader who has any feeling of Chaucer's direct, natural, manly diction, or even of the most common proprieties of speech, decide. Yet upon this single instance Dr. Nott lays it down that a large proportion of Chaucer's verses cannot be read metrically “without doing the utmost violence to our language; all which verses are harmonious as verses of cadence, if read with the cæsura rhythmically;” and further, that *all* those verses might easily, by a slight transposition, have been reduced to the pure Iambic decasyllabic measure, “if Chaucer had either known that mode of versification, or intended to have adopted it.” Such an assertion, by the by, would be a somewhat bold one, even if a hundred instances were quoted instead of one, and those really instances in point.

While insisting that Chaucer's verses are constructed upon what he describes as the rhythmical principle, which he has begun by defining as independent of the number of feet or syllables, Dr. Nott, strangely enough, admits that the chief improvement which Chaucer made in our versification was the introduction of the line of ten syllables (Diss. p. clviii.); and he afterwards repeatedly calls his verses "Decasyllabic" (or, as he more usually chooses to express himself, "Decasyllables"). But he cannot possibly mean that Chaucer's versification is, upon his theory, really syllabically, any more than that it is accentually, correct, according to our modern notions. In fact, of the eighteen lines which he has printed from the commencement of the *Canterbury Tales*, "to show in what manner rhythmical Decasyllabic verses were recited," no fewer than seven are, according to his own notation, not decasyllabic at all: they are verses of nine syllables (sometimes with an unaccented syllable at the end, which counts for nothing in prosody), not of ten.¹

Finally, before dismissing Dr. Nott and his theory, we may remark that no attempt is made by him or it to meet the apparently conclusive proof of the now silent final *e* having been enunciable as a distinct syllable in Chaucer's age derived from the occurrence of such rhymes as *Ro-me* and *to me*, *ti-me* and *by me*. Indeed he expressly states (Diss. p. clxxxiii. note), that with the exception of a passage in *Oecleve*, of which he shows that the received reading is most probably incorrect (and which, by the *by*, would scarcely have been in point at any rate), he had nowhere met with a single rhyme "to justify the notion that the final *e*, which we properly call the *e* mute, was ever pronounced."

¹ Either from a misprint or from something in his system of notation which is not explained, it is difficult with regard to certain of these lines to say in what manner Dr. Nott intends that they should be read. For instance, in the couplet (as he prints it),

"And palmeres to seeken strange strondes,
To serve halwes couth in sundry londes,"

the appearance of ten syllables is given to each of the two lines by throwing a double accent upon the terminating words *strôndès*, *lôndès*—as if the rhyme lay in the *des*. But it is plain that, if *stronds* and *londes* are to be accounted dissyllables, we have here what is called a double rhyme—which can only count as one syllable in the measure—just as in the immediately preceding couplet, which Dr. Nott himself prints—

"So pricketh them nature in their courages;
Then longen folk to go on pilgrimages."

More recently, however, Tyrwhitt's main principle for the scanning of Chaucer's verse, the occasional pronunciation of this now mute final *e*, has been attacked, or at least denounced, on other grounds and by a higher authority. The late Mr. Richard Price, in his edition of Warton's *History of English Poetry* (4 vols. 8vo. Lon. 1824), assigns an origin to this termination which he considers to be altogether irreconcilable with Tyrwhitt's view of it. The change of orthography from the Anglo-Saxon forms which has taken place in a numerous class of our English words, Mr. Price maintains, "has arisen solely from the abolition of the accental marks which distinguish the long and short syllables." "As a substitute for the former," he says, "the Norman scribes, or at least the disciples of the Norman school of writing, had recourse to the analogy which governed the French language; and, to avoid the confusion which would have sprung from observing the same form in writing a certain number of letters differently enounced and bearing a different meaning, they elongated the word, or attached as it were an accent instead of superscribing it. From hence has emanated an extensive list of terms having final *e*'s and duplicate consonants; which were no more the representatives of additional syllables than the acute or grave accent in the Greek language is a mark of metrical quantity." And he adds in a note, — "The converse of this can only be maintained under an assumption that the Anglo-Saxon words of one syllable multiplied their numbers after the Conquest, and in some succeeding century subsided into their primitive simplicity."¹ Again, he observes in another place, "The Anglo-Saxon *á* was pronounced like the Danish *aa*, the Swedish *â*, or our modern *o* in *more*, *fore*, &c. The strong intonation given to the words in which it occurred would strike a Norman ear as indicating the same orthography that marked the long syllables of his native tongue, and he would accordingly write them with an *e* final. It is from this cause that we find *hár*, *sár*, *hát*, *bát*, *wá*, *án*, *bán*, *stán*, &c., written *hore* (*hore*), *sore*, *hote* (*hot*), *bote* (*boat*), *woe*, *one*, *bone*, *stone*, some of which have been retained. The same principle of elongation was extended to all the Anglo-Saxon vowels that were accentuated; such as *ré*, *reke* (*reek*), *líf*, *life*, *góde*, *gode* (*good*), *scúr*, *shure* (*shower*); and hence the majority of those *e*'s mute upon which Mr. Tyrwhitt has expended so much unfounded speculation."² And the

¹ Preface to Warton, p. (114).

² Note to Warton, Vol. I. p. c. ii.

complete development of these doctrines is promised in a supplementary volume, which was announced under the title of *Illustrations of Warton's History of English Poetry*, containing [among other things] an examination of Mr. Tyrwhitt's *Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer*; but which has never appeared.

Upon this view of the matter let us hear a living writer who must be regarded as the highest authority on the earlier forms of the language. "The most frequent vowel endings of Anglo-Saxon substantives," says Mr. Guest (*Hist. of Eng. Rhythms*, i. 26), "were *a, e, u*. All the three were in the fourteenth century represented by the *e* final." And afterwards, in explaining the origin of our present mode of indicating the long quantity of a vowel preceding a single consonant by the annexation of an *e*, he observes (*Id.* p. 108): — "In the Anglo-Saxon there was a great number of words which had, as it were, two forms: one ending in a consonant, the other in a vowel. In the time of Chaucer all the different vowel endings were represented by the *e* final; and so great is the number of words which this writer uses, sometimes as monosyllables, and sometimes as dissyllables, with the addition of the *e*, that he has been accused of adding to the number of his syllables whenever it suited the convenience of his rhythm. In his works we find *hert* and *herte*, *bed* and *bedde*, *erth* and *erthe*, &c. In the Anglo-Saxon we find corresponding duplicates, the additional syllable giving to the noun, in almost every case, a new declension, and in most a new gender. In some few cases the final *e* had become mute even before the time of Chaucer, and was wholly lost in the period which elapsed between his death and the accession of the Tudors. Still, however, it has its ground in our manuscripts, and *ure* our, *rose* a rose, &c., though pronounced as monosyllables, were still written according to the old spelling. Hence it came gradually to be considered as a rule, that when a syllable ended in a single consonant and mute *e* the vowel was long." "Such," concludes Mr. Guest, "is clearly the origin of this very peculiar mode of indicating the long vowel; and it seems to me so obvious, that I always felt surprised at the many and various opinions that have been hazarded upon the subject. We could not expect much information from men who, like Tyrwhitt, were avowedly ignorant of the early state of our language; but even Hickeys had his doubts whether the final *e* of the Anglo-Saxon words were mute

or vocal; and Rask, notwithstanding his triumph over that far superior scholar, has fallen into this his greatest blunder. Price, whose good sense does not often fail him, supposes this mode of spelling to be the work of the Norman, and the same as the 'orthography that marked the long syllables of his native tongue.' As if the *e* final were mute in Norman French! "Throughout his work, Mr. Guest assumes the syllabic quality of the final *e* in Chaucer's verse, exactly as is done by Tyrwhitt. "After the death of Chaucer," he asserts (vol. i. p. 80), "the final *e*, so commonly used by that poet and his contemporaries, fell into disuse. Hence many dissyllables became words of one syllable, *none* became moon, and *sunne* sun; and the compounds into which they entered were curtailed of a syllable." If it be meant that the change spoken of took place immediately or very soon after the death of Chaucer, the assertion is one which it would probably be somewhat difficult to make good. We should doubt if the new pronunciation was generally introduced before the commencement of the sixteenth century.¹

¹ An important view of the final *e* in the English of the period from the Norman Conquest down at least to the end of the fourteenth century has been for the first time propounded by Mr. Guest. He believes that it has, at least in many cases, a grammatical, as well as a prosodical, value; that it is the remnant of or substitute for the vowel of inflection belonging to the original form of the language. Thus, in the expression *shoures sote* (showers sweet), he holds the *e* of *sote* to be the sign of the plural; and that of *rote* in the expression *to the rote* (to the root) to be the distinctive termination of the dative singular. In other cases, again, he conceives that the *e* distinguishes what is called (as in modern German) the definite from the indefinite form of the adjective; in others, the adverb from the adjective (*brighte*, for example, being the former, equivalent to our modern *brightly*, *bright* the latter). See his English Rhythms, i. 29-34. It is, there can be little doubt, this short *e*, we may here remark, commuted into a short *i*, which we have in such modern forms as *handicraft* and *handiwork*. They are other forms of *handcraft* and *handwork* (both recently, if not still, belonging to the language), not of *handy craft* and *handy work*, which would be expressions having a different meaning altogether. A misunderstanding of this matter is probably what has led to the absurd neologism which has been current on title-pages for the last few years, first employed by a distinguished noble author (of much higher authority in legal than in linguistic learning), and forthwith adopted, of course, by the numerous class to whom anything and everything new recommends itself as certain to be right — the same who some years before at once and unanimously took to writing *Dovor* instead of *Dover* on no better ground than that the former spelling had appeared painted on some stage-coach — the neologism which turns our perfectly correct old *Handbook* (the *Handbuch* of the Germans) into *Handy Book*! Are we to have also *handy ball*, and *handy barrow*, and *handy basket*, and *handy breadth*, and *handy maiden*? It is the same as if we were to call a *sunbeam* a *sunny beam*, or a *fire-shovel* a *fiery shovel*, or a *hairbrush* a *hairy brush*, or a *head-dress* a *heady dress*.

A fact elsewhere noticed by Mr. Guest, we may just remark, although not adduced by him for that purpose, meets Mr. Price's objection about the unlikelihood or impossibility of many Anglo-Saxon monosyllables having after the Conquest been elongated into dissyllables, and having then in some succeeding century reverted to their original monosyllabic condition. If it were necessary to make such an assumption as this in order to vindicate Tyrwhitt's theory of Chaucer's versification, the thing supposed is no more than what has actually happened. As Mr. Guest has observed (vol. i. p. 40), "The dissyllables containing *y* and *w* seem to have been once so numerous in our language, that many words, both English and foreign, were adapted to their pronunciation, and thus gained a syllable: *seur* A. S. became shower, and *fleur* Fr. became flower. Change of pronunciation has again reduced them to their original dimensions."

On the whole, then, we may say that substantially Tyrwhitt's theory remains unshaken; and we shall, in our extracts, assume that the mode proposed by him of reading the verse of Chaucer and his contemporaries is the true one. The reader, to whom it may be new, will find, after a very little practice, that the ear soon gets accustomed to the peculiarities of pronunciation required; and the slight air of archaism which they impart rather adds to the effect of the poetry, so that we come to prefer the retention of these obsolete forms to any substitution, however delicately made, that would aim at modernizing it or making it more intelligible. We shall not, however, in our transcripts, attempt to indicate the pronunciation by any accentual or other marks; being of opinion with Tyrwhitt that "a reader who cannot perform such operations for himself had better not trouble his head about the versification of Chaucer."

"The notion, probably, which most people have of Chaucer," to borrow a few sentences of what we have written elsewhere, "is merely that he was a remarkably good poet for his day; but that, both from his language having become obsolete, and from the advancement which we have since made in poetical taste and skill, he may now be considered as fairly dead and buried in a literary, as well as in a literal, sense. This, we suspect, is the common belief even of educated persons and of scholars who have not actually made acquaintance with Chaucer, but know him only by

name or by sight;—by that antique-sounding dissyllable that seems to belong to another nation and tongue, as well as to another age; and by that strange costume of diction, grammar, and spelling, in which his thoughts are clothed, fluttering about them, as it appears to do, like the rags upon a scarecrow.

“Now, instead of this, the poetry of Chaucer is really, in all essential respects, about the greenest and freshest in our language. We have some higher poetry than Chaucer’s—poetry that has more of the character of a revelation, or a voice from another world: we have none in which there is either a more abounding or a more bounding spirit of life, a truer or fuller natural inspiration. He may be said to verify, in another sense, the remark of Bacon, that what we commonly call antiquity was really the youth of the world: his poetry seems to breathe of a time when humanity was younger and more joyous-hearted than it now is. Undoubtedly he had an advantage as to this matter, in having been the first great poet of his country. Occupying this position, he stands in some degree between each of his successors and nature. The sire of a nation’s minstrelsy is of necessity, though it may be unconsciously, regarded by all who come after him as almost a portion of nature,—as one whose utterances are not so much the echo of hers as in very deed her own living voice,—carrying in them a spirit as original and divine as the music of her running brooks, or of her breezes among the leaves. And there is not wanting something of reason in this idolatry. It is he alone who has conversed with nature directly, and without an interpreter,—who has looked upon the glory of her countenance unveiled, and received upon his heart the perfect image of what she is. Succeeding poets, by reason of his intervention, and that imitation of him into which, in a greater or less degree, they are of necessity drawn, see her only, as it were, wrapt in hazy and metamorphosing adornments, which human hands have woven for her, and are prevented from perfectly discerning the outline and the movements of her form by that encumbering investiture. They are the fallen race, who have been banished from the immediate presence of the divinity, and have been left only to conjecture from afar off the brightness of that majesty which sits throned to them behind impenetrable clouds: he is the First Man, who has seen God walking in the garden, and communed with him face to face.

“But Chaucer is the Homer of his country, not only as having been the earliest of her poets (deserving to be so called), but also as being still one of her greatest. The names of Spenser, of Shakspeare, and of Milton are the only other names that can be placed on the same line with his.

“His poetry exhibits, in as remarkable a degree perhaps as any other in any language, an intermixture and combination of what are usually deemed the most opposite excellences. Great poet as he is, we might almost say of him that his genius has as much about it of the spirit of prose as of poetry, and that, if he had not sung so admirably as he has done of flowery meadows, and summer skies, and gorgeous ceremonials, and high or tender passions, and the other themes over which the imagination loves best to pour her vivifying light, he would have won to himself the renown of a Montaigne or a Swift by the originality and penetrating sagacity of his observations on ordinary life, his insight into motives and character, the richness and peculiarity of his humor, the sharp edge of his satire, and the propriety, flexibility, and exquisite expressiveness of his refined yet natural diction. Even like the varied visible creation around us, his poetry too has its earth, its sea, and its sky, and all the ‘sweet vicissitudes’ of each. Here you have the clear-eyed observer of man as he is, catching ‘the manners living as they rise,’ and fixing them in pictures where not their minutest lineament is or ever can be lost: here he is the inspired dreamer, by whom earth and all its realities are forgotten, as his spirit soars and sings in the finer air and amid the diviner beauty of some far-off world of its own. Now the riotous verse rings loud with the turbulence of human merriment and laughter, casting from it, as it dashes on its way, flash after flash of all the forms of wit and comedy; now it is the tranquillizing companionship of the sights and sounds of inanimate nature of which the poet’s heart is full,—the springing herbage, and the dew-drops on the leaf, and the rivulets glad beneath the morning ray and dancing to their own simple music. From mere narrative and playful humor up to the heights of imaginative and impassioned song, his genius has exercised itself in all styles of poetry, and won imperishable laurels in all.”¹

It has been commonly believed that one of the chief sources from which Chaucer drew both the form and the spirit of his

¹ Printing Machine, No. 37 (1835).

poetry was the recent and contemporary poetry of Italy -- that eldest portion of what is properly called the literature of modern Europe, the produce of the genius of Petrarch and Boccaccio and their predecessor and master, Dante. But, although this may have been the case, it is by no means certain that it was so; and some circumstances seem to make it rather improbable that Chaucer was a reader or student of Italian. Of those of his poems which have been supposed to be translations from the Italian, it must be considered very doubtful if any one was really derived by him from that language. The story of his Palamon and Arcite, which, as the Knight's Tale, begins the Canterbury Tales, but which either in its present or another form appears to have been originally composed as a separate work, is substantially the same with that of Boccaccio's heroic poem in twelve books entitled *Le Teseide*, — a fact which, we believe, was first pointed out by Warton. But an examination of the two poems leads rather to the conclusion that they are both founded upon a common original than that the one was taken from the other. Boccaccio's poem extends to about 12,000 octosyllabic, Chaucer's to not many more than 2000 decasyllabic, verses; and not only is the story in the one much less detailed than in the other, but the two versions differ in some of the main circumstances.¹ Chaucer, moreover, nowhere mentions Boccaccio as his original; on the contrary, as Warton has himself noticed, he professes to draw his materials, not from the works of any contemporary, but from "olde Stories," and "olde bookes that all this story telleth more plain."² Tyrwhitt, too, while holding, as well as Warton, that Chaucer's original was Boccaccio, admits that the latter was in all probability not the inventor of the story.³ Boccaccio himself, in a letter relating to his poem, describes the story as very ancient, and as existing in what he calls *Latino volgare*, by which he may mean rather the Provençal than the Italian.⁴ In fact, as both Warton and Tyr-

¹ See this pointed out by Dr. Nott (who nevertheless assumes the one poem to be a translation from the other), in a note to his *Dissertation on the State of English Poetry before the Sixteenth Century*, p. cclxxiv.

² Warton's *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, ii. 179.

³ *Introductory Discourse to Canterbury Tales*, Note (13).

⁴ The letter is addressed to his mistress (*La Fiametta*), Mary of Aragon, a natural daughter of Robert king of Naples. "Trovata," he says, "una antichissima storia, ed al più delle genti non manifesta, in Latino volgare," &c. The expression here

whitt have shown, there is reason to believe that it had previously been one of the themes of romantic poetry in various languages. The passages pointed out by Tyrwhitt in his notes to Chaucer's poem, as translated or imitated from that of Boccaccio, are few and insignificant, and the resemblances they present would be sufficiently accounted for on the supposition of both writers having drawn from a common source. Nearly the same observations apply to the supposed obligations of Chaucer in his *Troilus and Creseide* to another poetical work of Boccaccio's, his *Filostrato*. The discovery of these was first announced by Tyrwhitt in his Essay prefixed to the *Canterbury Tales*. But Chaucer himself tells us (ii. 14) that he translates his poem "out of Latin"; and in other passages (i. 394, and v. 1653) he expressly declares his "auctor," or author, to be named *Lollius*. In a note to the *Parson's Tale*, in the *Canterbury Tales*, Tyrwhitt assumes that *Lollius* is another name for Boccaccio, but how this should be he confesses himself unable to explain. In his *Glossary* (a later publication) he merely describes *Lollius* as "a writer from whom Chaucer professes to have translated his poem of *Troilus and Creseide*," adding, "I have not been able to find any further account of him." It is remarkable that he should omit to notice that *Lollius* is mentioned by Chaucer in another poem, his *House of Fame* (iii. 378), as one of the writers of the Trojan story, along with Homer, Dares Phrygius, Livy (whom he calls Titus), Guido of Colonna, and "English Galfrid," that is, Geoffrey of Monmouth. The only writer of the name of *Lollius* of whom anything is now known appears to be *Lollius Urbicus*, who is stated to have lived in the third century, and to have composed a history of his own time, which, however, no longer exists.¹ But our ignorance of

has a curious resemblance to the words used by Chaucer in enumerating his own works in the *Legende of Good Women*, v. 420, —

"He made the boke that hight the House of Fame, &c.
And all the love of Palamon and Arcite
Of Thebes, though the story is knowne lite."

Tyrwhitt's interpretation of these last words is, that they seem to imply that the poem to which they allude, the *Palamon and Arcite* (as first composed), had not made itself very popular. Both he and Warton understand the *Latino volgare* as meaning the Italian language in this passage of the letter to *La Fiametta*, as well as in a stanza which he quotes from the *Teseide* in *Discourse*, Note (9).

¹ See Warton, *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, ii. 220; and Vossius, *de Historicis Latinis*, ed. 1651, p. 176.

who Chaucer's Lollius was does not entitle us to assume that it is Boccaccio whom he designates by that name. Besides, the two poems have only that general resemblance which would result from their subject being the same, and their having been founded upon a common original. Tyrwhitt (note to Parson's Tale), while he insists that the fact of the one being borrowed from the other "is evident, not only from the fable and characters, which are the same in both poems, but also from a number of passages in the English which are literally translated from the Italian," admits that "at the same time there are several long passages, and even episodes, in the *Troilus* of which there are no traces in the *Filoscitrato*;" and Warton makes the same statement almost in the same words.¹ Tyrwhitt acknowledges elsewhere, too, that the form of Chaucer's stanza in the *Troilus* does not appear ever to have been used by Boccaccio, nor does he profess to have been able to find such a stanza in any early Italian poetry.² The only other composition of Chaucer's for which he can be imagined to have had an Italian original is his Clerk's Tale in the *Canterbury Tales*, the matchless story of *Griselda*. This is one of the stories of the *Decameron*; but it was not from Boccaccio's Italian that Chaucer took it, but from Petrarch's Latin, as he must be understood to intimate in the Prologue, where he says, or makes the narrator say,—

"I woll you tell a tale which that I
 Learned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
 As preved by his wordes and his werk:
 He is now dead and nailed in his chest;
 I pray to God so yeve his soule rest.
 Francis Petrarch, the laureat poet,
 Highte this clerk, whose rheticke sweet
 Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie."

Petrarch's Latin translation of Boccaccio's tale is, as Tyrwhitt states, printed in all the editions of his works, under the title of *De Obedientia et Fide Uxoriam Mythologia* (a Myth on Wifely Obedience and Faithfulness).³ But, indeed, Chaucer may not have even had Petrarch's translation before him; for Petrarch, in his letter to

¹ Hist. Eng. Poetry, ii. p. 221, note.

² Essay, § 9.

³ It is strange that Warton, Hist. Eng. Poetry, ii. 250, should say that this translation was never printed.

Boccaccio, in which he states that he had translated it from the Decameron, only recently come into his hands, informs his friend also that the story had been known to him many years before. He may therefore have communicated it orally to Chaucer, through the medium of what was probably their common medium of communication, the Latin tongue, if they ever met, at Padua or elsewhere, as it is asserted they did. All that we are concerned with at present, is the fact that it does not appear to have been taken by Chaucer from the Decameron: he makes no reference to Boccaccio as his authority, and, while it is the only one of the Canterbury Tales which could otherwise have been suspected with any probability to have been derived from that work, it is at the same time one an acquaintance with which we know he had at least the means of acquiring through another language than the Italian. To these considerations may be added a remark made by Sir Harris Nicolas: — “That Chaucer was not acquainted with Italian,” says that writer, “may be inferred from his not having introduced any Italian quotation into his works, redundant as they are with Latin and French words and phrases.” To which he subjoins in a note: “Though Chaucer’s writings have not been examined for the purpose, the remark in the text is not made altogether from recollection; for at the end of Speght’s edition of Chaucer’s works translations are given of the Latin and French words in the poems, but not a single Italian word is mentioned.”¹

It may be questioned, then, if much more than the fame of Italian song had reached the ear of Chaucer; but, at all events,

¹ Life of Chaucer, p. 25. Sir Harris had said before: — “Though Chaucer undoubtedly knew Latin and French, it is by no means certain, notwithstanding his supposed obligations to the Decameron, that he was as well acquainted with Italian. There may have been a common Latin original of the main incidents of many if not of all the Tales for which Chaucer is supposed to have been wholly indebted to Boccaccio, and from which original Boccaccio himself may have taken them.” Beside the Clerk’s Tale, which has been noticed above, the only stories in the Canterbury Tales which are found in the Decameron are the Reeve’s Tale, the Shipman’s Tale, and the Franklin’s Tale; but both Tyrwhitt and Warton, while maintaining Chaucer’s obligations in other respects to the Italian writers, admit that the two former are much more probably derived from French Fabliaux (the particular fabliau, indeed, on which the Reeve’s Tale appears to be founded has been published by Le Grand); and the Franklin’s Tale is expressly stated by Chaucer himself to be a Breton lay. He nowhere mentions Boccaccio or his Decameron, or any other Italian authority. Of the Pardoner’s Tale, “the mere outline,” as Tyrwhitt states, is to be found in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*; but the greater part of that collection is borrowed from the Contes and Fabliaux of the French.

the foreign poetry with which he was most familiar was certainly that of France. This, indeed, was probably still accounted everywhere the classic poetical literature of the modern world; the younger poetry of Italy, which was itself a derivation from that common fountain-head, had not yet, with all its real superiority, either supplanted the old lays and romances of the *trouvères* and *troubadours*, or even taken its place by their side. The earliest English, as well as the earliest Italian, poetry was for the most part a translation or imitation of that of France. Of the poetry written in the French language, indeed, in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, the larger portion, as we have seen, was produced in England, for English readers, and to a considerable extent by natives of this country. French poetry was not, therefore, during this era regarded among us as a foreign literature at all; and even at a later date it must have been looked back upon by every educated Englishman as rather a part of that of his own land. For a century, or perhaps more, before Chaucer arose, the greater number of our common versifiers had been busy in translating the French romances and other poetry into English, which was now fast becoming the ordinary or only speech even of the educated classes; but this work had for the most part been done with little pains or skill, and with no higher ambition than to convey the mere sense of the French original to the English reader. By the time when Chaucer began to write, in the latter half of the fourteenth century, the French language appears to have almost gone out of use as a common medium of communication; the English, on the other hand, as we may see by the poetry of Langland and Minot as compared with that of Robert of Gloucester, had, in the course of the preceding hundred years, thrown off much of its primitive rudeness, and acquired a considerable degree of regularity and flexibility, and general fitness for literary composition. In these circumstances, writing in French in England was over for any good purpose: Chaucer himself observes in the prologue to his prose treatise entitled the Testament of Love:—“Certes there ben some that speak their poesy matter in French, of which speech the Frenchmen have as good a fantasy as we have in hearing of Frenchmen’s English.” And again:—“Let, then, clerks enditen in Latin, for they have the property of science and the knowinge in that faculty; and let Frenchmen in their French also endite their quaint terms, for it is kindly [natural] to their mouths; and

let us show our fantasies in such words as we learned of our dames' tongue." The two languages, in short, like the two nations, were now become completely separated, and in some sort hostile: as the Kings of England were no longer either Dukes of Normandy or Earls of Poitou, and recently a fierce war had sprung up still more effectually to divide the one country from the other, and to break up all intercourse between them, so the French tongue was fast growing to be almost as strange and distinctly foreign among us as the English had always been in France. Chaucer's original purpose and aim may be supposed to have been that of the generality of his immediate predecessors, to put his countrymen in possession of some of the best productions of the French poets, so far as that could be done by translation; and with his genius and accomplishments, and the greater pains he was willing to take with it, we may conjecture that he hoped to execute his task in a manner very superior to that in which such work had hitherto been performed. With these views he undertook what was probably his earliest composition of any length, his translation of the *Roman de la Rose*, begun by Guillaume de Lorris, who died about 1260, and continued and finished by Jean de Meun, whose date is about half a century later. "This poem," says Warton, "is esteemed by the French the most valuable piece of their old poetry. It is far beyond the rude efforts of all their preceding romancers; and they have nothing equal to it before the reign of Francis the First, who died in the year 1547. But there is a considerable difference in the merit of the two authors. William of Lorris, who wrote not one quarter of the poem, is remarkable for his elegance and luxuriance of description, and is a beautiful painter of allegorical personages. John of Meun is a writer of another cast. He possesses but little of his predecessor's inventive and poetical vein; and in that respect he was not properly qualified to finish a poem begun by William of Lorris. But he has strong satire and great liveliness. He was one of the wits of the court of Charles le Bel. The difficulties and dangers of a lover in pursuing and obtaining the object of his desires are the literal argument of this poem. This design is couched under the argument of a rose, which our lover after frequent obstacles gathers in a delicious garden. He traverses vast ditches, scales lofty walls, and forces the gates of adamantine and almost impregnable castles. These enchanted fortresses are all inhabited by various divinities; some of which

and some oppose, the lover's progress."¹ The entire poem consists of no fewer than 22,734 verses, of which only 4149 are the composition of William of Lorris. All this portion has been translated by Chaucer, and also about half of the 18,588 lines written by De Meun: his version comprehends 13,105 lines of the French poem. These, however, he has managed to comprehend in 7701 (Warton says 7699) English verses: this is effected by a great compression and curtailment of De Meun's part; for, while the 4149 French verses of De Lorris are fully and faithfully rendered in 4432 English verses, the 8956 that follow by De Meun are reduced in the translation to 3269. Warton, who exhibits ample specimens both of the translation and of the original, considers that Chaucer has throughout at least equalled De Lorris, and decidedly surpassed and improved De Meun. We can afford space for only one short extract: the poet represents himself as having seen all that he relates in a dream, the account of which he thus begins:—

That it was May me thoughten tho,²
 It is five year or more ago,
 That it was May thus dreamed me
 In time of love and jollity,
 That all thing ginneth waxen gay;
 For there is neither busk nor hay³
 In May that it n'ill shrowded been,⁴
 And it with newe leaves wrene:⁵
 These woodes eke recoveren green
 That dry in winter been to seen,
 And the earth wexeth proud withal
 For sote⁶ dewes that on it fall,
 And the pover⁷ estate forget
 In which that winter had it set;
 And then becometh the ground so proud
 That it woll have a newe shrowd,
 And make so quaint his robe and fair
 That it had hews an hundred pair,
 Of grass and floures Ind and Pers,⁸
 And many hewes full diverse;
 That is the robe I mean, ywis,

¹ Hist. Eng. Poetry, ii. 209.

³ Bush nor hedgerow.

⁶ Itself hide, or cover.

⁷ Poor.

² Then.

⁴ Will not be shrouded or covered.

⁶ Sweet.

⁸ Indian and Persian.

Through which the ground to praisen is.¹

[The birdes, that han left their song
While they had suffered cold full strong
In weathers gril,² and derk to sight,
Been in May for the sunne bright
So glad, that they shew in singing

That in their heart is such liking,
That they mote singen and been light :

Then doth the nightingale her might
To maken noise and singen blithe ;

Then is blissful many a sithe³
The chalaundre⁴ and the poppingay ;
Then younge folk intenden⁵ aye

For to been gay and amorous,
The time is then so savourous.

[Hard is his heart that loveth nought
In May, when all this mirth is wrought,
When he may on these branches hear
The smale birdes singen clear

Their blissful swete song pitous.

And in this season delitous,
When love affirmeth⁶ alle thing,
Methought one night, in my sleeping
Right in my bed full readily,

That it was by the morrow early ;
And up I rose and gan me clothe ;

Anon I wish⁷ mine hondes both ;
A silver needle forth I drew

Out of a guiler⁸ quaint enow,
And gan this needle thread anon ;

For out of town me list to gone,
The soun of briddes⁹ for to hear
That on the buskes¹⁰ singen clear.

In the sweet season that leif is.¹¹

With a thread basting¹² my sleeves,
Alone I went in my playing,

The smale fowles' song hearkening,
That plained them full many a pair

¹ Is to be praised? if this be the true reading. The French is, "Parquoy la terre miculx se prise."

² Grim, dreary.

³ Address themselves.

⁴ Needle-case.

⁵ Pleasing.

⁶ Time.

⁷ Strengtheneth.

⁸ Birds.

⁹ Time.

⁴ Goldfinch.

⁷ Washed.

¹⁰ Bushes

To sing on boughes blossomed fair ;
 Jollif¹ and gay, full of gladness,
 Toward a river gan me dress²
 Which that I heard ren³ faste by ;
 For fairer playen none saw I
 Than playen me by that rivere ;
 For from an hill that stode⁴ there near
 Come down the stream full stiff and bold ;
 Clear was the water, and as cold
 As any well is, soth to sain,⁵
 And some deal lass⁶ it was than Seine ;
 But it was straighter, wele away ;⁷
 And never saw I ere that day
 The water that so wele liked⁸ me ,
 And wonder glad was I to see
 That lusty⁹ place and that rivere.
 With that water that ran so clear
 My face I wish ; tho saw I wele
 The bottom ypaved every deal¹⁰
 With gravel, full of stoues sheen ;
 The meadows, softe, sote, and green,
 Beet¹¹ right upon the water side ;
 Full clear was then the morrow tide,¹²
 And full attemper¹³ out of drede :¹⁴
 Tho gan I walken through the mead,
 Downward ever in my playing
 Nigh to the river's side coasting.

No verse so flowing and harmonious as this, no diction at once so clear, correct, and expressive, had, it is probable, adorned and brought out the capabilities of his native tongue when Chaucer began to write. Several of his subsequent poems are also in whole or in part translations ; the *Troilus and Creseide*, the *Legende of Good Women* (much of which is borrowed from Ovid's *Epistles*), and others. But we must pass over these, and will take our next extract from his *House of Fame*, no foreign original of which has been discovered, although Warton is inclined to think that it may have been translated or paraphrased from the Provençal. Chaucer,

¹ Jolly.² Direct.³ Run.⁴ Stood.⁵ Sooth to say.⁶ Somewhat less.⁷ Well-away, well a-day, alas.⁸ So well pleased.⁹ Pleasant.¹⁰ Everywhere.¹¹ Perhaps a misprint for *been*.¹² The morning.¹³ Temperate.¹⁴ Without doubt.

however, seems to appear in it in his own person; at least the poet or dreamer is in the course of it more than once addressed by the name of Geoffrey. And in the following passage he seems to describe his own occupation and habits of life. It is addressed to him by the golden but living Eagle, who has carried him up into the air in his talons, and by whom the marvellous sights he relates are shown and explained to him: —

First, I, that in my feet have thee,
 Of whom thou hast great fear and wonder,
 Am dwelling with the God of Thunder,
 Which men yeallen Jupiter,
 That doth me flyen full oft fer¹
 'To do all his commandement;
 And for this cause he hath me sent
 To thee; harken now by thy trouth;
 Certain he hath of thee great routh,²
 For that thou hast so truëly
 So long served ententifly³
 His blinde nephew Cupido,
 And the fair queen Venus also,
 Withouten guerdon ever yet;
 And nathelless⁴ hast set thy wit
 Althoughe in thy head full lit is
 To make bokes, songs, and dittes,
 In rhyme or elles in cadence,
 As thou best canst, in reverence
 Of Love and of his servants eke,
 That have his service sought and seek;
 And painest thee to praise his art,
 Although thou haddest never part;
 Wherefore, so wisely God me bless,
 Jovis yhalt⁵ it great humbles,
 And virtue eke, that thou wilt make
 Anight⁶ full oft thine head to ache
 In thy study, so thou ywritest,
 And ever more of Love enditest,
 In honour of him and praisings,
 And in his folkes furtherings,
 And in their matter all devisest,
 And not him ne his folk despisest,
 Although thou may'st go in the dance

¹ Far.² Ruth, pity.³ Attentively.⁴ Nevertheless.⁵ Jove held.⁶ O' nights, at night

Of them that him list not avance:
 Wherefore, as I now said, ywis,
 Jupiter considreth well this,
 And als, beau sire,¹ of other things,
 That is, that thou hast no tidings
 Of Loves folk if they be glade,
 Ne of nothing else that God made,
 And not only fro ² fer countree
 That no tidinges comen to thee,
 Not of thy very neighebores,
 That dwellen almost at thy dores,
 Thou hearest neither that ne this;
 For, when thy labour all done is,
 And hast made all thy reckonings,
 Instead of rest and of new things,
 Thou goest home to thine house anon,
 And, all so dumb as any stone,
 Thou sittest at another book,
 Till fully dazed is thy look,
 And livest thus as an hermit,
 Although thine abstinence is lit;
 And therefore Jovis, through his grace,
 Will that I bear thee to a place
 Which that yhight the House of Fame, &c.

From the mention of his *reckonings* in this passage, Tyrwhitt conjectures that Chaucer probably wrote the House of Fame while he held the office of Comptroller of the Customs of Wools, to which he was appointed in 1374. It may be regarded, therefore, as one of the productions of the second or middle stage of his poetical life, as the Romaunt of the Rose is supposed to have been of the first. The House of Fame is in three books, comprising in all 2190 lines, and is an exceedingly interesting poem on other accounts, as well as for the reference which Chaucer seems to make in it to himself, and the circumstances of his own life. Another evidence which it carries of the somewhat advanced years of the writer is the various learning and knowledge with which it is interspersed. Here, for instance, is the doctrine of gravitation as explained by the all-accomplished Eagle: —

Geffrey, thou knowest full well this,
 That every kindly ³ thing that is

¹ Fair sir.

² From.

³ Natural.

Yhath a kindly stead, there¹ he
 May best in it conserved be ;
 Unto which place every thing,
 Thorough his kindly inclining,
 Ymeveth² for to comen to
 When that it is away therefro ;
 As thus, lo, thou may'st all day see,
 Take any thing that heavy be,
 As stone, or lead, or thing of weight,
 And bear it ne'er so high on height,
 Let go thine hand it falleth down ;
 Right so, say I, by fire, or soun,
 Or smoke, or other thinges light,
 Always they seek upward on height ;
 Light things up and heavy down charge
 While everich of them be at large ;
 And for this cause thou may'st well see
 That every river to the sea
 Inclined is to go by kind ;
 And, by these skilles as I find,
 Have fishes dwelling in flood and sea,
 And trees eke on the earthe be :
 Thus every thing by his reason
 Hath his own proper mansion,
 To which he seeketh to repair
 There as it shoulde nat appar.³
 Lo this sentence is knowen couth
 Of every philosopher's mouth,
 As Aristotle and Dan Platon
 And other clerkes many one.
 And, to confirmen my reason,
 Thou wottest well that speech is soun,
 Or elles no man might it hear ;
 Now hearken what I woll thee lear.

And then the learned bird proceeds in the like strain to deliver a lecture on the production and propagation of sound : —

Soun is nought but air ybroken,
 And every speeche that is spoken,
 Whe'r⁴ loud or privy, foul or fair,

¹ Where.

³ Where it should not impar, or suffer declension.

² Moveth.

⁴ Whether.

In his substance ne is but air,
 For, as flame is but lighted smoke,
 Right so is soun but air ybroke.
 But this may be in many wise,
 Of the which I will thee devise,¹
 As soun cometh of pipe or harp ;
 For when a pipe is blowen sharp
 The air is twist with violence
 And rent : lo, this is my sentence.
 Eke, when that men harp-strings smite,
 Wheder that it be moch or lite,²
 Lo, with the stroke the air it breaketh,
 And right so breaketh it when men speaketh.
 Thus wost³ thou well what thing is speech :
 Now hennesforth I will thee teach
 How everich speeche, voice, or soun,
 Through his multiplicatioun,
 Though it were piped of a mouse,
 Mote⁴ needes come to Fame's House.
 I prove it thus, taketh heed now,
 By experience ; for, if that thou
 Threw⁵ in a water now a stone,
 Well wost thou it will make anon
 A little roundle as a circle,
 Peraventure as broad as a covirle ;⁶
 And right anon thou shalt see wele
 That circle cause another wheel,
 And that the third, and so forth, **brother**,
 Every circle causing other
 Much broader than himselfen was ;
 And thus, from roundle to compass,
 Each abouten other going
 Ycauseth of others stirring,
 And multiplying evermo,
 Till that it be so far ygo
 That it at bothe brinkes be ;
 Although thou mayest it not see
 Above, yet goeth it alway under,
 Although thou think it a great wonder ;

¹ Instruct.² Much or little.³ Knowest.⁴ Must.⁵ Probably a misprint, or mistranscription, for *throw*.⁶ Potlid.

And whoso saith of truth I vary,
 Bidde him preven¹ the contrary ;
 And right thus every word, ywis,
 That loud or privy yspoken is
 Ymoveth first an air about,
 And of his moving, out of doubt,
 Another air anon is moved.
 As I have of the water proved
 That every circle causeth other,
 Right so of air, my leive brother,
 Everich air another stirreth
 More and more, and speech up beareth,
 Or voice, or noise, or word, or soun,
 Aye through multiplicationun,
 Till it be at the House of Fame, &c.

He then applies this fact of sound tending up into the air, till it find its *stead* or home, the House of Fame, to the confirmation of what he had before delivered on the general law of gravitation or attraction. In another place, we have an illustration drawn from a novelty which we might have thought had hardly yet become familiar enough for the purposes of poetry. The passage, too, is a sample of the wild, almost grotesque imagination, and force of expression, for which the poem is remarkable : —

What did this Æolus? but he
 Took out his blacke trompe of brass,
 That fouler than the devil was,
 And gan this trompe for to blow
 As all the world should overthrow.
 Throughout every region
 Ywent this foule trompes soun,
*As swift as pellet out of gun
 When fire is in the powder run :*
 And such a smoke gan out wend
 Out of the foule trompes end,
 Black, blue, and greenish, swartish, red,
 As doeth where that men melt lead,
 Lo all on high from the tewel :²
 And thereto one thing saw I well,
 That aye the ferther that it ran
 The greater wexen it began,

¹ Prove.² Funnel.

As doth the river from a well ;
And it stank as the pit of hell.

The old mechanical artillery, however, is alluded to in another passage as if also still in use :—

And the noise which that I heard,
For all the world right so it fered¹
As doth the routing² of the stone
That fro the engine is letten gone.

All through the poem runs the spirit of the strange barbarous classical scholarship of the middle ages. The *Æneid* is not altogether unknown to the author ; but it may be questioned if his actual acquaintance with the work extended much beyond the two opening lines, which are pretty literally rendered in six octosyllabic verses near the beginning of the first book. An abridgment, indeed, of the entire story of *Æneas*, as told by Virgil, follows ; but that might have been got at second-hand. The same mixture of the classic and the Gothic occurs throughout that is found in all the poetry, French and Italian as well as English, of this era. For instance :—

There heard I playing on an harp,
That ysounded both well and sharp,
Him Orpheus full craftily ;
And on this other side fast by
Ysat the harper Orion,
And Gacides Chirion,
And other harpers many one,
And the Briton Glaskirion, &c.

Orion here is probably a mistake (not, we fear, a typographical one) for Arion. Why Chirion (by whom Chiron seems to be intended) is called Gacides we do not know—unless the epithet be a misprint for Eacides, or *Æacides*, applied to the Centaur (by a somewhat violent license) as the instructor of Achilles. In a subsequent passage the confusion is more perplexing :—

There saw I then Dan Citherus,
And of Athens Dan Proserus,
And Mercia, that lost her skin,
Both in the face, body, and chin,

¹ Fared, proceeded.

² Roaring.

For that she would envyer, lo !
 To pipen bett ¹ than Apollo.
 There saw I famous old and young
 Pipers of all the Dutche tongue,
 To learnen love dances, springs,
 Reyes,² and the strange things.

Here, we apprehend, Dan Citherus is none other than Mount Cithaeron. Dan Proserus is possibly the unfortunate Procris, who was daughter of the Athenian king Erectheus. Mercia, "that lost *her* skin," is undoubtedly the famous piper Marsyas, turned into a woman by a metamorphosis of which there is no record in Ovid.

As a specimen of the strong painting that characterizes this poem, its crowded and variegated canvas, and the dramatic life that moves and hurries on the action, we will give a portion of the poet's account of his last adventure, his visit to what we may call, with Warton, the House or Labyrinth of Rumor, which went round and round continually as swift as thought, making such a noise as might have been heard from the north of France to Rome. It was made of twigs, and was all over holes and chinks — or, as the poem says,

And eke this house hath of entrees
 As many as leaves been on trees
 In summer when that they been green ;
 And on the roof yet may men seen
 A thousand holes and well mo,
 To letten the sound out ygo ;
 And by day in every tide
 Been all the dores open wide,
 And by night each one is unshet ;
 Ne porter is there none to let ³
 No manner tidings in to pace ;
 Ne never rest is in that place,
 That it is filled full of tidings
 Either loud or of whisperings.
 And ever all the House's angles
 Is full of rownings ⁴ and of jangles,⁵
 Of werres,⁶ of peace, of mariages,
 Of rests, of labour, of viages, &c.

¹ Better.² A kind of Dutch dance.³ Hinder.⁴ Whisperings.⁵ Babbles.⁶ Wars.

The House, which was shaped like a cage, and sixty miles long, stood in a valley; and, after he has gazed upon it with astonishment for a short time, the poet eagerly begs his guide, the Eagle, to convey him to it, and show him what it contains. The answer of the Eagle seems to refer to some actual circumstance or passage of Chaucer's history:—

But certain one thing I thee tell,
 That, but ¹ I bringen thee therein,
 Ne shall thou never con the gin ²
 To come into it, out of doubt,
 So fast it whirleth, lo, about.
 But, sith that Jovis of his grace,
 As I have said, will thee solace
 Finally with these ilke ³ things,
 These uncouth ⁴ sightes and tidings,
 To pass away thine heaviness,
 Such routh hath he of thy distress
 That thou suffredest debonairly
 And woste ⁵ thy selven utterly,
 Wholly desperate of all bliss,
 Sith that fortune hath made amiss ⁶
 The sote ⁷ of all thine hearte's rest
 Languish, and eke in point to brest; ⁸
 But he, through his mighty melite, ⁹
 Will do thee ease, all be it lite. ¹⁰

The imperial bird, accordingly, took up the poet again in its "tone," or claws (*toes*), and, conveying him into the whirling house by a window, set him down on the floor. Then, he proceeds,

————— Such great congregation
 Of folk as I saw roam about,
 Some it within and some without,
 N'as never seen, ne shall be eft ¹¹
 And every wight that I saw there
 Rownd everich ¹² in other's ear
 A newe tiding privily,
 Or else he told it openly,

¹ Unless.² Know the contrivance (engine).³ Same.⁴ Strange (unknown).⁵ Wastest.⁶ Unluckily.⁷ Sweet.⁸ On the point of bursting.⁹ Not understood¹⁰ Little.¹¹ Again.¹² Whispered every one.

Right thus, and said, Ne wost nat thou
 That is betidden,¹ lo ! right now ?
 No, certes, quod he ; tell me what ;
 And then he told him this and that,
 And swore thereto that it was soth ;
 Thus hath he said, and thus he doth,
 And this shall be, and this heard I say,
 That shall be found, that dare I lay ;
 That all the folk that is on live
 Ne have the cunning to deserive
 Tho thinges that I hearden there,
 What aloud and what in the ear.
 But all the wonder most was this,
 When one had heard a thing, ywis,
 He came straight to another wight,
 And gan him tellen anon right
 The same tale that to him was told
 Or it a furlong way was old,
 And began somewhat for to ech²
 Unto this tiding in his speech
 More than ever it spoken was,
 And nat so soon departed n'as
 Tho fro him that he ne ymet³
 With the third man, and, ere he let⁴
 Any stonnd,⁵ he ytold him else ;⁶
 Weren the tidings sooth or false,
 Yet wold he tell it natheless.
 And evermore with no increase
 Than it was erst : thus north and south
 Went every tiding from mouth to mouth,
 And that increasing ever mo,
 As fire is wont to quicken and go
 From a sparkle sprongen⁷ amiss,
 Till all a city brent up is.
 And when that that was full up-sprong,
 And waxen more on every tongue
 Than⁸ er it was, and went anon
 Up to a window out to gone,
 Or but⁹ it might out there ypass,

¹ Knowest thou not that which is befallen.

² Add (eke)

³ And no sooner was departed then from him that he met.

⁴ Stopped, delayed.

⁵ Moment.

⁶ Also.

⁷ Sprung.

⁸ Before.

⁹ Ere ever.

It gan out creep at some crevass,
 And flew forth faste for the nones.¹
 And sometime I saw there at once
 A leasing² and a sad soothsaw,³
 That gonnen of aventure draw,⁴
 Out at a window for to pace,
 And when they metten in that place
 They were achecked⁵ bothe two,
 And neither of them might out go,
 For each other they gun so crowd,
 Till each of them gan cryen loud,
 Let me gon first; Nay, but let me,
 And here I wol ensuren thee
 With vowes, that⁶ thou wolt do so,
 That I shall never fro thee go,
 But be alway thine own sworn brother;
 We wol meddle⁷ us each in other,
 That no man, be he ne'er so wroth,
 Shall have one of us two, but both
 At ones, as beside his leve,⁸
 Come we a morrow or on eve,
 Be we ycried or still yrowned.
 Thus saw I false and sooth compowned
 Togeder fly for o⁹ tiding.
 Thus out at holes gon to wring¹⁰
 Every tiding straight to Fame;
 And she gan yeven¹¹ each his name
 After her disposition,
 And yeve them eke duration,
 Some to wexen and wanen soon,
 As doth the fair and white moon,
 And let him gone: there might I seen
 Winged wonders full fast flyen,
 Twenty thousand all in a rout
 As Æolus them blew about.
 And, Lord! this house in alle times
 Was full of shipmen and pilgrimes
 With scrippes bretful¹² of leasings,

¹ For the occasion (the nonce).

² Lie, falsehood.

³ Grave truth.

⁴ Began by chance to draw.

⁵ Checked, stopped.

⁷ Intermix.

⁶ Apparently a misprint for "and," that is, *if*.

⁸ Without his leave?

⁹ One.

¹⁰ To squeeze out †

¹¹ Give.

¹² Topful.

Intermeddeled with tidings ;
 And eke, alone by them selve,
 A many thousand times twelve
 Saw I eke of these pardoners,
 Curroures,¹ and eke of messengers,
 With boxes crommed full of lies
 As ever vessel was with lees.
 And, as I altherfastest² went
 About, and did all mine intent³
 Me for to playen,⁴ and for to lear,⁵
 And eke a tidings for to hear
 That I had heard of some countree,
 That shall not now be told for me,
 For it no need is (readily
 Folk can ysing it bet than I,
 For all mote⁶ out, or late or rathe,⁷
 Alle the sheaves in the lathe),⁸
 I hearden a great noise withal
 Within a corner of the hall,
 There⁹ men of love tidings told ;
 And I gan thiderward behold,
 For I saw renning every wight
 As fast as that they hadden might ;
 And everich cried, What thing is that ?
 And some said, I n'ot¹⁰ never what :
 And when they were all on an heap,
 Tho they behind gonnen up leap,
 And clamben up on other fast,
 And up the noise on highen cast,
 And treaden fast on other's heels,
 And stamp as men done after eels ;
 But at the last I saw a man,
 Which that I nought describe ne can,
 But he yseemed for to be
 A man of great aucturity.

At the apparition of this unnamed personage the poet awakens from his dream, and the poem ends.

¹ Couriers.

² Fastest of all.

³ Endeavor.

⁴ To play or amuse myself?

⁵ Learn.

⁶ Must.

⁷ Late or soon.

⁸ Barn. Urry misprints the word "fathe." His punctuation also shows that he did not understand the passage.

⁹ Where.

¹⁰ Know not (ne wot).

Through such deeper thinking and bolder writing as this, Chaucer appears to have advanced from the descriptive luxuriance of the *Romaunt of the Rose* to his most matured style in the *Canterbury Tales*. This is not only his greatest work, but it towers above all else that he has written, like some palace or cathedral ascending with its broad and lofty dimensions from among the common buildings of a city. His genius is another thing here altogether from what it is in his other writings. Elsewhere he seems at work only for the day that is passing over him; here, for all time. All his poetical faculties put forth a strength in the *Canterbury Tales* they have nowhere else shown; not only is his knowledge of life and character greater, his style firmer, clearer, more flexible, and more expressive, his humor more subtle and various, but his fancy is more nimble-winged, his imagination far richer and more gorgeous, his sensibility infinitely more delicate and more profound. And this great work of Chaucer's is nearly as remarkably distinguished by its peculiar character from the great works of other poets as it is from the rest of his own compositions. Among ourselves at least, if we except Shakspeare, no other poet has yet arisen to rival the author of the *Canterbury Tales* in the entire assemblage of his various powers. Spenser's is a more aerial, Milton's a loftier, song; but neither possesses the wonderful combination of contrasted and almost opposite characteristics which we have in Chaucer:—the sportive fancy, painting and gilding everything, with the keen, observant, matter-of-fact spirit that looks through whatever it glances at; the soaring and creative imagination, with the homely sagacity, and healthy relish for all the realities of things; the unrivalled tenderness and pathos, with the quaintest humor and the most exuberant merriment; the wisdom at once and the wit; the all that is best, in short, both in poetry and in prose, at the same time.

The *Canterbury Tales* is an unfinished, or at least, as we have it, an imperfect work; but it contains above 17,000 verses, besides more than a fourth of that quantity of matter in prose. The *Tales* (including the two in prose¹) are twenty-four in number;

¹ Mr. Guest conceives that one of these prose tales, the *Tale of Meliboeus*, (that told by the poet himself,) is a specimen of the kind of poetry called *cadence*, of which mention is made in a passage that has been quoted in a preceding page from the *House of Fame* (*Hist. Eng. Rhythms*, ii. 255-258). "As the tale proceeds," he says, "the rhythmical structure gradually disappears." Tyrwhitt, after informing us that Mr. William Thomas, in one of his MS. notes upon the copy of Urry's

and they are interspersed with introductions to each, generally short, called prologues, besides the Prologue to the whole work, in which the pilgrims or narrators of the tales are severally described, and which consists of between 800 and 900 lines. The Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale is fully as long. All the twenty-four tales are complete, except only the Cook's Tale, of which we have only a few lines, the Squire's Tale, which remains "half-told," and the burlesque Tale of Sir Thopas, which is designedly broken off in the middle. Of the nineteen complete tales in verse, the longest are the Knight's Tale of 2250 verses, the Clerk's Tale of 1156, and the Merchant's Tale of 1172.¹ The entire work, with the exception of the prose tales and the Rime of Sir Thopas (205 lines), is in decasyllabic (or hendecasyllabic) verse, arranged either in couplets or in stanzas.

The few extracts we can give cannot, of course, convey any notion of this vast and various poem to those who are not acquainted with it; but those who are may have their recollection of it refreshed, and the curiosity of other readers may be excited, though not satisfied, by the two or three passages we shall now subjoin.

The general Prologue is a gallery of pictures almost unmatched for their air of life and truthfulness. Here is one of them: —

There was also a nun, a Prioress
 That of her smiling was full simple and coy,
 Her greatest oathe n'as but by Saint Loy;²
 And she was cleped³ Madame Eglantine.
 Full well she sange the service divine,
 Entuned in her nose full sweetely;
 And French she spake full fair and fetisly⁴

edition presented by him to the British Museum, had observed that this tale seems to have been written in blank verse, adds: "It is certain that in the former part of it we find a number of blank verses intermixed in a much greater proportion than in any of our author's other prose writings; but this poetical style is not, I think, remarkable beyond the first four or five pages."

¹ Some of the old editions add the following spurious tales: — The Cook's Tale of Gamelyn, in 1787 short verses; the Ploughman's Tale, with a short prologue, in 1383 alternately rhyming verses; and the Merchant's Second Tale, or the History of Beryn, in 3289 lines, preceded by the prologue of the Pardoner and Tapster, in 729 lines. These are all rejected by Tyrwhitt.

² That is, Saint Eloy, or Eligius. *Oathe* here, according to Mr. Guest, is the old genitive plural (originally *atha*), meaning of *oaths*.

³ Called

⁴ Neatly.

After the school of Stratford atte Bow,
 For French of Paris was to her unknow.¹
 At meate was she well ytaught withal ;
 She let no morsel from her lippes fall,
 Ne wet her fingers in her sauce deep ;
 Well could she carry a morsel and well keep
 Thatte no droppe ne fell upon her breast :
 In curtesy was set full much her lest.²
 Her over-lippe wiped she so clean
 That in her cuppe was no ferthing³ seen
 Of grease when she drunken had her draught.
 Full seemely after her meat she raught.⁴
 And sickerly⁵ she was of great disport,
 And full pleasant and amiable of port,
 And pained⁶ her to counterfeiten cheer
 Of court, and been estatelich of manere,
 And to been holden digne⁷ of reverence.

But for to speaken of her conscience,
 She was so charitable and so pitous
 She wolde weep if that she saw a mouse
 Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.
 Of smale houndes had she that she fed
 With roasted flesh, and milk, and wastel bread ;
 But sore wept she if one of them were dead,
 Or if men smote it with a yerde⁸ smart :
 And all was conscience and tender heart.

Full seemely her wimple ypinched was ;
 Her nose tretis,⁹ her eyen grey as glass ;
 Her mouth full small, and thereto¹⁰ soft and red,
 But sickerly she had a fair forehead ;
 It was almost a spanne broad, I trow ;
 For hardily¹¹ she was not undergrow.¹²

Full fetise¹³ was her cloak, as I was ware.
 Of smale coral about her arm she bare
 A pair of beades gauded all with green ;¹⁴
 And thereon heng¹⁵ a brooch of gold full sheen,
 On which was first ywritten a crowned A,
 And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

¹ Unknown.² Pleasure.³ Smallest spot.⁴ Reached.⁵ Surely.⁶ Took pains.⁷ Worthy.⁸ Yard, rod⁹ Long and well proportioned.¹⁰ In addition to that.¹¹ Certainly.¹² Undergrown, of a low stature.¹³ Neat.¹⁴ Having the gauds or beads colored green.¹⁵ Hung.

As a companion to this perfect full length, we will add that of the Mendicant Friar: —

A Frere there was, a wanton and a merry,
 A limitour,¹ a full solemne man ;
 In all the orders four is none that can
 So much of dalliance and fair langage.
 He had ymade full many a marriage
 Of younge women at his owen cost ;
 Until² his order he was a noble post.
 Full well beloved and familier was he
 With franklins³ over all in his countree,
 And eke with worthy women of the town ;
 For he had power of confessionn,
 As said him selfe, more than a curat,
 For of his order he was a licenciat.
 Full sweetly hearde he confession,
 And pleasant was his absolution.
 He was an easy man to give penance
 There as he wist to han a good pittance ;⁴
 For unto a poor order for to give
 Is signe that a man is well yshrive ;⁵
 For, if he gave, he durste make avant,⁶
 He wiste that a man was repentant ;
 For many a man so hard is of his heart
 He may not weep although him sore smart ;
 Therefore, instead of weeping and prayeres,
 Men mote give silver to the poore freres.
 His tippet was aye farsed⁷ full of knives
 And pinnes for to given faire wives :
 And certainly he had a merry note ;
 Well could he sing and playen on a rote.⁸
 Of yeddings⁹ he bare utterly the pris.¹⁰
 His neck was white as is the flower de lis ;¹¹
 Thereto he strong was as a champion,
 And knew well the taverns in every town,
 And every hosteler and gay tapstere,

¹ A friar licensed to beg within a certain district.

² Unto.

³ Freeholders of the superior class.

⁴ Where he knew he should have a good pittance or fee.

⁵ Shriven.

⁶ Boast.

⁷ Stuffed.

⁸ A musical instrument so called.

⁹ Stories, romances.

¹⁰ Prize.

¹¹ Fleur de lis, lily.

Better than a lazar or a beggere ;
 For unto swich ¹ a worthy man as he
 Accordeth nought ² as, ³ by his facultee, ⁴
 To haven with sick lazars acquaintance ;
 It is not honest, it may not avance, ⁵
 As ⁶ for to dealen with no swich poorail ⁷
 But all with rich and sellers of vitail. ⁸
 And, over ⁹ all, there as ¹⁰ profit should arise,
 Curteis ¹¹ he was, and lowly of service ;
 There n'as no man no where so virtuous ;
 He was the best beggar in all his house ;
 And gave a certain ferme ¹² for the grant
 None of his brethren came in his haunt ;
 For, though a widow hadde but a shoe,
 So pleasant was his *In principio*,
 Yet would he have a ferthing or he went ;
 His purchase ¹³ was well better than his ret.
 And rage he could as it had been a whelp :
 In lovedays ¹⁴ there could he mochel ¹⁵ help ;
 For there was he nat ¹⁶ like a cloisterere
 With threadbare cope, as is a poor scholere ;
 But he was like a maister or a pope :
 Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
 That round was as a bell out of the press. ¹⁷
 Somewhat he lisped for his wantonness,
 To make his English sweet upon his tongue ;
 And in his harping, when that he had sung,
 His eye twinkled in his head aright,
 As don the sterres ¹⁸ in a frosty night.
 This worthy limitour, was clep'd Huberd.

It may be observed in all these extracts how fond Chaucer is of as it were welding one couplet and one paragraph to another,

¹ Such.

² It suits not, is not fitting.

³ As in this and in other forms seems to have the effect of merely generating or giving indefiniteness to the expression.

⁴ Having regard to his quality or functions ?

⁵ Profit.

⁶ As in the fourth line proceeding.

⁷ Poor people.

⁸ Victual.

⁹ In addition to.

¹⁰ Wherever.

¹¹ Courteous.

¹² Farm.

¹³ What he got by begging and the exercise of his profession.

¹⁴ Days formerly appointed for the amicable settlement of differences.

¹⁵ Much.

¹⁶ Not.

¹⁷ Not understood. It is the bell or the semicope that is described as *out of the press* ?

¹⁸ As do the stars.

by allowing the sense to flow on from the last line of the one through the first of the other, thus producing an alternating movement of the sense and the sound, instead of making the one accompany the other, as is the general practice of our modern poetry. This has been noticed, and a less obvious part of the effect pointed out, by a poet of our own day, who has shown how well he felt Chaucer by something more and much better than criticism. "Chaucer," observes Leigh Hunt, "took the custom from the French poets, who have retained it to this day. It surely has a fine air, both of conclusion and resumption; as though it would leave off when it thought proper, knowing how well it could recommence."¹ It is so favorite a usage with Chaucer, that it may be sometimes made available to settle the reading, or at least the pointing and sense of a doubtful passage. And it is also common with his contemporary Gower.

The following is the first introduction to the reader of Emily, the heroine of the Knight's Tale of Palamon and Arcite:—

Thus passeth year by year, and day by day,
 Till it fell ones in a morrow of May
 That Emily, that fairer was to seen
 Than is the lilly upon his stalke green,
 And fresher than the May with floures new
 (For with the rose colour strof² her hue;
 I n'ot³ which was the finer of them two)
 Ere it was day, as she was wont to do,
 She was arisen and all ready dight,
 For May wol have no slogardy⁴ a night;
 The season pricketh every gentle heart,
 And maketh him out of his sleep to start,
 And saith, Arise, and do thine observance.

This maketh Emily han⁵ remembrance
 To don honour to May, and for to rise.
 Yclothed was she fresh for to devise:⁶
 Her yellow hair was broided⁷ in a tress
 Behind her back, a yerde long I guess;

¹ Preface to Poetical Works, 8vo. Lon. 1832. See also Mr. Hunt's fine imitation and continuation of the Squire's Tale in the Fourth Number of the Liberal. Lon 1823.

² Strove.

³ Wot not, know not.

⁴ Sloth.

⁵ Have.

⁶ With exactness (*point devise*).

⁷ Braided.

And in the garden as the sun uprist¹
 She walketh up and down where as her list:²
 She gathereth floures partie³ white and red
 To make a sotel⁴ gerlond⁵ for her head:
 And as an angel heavenlich she sung.

Of the many other noble passages in this Tale we can only present a portion of the description of the Temple of Mars:—

Why should I not as well eke tell you all
 The portraiture that was upon the wall
 Within the Temple of mighty Mars the Red?
 All painted was the wall in length and bred⁶
 Like to the estres⁷ of the grisley place
 That hight⁸ the great Temple of Mars in Trace,⁹
 In thilke¹⁰ cold and frosty region
 There as Mars bath his sovereign mansion.

First on the wall was painted a forest,
 In which there wonneth¹¹ neither man ne beast;
 With knotty knarry barren trees old,
 Of stubbes sharp and hidous to behold,
 In which there ran a rumble and a swough,¹²
 As though a storm should bresten¹³ every bough;
 And downward from an hill under a bent¹⁴
 There stood the Temple of Mars Armipotent,
 Wrought all of burned¹⁵ steel, of which the entree
 Was long, and strait, and ghaftly for to see;
 And thereout came a rage and swich a vise¹⁶
 That it made all the gates for to rise.
 The northern light in at the dore shone;
 For window on the wall ne was there none
 Through which men mighten any light discern.
 The door was all of athamant¹⁷ etern,
 Yclenched overthwart and endelong¹⁸
 With iron tough, and, for to make it strong,
 Every pillar the temple to sustene

¹ Uprises.⁴ Subtle, artfully contrived.⁷ The interior.¹⁰ That same.¹² A long sighing noise, such as in Scotland is called a *sugh*.¹³ Was going to break.¹⁶ A violent blast?² Where it pleaseth her.⁵ Garland.⁸ Is called.¹¹ Dwelleth.¹⁴ A declivity.¹⁷ Adamant.⁸ Mixed of.⁶ Breadth.⁹ Thrace.¹⁵ Burnished.¹⁸ Across and lengthways

Was tonne-great,¹ of iron bright and shene.
 There saw I first the dark imagining
 Of Felony, and all the compassing ;
 The cruel Ire, red as any gled ;²
 The Picke-purse, and eke the pale Dread ;
 The Smiler with the knife under the cloak ;
 The shepen³ brenning⁴ with the blake smoke ;
 The treason of the murdering in the bed ;
 The open wer,⁵ with woundes all bebled ;
 Contek⁶ with bloody knife and sharp menace ;
 All full of chirking⁷ was that sorry place.
 The sleer⁸ of himself yet saw I there ;
 His hearte-blood hath bathed all his hair ;
 The nail ydriven in the shod⁹ on hight ;
 The colde death, with mouth gaping upright.
 Amiddes of the Temple sat Mischance,
 With discomfort and sorry countenance :
 Yet saw I Woodness¹⁰ laughing in his rage,
 Armed Complaint, Outhees,¹¹ and fierce Outrage ;
 The carrain¹² in the bush, with throat ycorven ;¹³
 A thousand slain, and not of qualm ystorven ;¹⁴
 The tyrant, with the prey by force yraft ;¹⁵
 The town destroyed ; — there was nothing left.¹⁶

The statue of Mars upon a carte¹⁷ stood
 Armed, and looked grim as he were wood ;¹⁸
 And over his head there shinen two figures
 Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures¹⁹
 That one Puella, that other Rubeus.
 This God of Armes was arrayed thus :
 A wolf there stood befor him at his feet
 With eyen red, and of a man he eat.

Chancer's merriment, at once hearty and sly, has of course the freedom and unscrupulousness of his time ; and much of the best of it cannot be produced in our day without offence to our greatest sensitiveness, at least in the matter of expression. Besides, humor

¹ Of the circumference of a tun.

² Burning coal.

³ Stable.

⁴ Burning.

⁵ War.

⁶ Contention.

⁷ Disagreeable sound.

⁸ Slayer.

⁹ Hair of the head.

¹⁰ Madness.

¹¹ Outery.

¹² Carrion.

¹³ Cut.

¹⁴ Dead (starved).

¹⁵ Reft.

¹⁶ Left.

¹⁷ Car, chariot.

¹⁸ Mad.

¹⁹ Stars that are called in books.

in poetry, or any other kind of writing, can least of all qualities be effectively exemplified in extract: its subtle life, dependent upon the thousand minutiaë of place and connection, perishes under the process of excision; it is to attempt to exhibit, not the building by the brick, but the living man by a "pound of his fair flesh." We will venture, however, to give one or two short passages. Nothing is more admirable in the *Canterbury Tales* than the manner in which the character of the Host is sustained throughout. He is the moving spirit of the poem from first to last. Here is his first introduction to us presiding over the company at supper in his own

gentle hostelry,
That highte the Tabard faste by the Bell,

in Southwark, on the evening before they set out on their pilgrim-
grimage:—

Great cheere made our Host us everich one,
And to the supper set he us anon,
And served us with vitail of the best;
Strong was the wine, and well to drink us lest.¹
A seemly man our Hoste was with all
For to han been a marshal in an hall;
A large man he was, with eyen steep;
A fairer burgess is there none in Cheap;
Bold of his speech, and wise, and well ytaught,
And of manhood ylaked² right him naught:
Eke thereto³ was he right a merry man;
And after supper playen he began,
And spake of mirth amonges other things,
When that we hadden made our reckonings,
And said thus: Now, Lordings, trüely
Ye been to me welcome right heartily;
For, by my troth, if that I shall not lie,
I saw nat this yer swich⁴ a company
At ones in this herberwe⁵ as is now;
Fain would I do you mirth an I wist how;
And of a mirth I am right now bethought
To don you ease, and it shall cost you nought.
Ye gon to Canterbury; God you speed,
The blissful martyr quite you your meed

¹ It pleased us.

² Lacked.

⁴ Such.

⁵ Inn.

And well I wot as ye gon by the way
 Ye shapen¹ you to talken and to play ;
 For trieli comfot ne mirth is none
 To riden by the way dumb as the stone ;
 And therefore would I maken you disport,
 As I said erst, and don you some comfot.
 And if you liketh all by one assent
 Now for to stonden² at my judgement,
 And for to werchen³ as I shall you say
 To morrow, when ye riden on the way,
 Now, by my fader's soule that is dead,
 But ye be merry⁴ smiteth⁵ off my head :
 Hold up your hondes withouten more speech.

They all gladly assent ; upon which mine Host proposes further that each of them (they were twenty-nine in all, besides himself) should tell two stories in going, and two more in returning, and that, when they got back to the Tabard, the one who had told the "tales of best sentence and most solace" should have a supper at the charge of the rest. And, adds the eloquent, sagacious, and large-hearted projector of the scheme,

— for to make you the more merry
 I woll my selven gladly with you ride
 Right at mine owen cost, and be your guide.
 And who that woll my judgement withsay^e
 Shall pay for all we spenden by the way.

Great as the extent of the poem is, therefore, what has been executed, or been preserved, is only a small part of the design ; for this liberal plan would have afforded us no fewer than a hundred and twenty tales. Nothing can be better than the triumphant way in which mine Host of the Tabard is made to go through the duties of his self-assumed post ;—his promptitude, his decision upon all emergencies, and at the same time his good feeling never at fault any more than his good sense, his inexhaustible and unflagging fun and spirit, and the all-accommodating humor and perfect sympathy with which, without for a moment stooping from his own frank and manly character, he bears himself to every individual of the varied

¹ Prepare yourselves, intend.

² Stand.

³ Work, do.

⁴ If ye shall not be merry.

⁵ Smite. The imperative has generally this termination.

⁶ Resist, oppose, withstand.

cavalcade. He proposes that they should draw cuts to decide who was to begin; and with how gemmine a courtesy, at once encouraging and reverential, he first addresses himself to the modest Clerk, and the gentle Lady Prioress, and the Knight, who also was "of his port as meek as is a maid: " —

Sir Knight, quod he, my maister and my lord,
 Now draweth cut, for that is mine accord.
 Cometh near, quod he, my Lady Prioress;
 And ye, Sir Clerk, let be your shamefastness,
 Ne studieth nought; lay hand to, every man.

But for personages of another order, again, he is another man, giving and taking jibe and jeer with the hardest and boldest in their own style and humor, only more nimbly and happily than any of them, and without ever compromising his dignity. And all the while his kindness of heart, simple and quick, and yet considerate, is as conspicuous as the cordial appreciation and delight with which he enters into the spirit of what is going forward, and enjoys the success of his scheme. For example, —

When that the Knight had thus his tale told,
 In all the company n'as there young ne old
 That he ne said it was a noble storie,
 And worthy to be drawn to memorie,¹
 And namely² the gentles everich one.
 Our Hoste lough³ and swore, So mote I gon-⁴
 This goth aright; unboked is the male;⁵
 Let see now who shall tell another tale,
 For trüely this game is well begonne:
 Now telleth ye, Sir Monk, if that ye come,⁶
 Somewhat to quiten with⁷ the Knighte's tale.

The Miller, that for-dronken⁸ was all pale,
 So that unneaths⁹ upon his horse he sat,
 He n'old avalen¹⁰ neither hood ne hat,
 Ne abiden¹¹ no man for his courtesy,
 But in Pilate's voice¹² he gan to ery,

¹ Probably pronounced *stò-ri-e* and *me-mò-ri-e*.

² Especially.

³ Laughed.

⁴ So may I fare well.

⁵ Unbuckled + *unbuckled* + *unbuckled*.

⁶ Can.

⁷ To requite.

⁸ Very drunk.

⁹ With difficulty.

¹⁰ Would not doff or lower.

¹¹ Stop for.

¹² "In such a voice as Pilate was used to speak with in the Mysteries. Pilate being an odious character, was probably represented as speaking with a harsh, disagreeable voice." — *Tyrwhitt*.

And swore, By armes, and by blood and bones,
I can¹ a noble tale for the nones,²
Witl which I wol now quite the Knightes tale.

Our Hoste saw that he was dronken of ale,
And said, Abide, Robin, my leve³ brother ;
Some better man shall tell us first another ;
Abide and let us werken⁴ thriftily.

By Goddes soul, quod he, that woll not I,
For I woll speak, or elles go my way.

Our Host answered, Tell on a devil way ;
Thou art a fool ; thy wit is overcome.
Now, hearkeneth, quod the Miller, all and some ;
But first I make a protestatioun
That I am drunk, I know it by my soun,
And therefore, if that I misspeak or say,
Wite it⁵ the ale of Southwark, I you pray.

The Miller is at last allowed to tell his tale — which is more accordant with his character, and the condition he was in, than with either good morals or good manners ; — as the poet observes : —

What should I more say, but this Millere
He n'old his wordes for no man forbere,
But told his cherle's⁶ tale in his manere ;
Methinketh that I shall rehearse it here :
And therefore every gentle wight I pray
For Goddes love, as deem not that I say,
Of evil intent, but that I mote rehearse
Their tales all, al be they better or werse,
Or elles falsen some of my matere :
And, therefore, whoso list it not to hear,
Turn over the leaf, and chese⁷ another tale ;
For he shall find enow, both great and smale,
Of storial thing that toucheth gentiless,
And eke morality and holiness.

The Miller's Tale is capped by another in the same style from his fellow "churl" the Reve (or Bailiff) — who before he begins, however, avails himself of the privilege of his advanced years to prelude away for some time in a preaching strain, till his eloquence is suddenly cut short by the voice of authority : —

¹ Know.² For the nonce, for the occasion.³ Dear.⁴ Go to work.⁵ Lay the blame of it on.⁶ Churl's.⁷ Choose.

When that our Host had heard this sermoung,
 He gan to speak as lordly as a king,
 And saide, What amounteth all this wit?
 What, shall we speak all day of holy writ?
 The devil made a Reve for to preach,
 Or of a souter¹ a shipman or a leech.²
 Say forth thy tale, and tarry not the time;
 Lo Depesford,³ and it is half way prime;⁴
 Lo Greenewich, there many a shrew is in:⁵
 It were all time thy Tale to begin.

The last specimen we shall give of "our Host" shall be from the Clerk's Prologue:—

Sir Clerk of Oxenford, our Hoste said,
 Ye ride as still and coy as doth a maid
 Were newe spoused, sitting at the board;
 This day ne heard I of your tongue a word.
 I trow ye study abouten some sophime,⁶
 But Salomon saith that every thing hath time.
 For Godde's sake as beth⁷ of better cheer;
 It is no time for to studien here.
 Tell us some merry tale by your fay;⁸
 For what man that is entered in a play
 He needes must unto the play assent.
 But preacheth not, as freres don in Lent,
 To make us for our olde sinnes weep,
 Ne that thy tale make us not to sleep.
 Tell us some merry thing of adventures;
 Your terms, your coloures, and your figures,
 Keep them in store till so be ye indite
 High style, as when that men to kinges write.
 Speaketh so plain at this time, I you pray,
 That we may understonden what ye say.

This worthy Clerk benignely answerd;
 Hoste, quod he, I am under your yerde;
 Ye have of us as now the governance,
 And therefore would I do you obeisance,
 As fer as reason asketh hardily.⁹

¹ Cobbler.

² Physician,

³ Deptford.

⁴ Tyrwhitt supposes this means half-past seven in the morning.

⁵ In which (wherein) is many a shrew.

⁶ Sophism, perhaps generally for a logical argument.

⁷ Be.

⁸ Faith.

⁹ Surely.

I wol you tell a tale which that I
 Learned at Padow of a worthy clerk,
 As preved¹ by his wordes and his werk :
 He is now dead and nailed in his chest ;
 I pray to God so yeve his soule rest.
 Francis Petrarch, the laureat poete
 Highte this clerk, whose rhetoricke sweet
 Enlumined all Itaille of poetry,
 As Linian² did of philosophy,
 Or law, or other art particulere ;
 But death, that wol not suffre us dwellen here
 But as it were a twinkling of an eye,
 Them both hath slain, and alle we shall die.

And our last specimen of the Canterbury Tales, and also of Chaucer, being a passage exhibiting that power of pathos in the delicacy as well as in the depth of which he is unrivalled, shall be taken from this tale told by the Clerk, the exquisite tale of Griselda. Her husband has carried his trial of her submission and endurance to the last point by informing her that she must return to her father, and that his new wife is "coming by the way" : —

And she again answerd in patience :
 My lord, quod she, I wot, and wist alway,
 How that betwixen your magnificence
 And my povert no wight ne can ne may
 Maken comparison : it is no nay :
 I ne held me never digne³ in no manere
 To be your wife, ne yet your chamberere.⁴

And in this house there⁵ ye me lady made
 (The highe God take I for my witness,
 And all so wisly⁶ he my soule glade)
 I never held me lady ne maistress,
 But humble servant to your worthiness,
 And ever shall, while that my life may dure,
 Aboven every worldly creature.

That ye so long, of your benignity,
 Han⁷ holden me in honour and nobley,⁸

¹ Proved.

³ Worthy.

⁶ Surely

² A great lawyer of the fourteenth century.

⁴ Chambermaid.

⁷ Have.

⁵ Where.

⁸ Nobility.

Whereas¹ I was not worthy for to be,
 That thank I God and you, to whom I pray
 Foryeld² it you : there is no more to say.
 Unto my fader gladly wol I wend,
 And with him dwell unto my lives end.

.

God shielde swich a lordes wife to take
 Another man to husband or to make.³

And of your newe wife God of his grace
 So grant you weale and prosperity ;
 For I wol gladly yelden her my place,
 In which that I was blissful wont to be :
 For, sith it liketh you, my lord, quod she,
 That whilome weren all my heartes rest,
 That I shall gon, I wol go where you list.

But, thereas⁴ ye me profer swich dowair⁵
 As I first brought, it is well in my mind
 It were my wretched clothes, nothing fair,
 The which to me were hard now for to find.
*O goode God! how gentle and how kind
 Ye seemed by your speech and your visage
 The day that maked was our marriage!*

But sooth is said, algate⁶ I find it true,
 For in effect it preved⁷ is on me,
 Love is not old as when that it is new.
 But certes, Lord, for non adversity⁸
 To dien in this case, it shall not be
 That ever in word or werk I shall repent
 That I you yave mine heart in whole intent.

My lord, ye wot that in my fader's place
 Ye did me strip out of my poore weed,
 And richely ye clad me of your grace :
 To you brought I nought elles, out of drede,⁹
 But faith, and nakedness, and maidenhede :
 And here again your clothing I restore,
 And eke your wedding ring, for evermore.

¹ Where.² Repay.³ Mate.⁴ Whereas⁵ Such dower.⁶ In every way.⁷ Proved.⁸ For no unhappiness that may be my lot, were it even to die?⁹ Doubt.

The remnant of your jewels ready be
 Within your chamber, I dare it safely sayn.
 Naked out of my fader's house, quod she,
 I came, and naked I mote turn again.
 All your pleasance wold I follow fain :
 But yet I hope it be not your intent
 That I smockless out of your palace went.

.
 Let me not like a worm go by the way :
 Remember you, mine owen lord so dear,
 I was your wife, though I unworthy were.

.
 The smock, quod he, that thou hast on thy bake
 Let it be still, and bear it forth with thee.
 But well unneathes¹ thilke² word he spake,
 But went his way for ruth and for pitee.
 Before the folk herselven strippeth she,
 And in her smock, with foot and head all bare,
 Toward her father's house forth is she fare.³

The folk her followen weeping in her way,
 And Fortune aye they cursen as they gone ;
 But she fro weeping kept her eyen drey,⁴
 Ne in this time word ne spake she none.
 Her fader, that this tiding heard anon,
 Curseth the day and time that nature
 Shope him⁵ to been a lives⁶ creature.

There is scarcely perhaps to be found anywhere in poetry a finer burst of natural feeling than in the lines we have printed in italics.

JOHN GOWER.

CONTEMPORARY with Chaucer, and probably born a few years earlier, though of the two he survived to the latest date, for his death did not take place till the year 1408, was John Gower. It is affirmed by Leland in his *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis* that he was of the ancient family, said to have been seated

¹ With great difficulty.

² This same.

³ Gone.

⁴ Dry.

⁵ Formed.

⁶ Living.

at Stitenham, or Sittenham, in Yorkshire, before the Conquest, of which the Duke of Sutherland is now the head; and Mr. Todd, in his valuable *Illustrations of the Lives and Writings of Gower and Chaucer* (8vo. Lon. 1810), has published a deed from the charter-chest of the Duke (then Marquis of Stafford), dated at Stitenham in 1346, to which the first of the subscribing witnesses is *Johannes Gower*, and an indorsement upon which, but in a hand which is admitted to be at least a century later, states this person to have been "Sir John Gower the poet." This would make Gower to have been born before 1326 at the latest, and to have been some years beyond eighty when he died; which is consistent enough with the manner in which his name is generally mentioned by old writers along with but before that of Chaucer, and with the express statement in some of the earlier accounts that he was the senior of the two. But it has since been conclusively shown by Sir Harris Nicolas that no reliance can be placed upon these assertions and inferences, and that Gower was really not a North of England, but a South of England man, and resided in the county of Kent.¹ It is proved, however, by his will, published by Mr. Todd (and previously by Gough, in his *Sepulchral Monuments*, 2 vols. fol. 1786), that he was a person of condition, and possessed of considerable property. He and Chaucer were friends, as well as contemporaries and brother-poets; and there appears to be no sufficient reason for the notion that has been taken up by most of the modern biographers of the latter, that they were alienated from one another in their old age.² It may be safely assumed, at least, that their friendship remained unbroken down to 1393, the year in which Gower, as he tells us himself, finished his *Confessio Amantis*, where near the end he puts the following compliment to Chaucer into the mouth of Venus: —

And greet well Chaucer when ye meet,
As my disciple and my poete;
For in the floures of his youth,
In sondry wise, as he well couth,
Of ditties and of songes glade,
The which he for my sake made,

¹ *Retrospective Reviews*, Second Series, ii. 111; and Dr. Pauli's *Introductory Essay to the Confessio Amantis*.

² See the remarks of Sir Harris Nicolas, in his *Life of Chaucer*, p. 39.

The land fulfilled is over all ;
 Whereof to him in special,
 Above all other, I am most hold :¹
 Forthy ² now in his dayes old
 Thou shalle him tell this message,
 That he upon his latter age,
 To set an end of all his werk,
 As he which is mine owne clerk,
 Do make his Testament of Love,
 As thou hast done thy shrift above,
 So that my court it may record.

This was certainly liberal repayment for Chaucer's dedication to his friend, probably many years before, of his *Troilus and Creseide*, or rather of half that work, in the following sober lines : —

O moral Gower ! this booke I direct
 To thee, and to the philosophical Strood,
 To vouchesauf there need is to correct
 Of your benignities and zeales good.

The epithet here bestowed upon Gower is not perhaps exactly the one which a poet would most covet ; but it has stuck, and *Moral Gower* is the name by which he has generally passed ever since. “ O *Moral Gower*, and Lydgate laureat,” exclaims the Scottish poet Dunbar, in his *Golden Targe*. “ *Moral Gower*, whose sententious dew adown reflareth with fair golden beams,” says Hawes in his *Pastime of Pleasure*. “ And near them sat old *Moral Goore*, with pleasant pen in hand,” writes the author of *A Dialogue both pleasant and pitiful*, Lon. 1573.³ But his publisher, Berthelet the printer, is the most severe of all ;—in the dedication prefixed to his edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, 1532, he naïvely remarks : “ It was not much greater pain to that excellent clerk, the *Moral John Gower*, to compile the same noble wark than it was to me to print it.” “ No man,” he adds, alluding to the former edition by Caxton, in 1483, “ will believe it without conferring both the prints, the old and mine, together.”

Gower is the author of three great poetical works (sometimes spoken of as one, though they do not seem to have had any connection of plan or subject) : the *Speculum Meditantis*, which is,

¹ Beholden.

² Therefore.

³ Quoted by Mr. Todd in *Illustrations*, Introduction, p. xxix

or was, in French; the *Vox Clamantis*, which is in Latin; and the *Confessio Amantis*, which is in English. But the first, although an account of it, founded on a mistake, has been given by Warton, has certainly not been seen in modern times, and has in all probability perished. We have other specimens, however, of Gower's talents as a French and also as a Latin poet in certain short pieces in both these languages preserved in a volume in the Duke of Sutherland's library at Trentham (Staffordshire), of which an account has been given by Warton (*Hist. Eng. Poetry*, ii. 334-341), and another, more full, particular, and exact, by Mr. Todd (*Illustrations*, pp. 93-108). Speaking of Gower's Latin poetry, Warton says that he "copied Ovid's elegiacs with some degree of purity, and with fewer false quantities and corrupt phrases than any of our countrymen had yet exhibited since the twelfth century."¹ Of the French pieces in the Trentham volume, which consist of fifty *Balades*, or sonnets, he observes, "They have much real and intrinsic merit. They are tender, pathetic, and poetical; and place our old poet Gower in a more advantageous point of view than that in which he has hitherto been usually seen. I know not if any even among the French poets themselves, of this period, have left a set of more finished sonnets; for they were probably written when Gower was a young man, about the year 1350. Nor had yet any English poet treated the passion of love with equal delicacy of sentiment, and elegance of composition."² Four of these French sonnets are given by Warton, and more correctly, with the addition of a fifth, by Todd; and the entire contents of the volume were edited for the Roxburghe Club in 1818 by the present Duke of Sutherland (then Earl Gower) under the title of *Balades and other Poems*, by John Gower, printed from the original MS., Latin and French; Black Letter, 4to. London. Gower was probably one of the last Englishmen who attempted the composition of poetry in French; and at the end of one of the pieces in this volume he asks forgiveness of his reader for any inaccuracies he may have committed in the foreign idiom, on the ground of his English birth and his therefore not being master of the French eloquence:—

Et si ieo nai de François la faconde,
 Pardonetz moi qe ieo de ceo forsvoie.
 Ieo sui Englois.

¹ *Hist. Eng. Poet.* ii. 305.

² *Hist. Eng. Poet.* p. 338.

The *Vox Clamantis* was edited for the Roxburghe Club in 1850 by the Rev. H. G. Coxe. It consists of seven Books in Latin elegiacs. "The greater bulk of the work," says Dr. Pauli, "the date of which its editor is inclined to fix between 1382 and 1384, is rather a moral than an historical essay; but the First Book describes the insurrection of Wat Tyler in an allegorical disguise; the poet having a dream on the 11th of June 1381, in which men assumed the shape of animals. The Second Book contains a long sermon on fatalism, in which the poet shows himself no friend to Wiclif's tenets, but a zealous advocate for the reformation of the clergy. The Third Book points out how all orders of society must suffer for their own vices and demerits; in illustration of which he cites the example of the secular clergy. The Fourth Book is dedicated to the cloistered clergy and the friars, the Fifth to the military; the Sixth contains a violent attack on the lawyers; and the Seventh subjoins the moral of the whole, represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as interpreted by Daniel."¹ The allusion in the title seems to be to St. John the Baptist, and to the general clamor then abroad in the country.

The *Confessio Amantis* has been several times printed:—by Caxton in 1483, by Berthelet in 1532 and again in 1554, and by Alexander Chalmers in the second volume of his *English poets*, 1810; but all these previous editions have been superseded by the very commodious and beautiful one of Dr. Reinhold Pauli, in 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1857.

We will avail ourselves of Dr. Pauli's account of the course in which the work proceeds:—"The poem opens by introducing the author himself, in the character of an unhappy lover in despair. Venus appears to him, and, after having heard his prayer, appoints her priest called Genius, like the mystagogue in the picture of Cebes, to hear the lover's confession. This is the frame of the whole work, which is a singular mixture of classical notions, principally borrowed from Ovid's *Ars Amandi*, and of the purely mediæval idea, that as a good Catholic the unfortunate lover must state his distress to a father confessor. This is done with great regularity and even pedantry; all the passions of the human heart, which generally stand in the way of love, being systematically arranged in the various books and subdivisions of the work. After Genius has fully explained the evil affection, passion, or vice under con-

¹ *Introd. Essay to Confessio Amantis.*

sideration, the lover confesses on that particular point; and frequently urges his boundless love for an unknown beauty, who treats him cruelly, in a tone of affectation which would appear highly ridiculous in a man of more than sixty years of age, were it not a common characteristic of the poetry of the period. After this profession the confessor opposes him, and exemplifies the fatal effects of each passion by a variety of opposite stories, gathered from many sources, examples being then, as now, a favorite mode of inculcating instruction and reformation. At length, after a frequent and tedious recurrence of the same process, the confession is terminated by some final injunctions of the priest — the lover's petition in a strophic poem addressed to Venus — the bitter judgment of the goddess, that he should remember his old age and leave off such fooleries . . . his cure from the wound caused by the dart of love, and his absolution, received as if by a pious Roman Catholic." ¹

Such a scheme as this, pursued through more than thirty thousand verses, promises perhaps more edification than entertainment; but the amount of either that is to be got out of the *Confessio Amantis* is not considerable. Ellis, after charitably declaring that so long as Moral Gower keeps to his morality he is "wise, impressive, and sometimes almost sublime," is compelled to add, "But his narrative is often quite petrifying; and when we read in his work the tales with which we had been familiarized in the poems of Ovid, we feel a mixture of surprise and despair at the perverse industry employed in removing every detail on which the imagination had been accustomed to fasten. The author of the *Metamorphoses* was a poet, and at least sufficiently fond of ornament; Gower considers him as a mere annalist; scrupulously preserves his facts; relates them with great perspicuity; and is fully satisfied when he has extracted from them as much morality as they can be reasonably expected to furnish." ² In many cases this must be little enough.

We shall confine our specimens of Gower's poetry to two short passages from the *Confessio Amantis*. The first is the tale of the coffers or caskets, in the Fifth Book, which has been given by Todd after a collation of the printed editions with the best manuscripts: ³

¹ Introductory Essay, p. xxxiv.

² Specimens of the Early English Poets, i. 179.

³ Illustrations, pp. 145-150; Notes, pp. 151-158.

this is the story, whether found by him in Gower or elsewhere, from which Shakspeare is supposed to have taken the hint of the incident of the caskets in his Merchant of Venice: —

In a cronique thus I read :
 About a kinge, as must need,
 There was of knightes and segniers
 Great rout and eke of officers :
 Some of long time him hadden served,
 And thoughten that they have deserved
 Avancement, and gone without ;
 And some also been of the rout
 That comen but a while agon,
 And they avanced were anon.

There olde men upon this thing,
 So as they durst, again ¹ the king
 Among themself ² complainen oft :
 But there is nothing said so soft
 That it ne cometh out at last :
 The king it wist, and als ³ so fast
 As he which was of high prudence :
 He shope ⁴ therefore an evidence
 Of them that plainen in the cas,⁵
 To know in whose default it was ;
 And all within his own intent,
 That none may wiste what it meant.
 Anon he let two coffers make
 Of one semblance, and of one make,
 So lich,⁶ that no life thilke throw ⁷
 That one may fro that other know :
 They were into his chamber brought,
 But no man wot why they be wrought ;
 And natheless ⁸ the king hath bede ⁹
 That they be set in privy stede,¹⁰
 As he that was of wisdom sly ;
 When ¹¹ he thereto his time sy,¹²

¹ Against.

² Gower, like Chaucer and Langland, writes *hem* for what we now call *them* ; but we have taken the liberty throughout of discarding that peculiarity.

³ Also.

⁴ Contrived.

⁵ Case.

⁶ Like.

⁷ No person at any particular time ?

⁸ Nevertheless.

⁹ Bidden.

¹⁰ Place.

¹¹ Gower, also, like the other writers of his time, has *whan* and *than*, where we now say *when* and *then*.

¹² Saw. The old spelling is *slih* and *sih*.

All privily, that none it wist,
 His owne bondes ¹ that one chest
 Of fine gold, and of fine perie,²
 The which out of his treasury
 Was take, anon he filled full ;
 That other coffer of straw and mull,³
 With stones meynd,⁴ he filld also :
 Thus be they full both two.

So that erlich ⁵ upon a day
 He had within, where he lay,
 There should be to form his bed
 A board upset and faire spread :
 And then he let the coffers fet ⁶
 Upon the board, and did them set.
 He knew the names well of tho
 The which again him grutched so,⁷
 Both of his chamber and of his hall ;
 Anon and sente for them all,
 And saide to them in this wise : —

There shall no man his hap ⁸ despise :
 I wot well ye have longe served,
 And God wot what ye have deserved ;
 But if it is along on ⁹ me
 Of that ye unadvanced be,
 Or elles if it belong on yow,
 The soothe shall be proved now :
 To stoppe with your evil word,
 Lo ! here two coffers on the board ;
 Chese ¹⁰ which you list of bothe two,
 And witteth ¹¹ well that one of tho
 Is with tresor so full begon ¹²
 That, if ye happe therupon,
 Ye shall be riche men for ever :
 Now chese and take which you is lever ; ¹³
 But be ye well ware that ye take,
 For of that one ¹⁴ I undertake ¹⁵

¹ Hands.² Jewellery.³ Rubbish⁴ Mingled.⁵ Early.⁶ Fetch.⁷ Those who against him grudged (or grumbled) so.⁸ Fortune.⁹ Owing to.¹⁰ Choose.¹¹ Know, understand ye¹² Begun, used in a general sense, nearly with the effect of *made*.¹³ Is more agreeable to you.¹⁴ The one.¹⁵ Promise, engage, assure you.

There is no manner good therein
 Whereof ye mighten profit win.
 Now goth¹ together of one assent
 And taketh your avisement ;
 For, but I you this day avance,
 It stant upon your owne chance,
 All only in default of grace ;
 So shall be showed in this place
 Upon you alle well afin²
 That no defaulte shall be min.

They kneelen all, and with one voice
 The king they thonken of this choice ;
 And after that they up arise,
 And gon aside and them advise ;
 And at laste they accord
 (Whereof their tale to record
 To what issue they be fall)
 A knight shall speake for them all.
 He kneeleth down unto the king,
 And saith that they upon this thing,
 Or for to win, or for to lese,³
 Bean all avised for to chese.

Tho⁴ took this knight a yerd on hond,⁵
 And goth there as the coffers stond,
 And with assent of everich one
 He layeth his yerde upon one,
 And saith⁶ the king how thilke⁷ same
 They chese in reguerdon⁸ by name,
 And prayeth him that they might it have.

The king, which wold his honour save,
 When he had heard the common voice,
 Hath granted them their owne choice,
 And took them thereupon the key,
 And, for he wold it were see⁹
 What good they have as they suppose,
 He bade anon the coffer mclose —
 Which was fulfilled with straw and stones !
 Thus be they served all at ones.¹⁰

The king then, in the same stede,¹¹

¹ Go.

⁴ Then.

⁷ This.

¹⁰ Once.

² In the end.

⁵ A yard, or rod, in hand.

⁸ In guerdon, or reward.

¹¹ Place.

³ Lose.

⁶ Saith to, telleth.

⁹ It were seen ?

Anon that other coffer undede,¹
 Whereas they sighen² great riches,
 Well more than they couthen guess.

Lo! saith the king, now may ye see
 That there is no default in me;
 Forthy³ myself I wol acquite,
 And beareth ye your owne wite⁴
 Of that fortune hath you refused.

Thus was this wise king excused:
 And they left off their evil speech,
 And mercy of their king beseech.

Our other extract we give in the old spelling, as it was contributed to the Pictorial History of England by Sir Henry Ellis from a very early MS. of the poem in the Harleian Collection, No. 3490:—

In a Croniq I fynde thus,
 How that Caius Fabricius
 Wich whilome was consul of Rome,
 By whome the lawes yede and come,⁵
 Whan the Sampnitees to him brouht
 A somme of golde, and hym by souht
 To done hem faouere in the lawe,
 Towarde the golde he gan hym drawe:
 Whereof, in alle mennes loke,
 A parte 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 so ben to coveitous.
 Bot he is riche an glorious
 Wich hath in his subieccion
 The men wich in possession
 Ben riche of gold, and by this skille,⁶

¹ Undid.⁵ Where they saw.⁶ Therefore.² Blame.³ Went and came.

For this reason.

For he may alday whan he wille,
 Or be him leef or be him lothi,
 Justice don vppon hem bothe.”
 Lo thus he seide, and with that werde
 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,
 Without lucre of such richesse.
 There be nowe fewe of such I gesse,
 For it was thilke tymes used
 That every juge was refused,
 Wich was not frende to commoun riht ;
 Bot thei that wolden stonde vpriht
 For trouth only to do justice
 Preferred were in thilke office,
 To deme and juge common lawe,
 Wich nowe men seyn is alle withdrawe.
 To set a lawe and keep it nouht
 There is no common profit souht,
 But, above alle, natheless,
 The lawe wich is made for pees
 Is good to kepe for the beste,
 For that set alle men in reste.

The manuscripts of the *Confessio Amantis* are very numerous. There are no fewer than ten in the Bodleian Library ; and several others are in the British Museum, at Cambridge, at Trinity College, Dublin, and in private collections. Dr. Pauli's text, in which he has regulated the spelling in conformity to the demands of the verse, which he apparently assumes to have been as regular as that of Chaucer is held to be by Tyrwhitt, is founded on the printed edition of 1532, collated chiefly with the Stafford MS., and with those in the Harleian Collection numbered 7184, 3869, and 3490. The poem extends to eight Books, and is expressly stated by the author to have been finished in the sixteenth year of Richard II., that is, in the year 1393. It had been begun some years before, at the command of that king, at a time when, as it seems to be intimated, Gower was laboring under ill health,....

Though I sikeness have upon honde,
 And long have had --.

though it is not quite clear that these words are not intended to describe his condition at the conclusion of his task. He particularly gives it as his reason for choosing the vernacular tongue, —

— for that few men endite
In our Englishhe.



BARBOUR.

THIS latter part of the fourteenth century is also the age of the birth of Scottish poetry; and Chaucer had in that dialect a far more worthy contemporary and rival than his friend and fellow-Englishman Gower, in John Barbour. Of Barbour's personal history but little is known. He was a churchman, and had attained to the dignity of Archdeacon of Aberdeen by the year 1357; so that his birth cannot well be supposed to have been later than 1320. He is styled Archdeacon of Aberdeen in a passport granted to him in that year by Edward III. at the request of David de Bruce (that is, King David II. of Scotland), to come into England with three scholars in his company, for the purpose, as it is expressed, of studying in the University of Oxford; and the protection is extended to him and his companions while performing their scholastic exercises, and generally while remaining there, and also while returning to their own country. It may seem strange that an Archdeacon should go to college; but Oxford appears to have been not the only seat of learning to which Barbour resorted late in life with the same object. Three other passports, or safe-conducts, are extant, which were granted to him by Edward at later dates: — the first, in 1364, permitting him to come, with four horsemen, from Scotland, by land or sea, into England, to study at Oxford, or elsewhere, as he might think proper; the second, in 1365, by which he is authorized to come into England, and travel throughout that kingdom, with six horsemen as his companions, as far as to St. Denis in France; and the third, in 1368, securing him protection in coming, with two valets and two horses, into England, and travelling through the same to the king's other dominions, on his way to France (*versus Franciam*) for the purpose of studying there, and in returning thence. Yet he had also been

long before this employed, and in a high capacity, in civil affairs. In 1357 he was appointed by the Bishop of Aberdeen one of his two Commissioners deputed to attend a meeting at Edinburgh about the ransom of the king. Nothing more is heard of him till 1373, in which year he appears as one of the auditors of Exchequer, being styled Archdeacon of Aberdeen, and clerk of probation (*clerico probacionis*) of the royal household. In his later days he appears to have been in the receipt of two royal pensions, both probably bestowed upon him by Robert II., who succeeded David II. in 1370; the first one of 10*l.* Scots from the customs of Aberdeen, the other one of 20*s.* from the *borough mails*, or city rents, of the same town. An entry in the records of Aberdeen for 1471 states on the authority of the original roll, now lost, that the latter was expressly granted to him "for the compilation of the book of the Acts of King Robert the First." In a passage occurring in the latter part of this work he himself tells us that he was then compiling it in the year 1375. All that is further known of him is, that his death took place towards the close of 1395. Besides his poem commonly called *The Bruce*, another metrical work of his, entitled *The Broite* or *The Brute*, being a deduction of the history of the Scottish kings from Brutus, is frequently referred to by the chronicler Wynton in the next age; but no copy of it is now believed to exist. Of the *Bruce* only one MS. was till lately supposed to be extant, a transcript made in 1489 preserved in the Advocates' Library; and it was from this that the last and best edition of the poem was printed by Dr. Jamieson, in 4to. at Edinburgh, in 1820; but another MS., dated 1488, has since been discovered in the Library of St. John's College, Cambridge. It appears to have been printed before the close of the sixteenth century. A "Patrick Gordon, gentleman," as he designates himself, the author of a metrical work entitled *The Famous History of the Renowned and Valiant Prince, Robert, surnamed the Bruce, King of Scotland*, which first appeared at Dort in 1615, alludes to Barbour's previous performance on the same subject as "the old printed book"; and Mr. David Laing, in a note to his edition of *Dunbar* (Edinburgh, 1834), p. 40, states that he is possessed of an edition of Barbour's poem, in small 4to. and black-letter, which, although it has lost the title-page, appears to have been printed at Edinburgh about the year 1570. The oldest edition known to Dr. Jamieson was an Edinburgh one of 1616. It was reprinted at the same

place in 1620 and 1670 ; at Glasgow in 1672 ; and again at Edinburgh in 1714 (the title-page, however, being usually dated 1758). The first critical edition was that by Pinkerton, published in 3 vols. 8vo. at London in 1790 ; the last and best, is that by the Rev. Dr. John Jamieson, forming the first volume of *The Bruce and Wallace*, 2 vols. 4to. Edinburgh, 1820. We may notice by the way that Gordon, who speaks with great contempt of Barbour's "outworn barbarous speech," and ill-composed and immethodical work, tells a story in the Preface to his *Famous History* about a still older poem on the exploits of Bruce, written by "a monk of the Abbey of Melrose, called *Peter Fenton*," in the year 1369, a manuscript copy of which, "old and torn, almost illegible, in many places wanting leaves," yet having the beginning, had been put into his hands by his "loving friend, Donald Farquharson." "It was," he says, "in old rhyme like to Chaucer, but wanting in many parts ; and especially from the field of Bannockburn forth it wanted all the rest almost, so that it could not be gotten to the press ; yet such as I could read thereof had many remarkable tales, worthy to be noted, and also probable, agreeing with the truth of the history, as I have followed it, as well as the other." "One cannot help regretting," Dr. Jamieson sensibly remarks, "that Gordon, instead of bestowing his labor on a new poem, had not favored the public with even the fragments of that written by Fenton." It would have been something if he had even informed us what he had done with the manuscript (if he did not put it into the fire upon finding that he could not read it). He writes the date (1369) in words at full length ; but he is evidently not a person upon whose testimony much reliance can be placed as to such a matter. It is a suspicious circumstance, as is hinted by Macpherson, the editor of *Wynton's Chronicle*, that that writer, though he often quotes Barbour, has never once mentioned Fenton.¹

The Scotch in which Barbour's poem is written was undoubtedly the language then commonly in use among his countrymen, for whom he wrote and with whom his poem has been a popular favorite ever since its first appearance. By his countrymen, of course, we mean the inhabitants of southern and eastern, or Lowland Scotland, not the Celts or Highlanders, who have always been and still are as entirely distinct a race as the native Irish are, and always have been, from the English in Ireland, and to confound whom

¹ *Wyntown's Chronicle*, by Macpherson (1795), Pref. I. xxix.

either in language or in any other respect with the Scottish Lowlanders is the same sort of mistake that it would be to speak of the English as being either in language or lineage identical with the Welsh. Indeed, there is a remarkable similarity as to this matter in the circumstances of the three countries: in each a primitive Celtic population, which appears to have formerly occupied the whole soil, has been partially expelled by another race, but still exists, inhabiting its separate locality (in all the three cases the maritime and mountainous wilds of the west), and retaining its own ancient and perfectly distinct language. The expulsion has been the most sweeping in England, where it took place first, and where the Welsh form now only about a sixteenth of the general population; it has been carried to a less extent in Scotland, where it was not effected till a later age, and where the numbers of the Highlanders are still to those of the Lowlanders in the proportion of one to five or six; in Ireland, where it happened last of all, the new settlers have scarcely yet ceased to be regarded as foreigners and intruders, and the ancient Celtic inhabitants, still covering, although not possessing, by far the greater part of the soil, the larger proportion of them, however, having relinquished their ancestral speech, continue to be perhaps six or eight times as numerous as the Saxons or English. For in all the three cases it is the same Saxon, or at least Teutonic, race before which the Celts have retired or given way: the Welsh, the Scottish Highlanders, and the native Irish, indeed, all to this day alike designate the stranger who has set himself down beside them by the common epithet of the Saxon. We know that other Teutonic or northern races were mixed with the Angles and Saxons in all the three cases: not only were the English, who settled in Scotland in great numbers, and conquered Ireland, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in part French Normans, but the original Normans or Danes had in the eighth and ninth centuries effected extensive settlements in each of the three countries. Besides, the original English were themselves a mixed people; and those of them who were distinctively Saxons were even the old hereditary enemies of the Danes. Still, as the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes were as one people against the Scandinavian Danes, or their descendants the French Normans, so even Saxons and Danes, or Normans, were united everywhere against the Celts. As for the language spoken by the Lowland Scots in the time of Barbour, it must have sprung out of the same

sources, and been affected by nearly the same influences, with the English of the same age. Nobody now holds that any part of it can have been derived from the Picts, who indeed originally occupied part of the Lowlands of Scotland, but who were certainly not a Teutonic but a Celtic people. Lothian, or all the eastern part of Scotland to the south of the Forth, was English from the seventh century, as much as was Northumberland or Yorkshire: from this date the only difference that could have distinguished the language there used from that spoken in the south of England was probably a larger infusion of the Danish forms; but this characteristic must have been shared in nearly the same degree by all the English then spoken to the north of the Thames. Again, whatever effect may have been produced by the Norman Conquest, and the events consequent upon that revolution, would probably be pretty equally diffused over the two countries. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries both the Normans themselves and their literature appear to have acquired almost the same establishment and ascendancy in Scotland as in England. We have seen that French was the language of the court in the one country as well as in the other, and that Scottish as well as English writers figure among the imitators of the Norman *trouveurs* and romance poets. Afterwards the connection of Scotland with France became much more intimate and uninterrupted than that of England; and this appears to have affected the Scottish dialect in a way which will be presently noticed. But in Barbour's day, the language of Teutonic Scotland was distinguished from that of the south of England (which had now acquired the ascendancy over that of the northern counties as the literary dialect) by little more than the retention, perhaps, of a good many vocables which had become obsolete among the English, and a generally broader enunciation of the vowel sounds. Hence Barbour never supposes that he is writing in any other language than English any more than Chaucer; that is the name by which not only he, but his successors Dunbar and even Lyndsay, always designate their native tongue: down to the latter part of the sixteenth century, by the term *Scotch* was generally understood what is now called the *Gaelic*, or the *Erse* or *Ersh* (that is, Irish), the speech of the Celts or Highlanders. Divested of the grotesque and cumbrous spelling of the old manuscripts, the language of Barbour is quite as intelligible at the present day to an English reader as that of Chaucer; the obsolete words and

forms are not more numerous in the one writer than in the other, though some that are used by Barbour may not be found in Chaucer, as many of Chaucer's are not in Barbour; the chief general distinction, as we have said, is the greater breadth given to the vowel sounds in the dialect of the Scottish poet. The old termination of the present participle in *and* is also more frequently used than in Chaucer, to whom however it is not unknown, any more than its modern substitute *ing* is to Barbour. The most remarkable peculiarity of the more recent form of the Scottish dialect that is not found in Barbour is the abstraction of the final *l* from syllables ending in that consonant preceded by a vowel or diphthong: thus he never has *a'*, *fa'*, *fu'* or *fou'*, *pou'*, *hou'*, for *all*, *fall*, *full*, *poll*, *hole*, &c. The subsequent introduction of this habit into the speech of the Scotch is perhaps to be attributed to their imitation of the liquefaction of the *l* in similar circumstances by the French, from whom they have also borrowed a considerable number of their modern vocables, never used in England, and to whose accentuation, both of individual words and of sentences, theirs has much general resemblance, throwing the emphasis, contrary, as already noticed, to the tendency of the English language, upon one of the latter syllables, and also running into the rising in many cases where the English use the falling intonation.

The Bruce is a very long poem, comprising between twelve and thirteen thousand lines, in octosyllabic metre, which the two last editors have distributed, Pinkerton into twenty, Jamieson into fourteen, Books. It relates the history of Scotland, and especially the fortunes of the great Bruce, from the death of Alexander III. in 1286, or, rather, from the competition for the crown, and the announcement of the claims of Edward I. as lord paramount, on that of his daughter, Margaret the Maiden of Norway, in 1290 — the events of the first fifteen or sixteen years, however, before Bruce comes upon the stage, being very succinctly given — to the death of Bruce (Robert I.) in 1329, and that of his constant associate and brother of chivalry, Lord James Douglas, the bearer of the king's heart to the Holy Land, in the year following. The 12,500 verses, or thereby, may be said therefore to comprehend the events of about twenty-five years; and Barbour, though he calls his work a "romaunt," as being a narrative poem, professes to relate nothing but what he believed to be the truth, so that he is to be regarded not only as the earliest poet but also as the

earliest historian of his country. Fordun, indeed, was his contemporary, but the Latin chronicle of that writer was probably not published till many years after his death. And to a great extent Barbour's work is and has always been regarded as being an authentic historical monument; it has no doubt some incidents or embellishments which may be set down as fabulous; but these are in general very easily distinguished from the main texture of the narrative, which agrees substantially with the most trustworthy accounts drawn from other sources, and has been received and quoted as good evidence by all subsequent writers and investigators of Scottish history, from Andrew of Wynton to Lord Hailes inclusive. This is Barbour's own introduction of himself to his readers; and the passage, besides explaining the design of his work, affords a fair example of the worthy archdeacon's manly bearing, and forcible and cordial style:—

Stories to read are delitable,
 Suppose that they be nought but fable;
 Then ¹ suld ² stories that suthfast ³ were,
 An they war ⁴ said on gud ⁵ manere,
 Have double pleasance in hearing.
 The first pleasance is the carping;⁶
 And the tother the suthfastness,
 That shaws ⁷ the thing right as it wes;⁸
 And such thinges that are likand ⁹
 Till mannes hearing are pleasand.
 Therefore I wald ¹⁰ fain set my will,
 Gif ¹¹ my wit might suffice theretill,
 To put in writ a suthfast story,
 That it lest ¹² aye furth in memory,
 Swa ¹³ that na ¹⁴ time of length it let,¹⁵
 Ne ger ¹⁶ it hally ¹⁷ be foryet.¹⁸
 For auld ¹⁹ stories, that men reads,
 Represents to them the deeds

¹ Barbour's word, like Chaucer's, is *than*.

² Should.

³ True.

⁴ If they were.

⁵ Good. It may perhaps be doubted if the *u* here, and in other cases, was yet pronounced like the French *u*.

⁶ The narrative, the story.

⁷ Shows.

⁸ Was.

⁹ Agreeable.

¹⁰ Would.

¹¹ If.

¹² Last.

¹³ So (probably pronounced *sway*).

¹⁴ No.

¹⁵ Hinder, stop.

¹⁶ Nor cause.

¹⁷ Wholly.

¹⁸ Forgotten.

¹⁹ Old.

Of stalwart folk, that livit are,¹
 Right as they then in presence ware.²
 And certes they suld weil have prize
 That in their time were wight³ and wise ;
 And led their life in great travail,
 And oft, in hard stour⁴ of betail,
 Wan right great price of chivalry
 And war voidit of cowardy ;⁵
 As wes King Robert of Scotland,
 That hardy wes of heart and hand ;
 And gud Schir James of Douglas,
 That in his time sa worthy was,
 That of his price and his bounty
 In fer landes renownit was he.
 Of them I think this book to may :⁶
 Now God give grace that I may swa
 Treat it, and bring it till ending.
 That I say nought but suthfast thing.

Some of the grammatical forms here, it may be observed, are even more modern than those we find in the English poetry of the same age ; in particular, Barbour uses our present *they*, *them*, and *their* (or in the old spelling, *thai*, *thaim*, and *thar*), where Chaucer and his countrymen still adhere to the Saxon *hey*, or *hi*, *hem*, and *hir* or *her*. This may serve, with other considerations, to refute the notion taken up by some modern writers, that Barbour is an imitator of Chaucer : the Bruce, in fact, is an earlier poem than the Canterbury Tales, and, as it was written by Barbour in his old age, the probability is, that the Scottish poet was absolutely the predecessor of the English ; but at any rate there is no more reason to believe that he imitated Chaucer than that Chaucer imitated him. The one is never mentioned or alluded to by the other, and there is no ground for supposing that they were even acquainted with each other's works. From his habits of locomotion, and frequent journeys to England, a suspicion might arise that Barbour intended to write in the language of that country ; but such a supposition is negatived by the dialectic peculiarities which, notwithstanding a general resemblance in other respects, still distinguish his style

¹ Lived early, formerly.

² Were.

³ Valiant.

⁴ Peril. Was the *ou* yet pronounced as in French ?

⁵ Voided or void, of cowardice.

⁶ Make.

from that of his English contemporaries. That his language, we may add, has not been modernized by the transcriber upon whom we are dependent for the present text is, to a great extent, proved by several considerable passages of the poem which are quoted by Wynton being found with scarcely any variation in the work of that chronicler, of which we have one manuscript believed to be of as early a date as the year 1430 at the latest, or within little more than a quarter of a century from the time when Barbour lived. Besides, his language, as we have it, does not differ from that of Wynton, who was his contemporary, although he was born perhaps thirty years later, and although he appears not to have composed his chronicle till after the commencement of the fifteenth century.

Barbour is far from being a poet equal to Chaucer; but there is no other English poet down to a century and a half after their day who can be placed by the side of the one any more than of the other. He has neither Chaucer's delicate feeling of the beautiful, nor his grand inventive imagination, nor his wit or humor; but in mere narrative and description he is, with his clear, strong, direct diction, in a high degree both animated and picturesque, and his poem is pervaded by a glow of generous sentiment, well befitting its subject, and lending grace as well as additional force to the ardent, bounding spirit of life with which it is instinct from beginning to end. The following passage, which occurs near the commencement, has been often quoted (at least in part); but it is too remarkable to be omitted in any exemplification of the characteristics of Barbour's poetry. He is describing the oppressions endured by the Scots during the occupation of their country by the English king, Edward I., after his deposition of his puppet Baliol:—

And gif that ony man them by
 Had ony thing that wes worthy,
 As horse, or hund, or other thing,
 That war pleasand to their liking!
 With right or wrang it wald have they.
 And gif ony wald them withsay,
 They suld swa do, that they suld tine¹
 ither² land or life, or live in pine.
 For they dempt³ them efter their will,

¹ Lose.² Either.³ Doomed, judged

Takand na kepe¹ to right na skill.²
 Ah! what they dempt them felonly!³
 For gud knightes that war worthy,
 For little enchesoun⁴ or then⁵ nane
 They hangit be the neckbane.
 Als⁶ that folk, that ever was free,
 And in freedom wont for to be,
 Through their great mischance and folly,
 Wor treated then sa wickedly,
 That their faes⁷ their judges ware :
 What wretchedness may man have mair?⁸

Ah! Freedom is a noble thing!
 Freedom mays⁹ man to have liking;¹⁰
 Freedom all solace to man gives :
 He lives at ease that freely lives!
 A noble heart may have nane ease,
 Ne elles nought that may him please
 Giff freedom failye : for free liking
 Is yarnit¹¹ ower¹² all other thing.
 Na he that aye has livit free
 May nought knaw well the property,¹³
 The anger, na the wretched doom,
 That is couplit¹⁴ to foul thirldoom.¹⁵
 But gif he had assayit it,
 Then all perquer¹⁶ he suld it wit ;
 And suld think freedom mair to prise
 Than all the gold in warld that is.

It is, he goes on to observe, by its contrary, or opposite, that the true nature of everything is best discovered : — the value and blessing of freedom, for example, are only to be fully felt in slavery ; and then the worthy archdeacon, who, although the humorous is not his strongest ground, does not want slyness or a sense of the comic, winds up with a very singular illustration, which, however, is more suited to his own age than to ours, and may be suppressed here without injury to the argument.

¹ Taking no heed, paying no regard.

² Reason.

³ Ah! how cruelly they judged them!

⁴ Cause.

⁵ Both the sense and the metre seem to require that this *then* (in orig. *than*) should be transferred to the next line; "they hangit then."

⁶ Also, thus.

⁷ Foes.

⁸ More.

⁹ Makes.

¹⁰ Pleasure.

¹¹ Yearned for, desired.

¹² Over, above.

¹³ The quality, the peculiar state or condition ?

¹⁴ Coupled, attached.

¹⁵ Thralldom.

¹⁶ Exactly.

But Barbour's design, no doubt, was to effect by means of this light and sportive conclusion an easy and harmonious descent from the height of declamation and passion to which he had been carried in the preceding lines. Throughout his long work he shows, for his time, a very remarkable feeling of the *art* of poetry, both by the variety which he studies in the disposition and treatment of his subject, and by the rare temperance and self-restraint which prevents him from ever overdoing what he is about either by prosing or raving. Even his patriotism, warm and steady as it is, is wholly without any vulgar narrowness or ferocity: he paints the injuries of his country with distinctness and force, and celebrates the heroism of her champions and deliverers with all admiration and sympathy; but he never runs into either the gasconading exaggerations or the furious depreciatory invectives which would, it might be thought, have better pleased the generality of those for whom he wrote. His understanding was too enlightened, and his heart too large, for that. His poem stands in this respect in striking contrast to that of Harry, the blind minstrel, on the exploits of Wallace, to be afterwards noticed; but each poet suited his hero, — Barbour, the magnanimous, considerate, and far-seeing king; Blind Harry, the indomitable popular champion, with his one passion and principle, hatred of the domination of England, occupying his whole soul and being.

We will now give one of Barbour's portraits — that of Sir James of Douglas, the second figure in his canvas: —

All men lovit him for his bounty!¹
 For he wes of full fair effer,²
 Wise, courtais, and deboner;
 Large and lovand als wes he,
 And ower all thing lovit lawty.³
 Lawty to love is greatunly;⁴
 Through lawty lives men righteously
 With a⁵ virtue and lawty
 A man may yet sufficiand be:
 And but⁶ lawty may nane have price,
 Whether he be wight, or he be wise

¹ Goodness of nature and disposition.

² Appearance, or rather, perhaps, demeanor, bearing.

³ Loyalty.

⁴ Great, magnanimous †

⁶ One. The reading seems doubtful.

⁵ Without.

For where it failies na virtue
 May be of price, na of value,
 To mak a man sa gnd that he
 May simply callit gud man be.
 He was in all his deedes leal;¹
 For him dedeigned² nought to deal
 With treachery; na with falset:³
 His heart on high honour was set;
 And him conteinit⁴ on sic manere
 That all him lovit that were him near.
 But he wes nought so fair that we
 Suld speak greatly of his beauty:
 In visage wes he some deal grey,
 And had black hair, as Ie⁵ heard say;
 But of limmes he wes weil made,
 With banes great, and shuldres braid.
 His body was well made and leanie.⁶
 As they that saw him said to me.
 When he was blythe⁷ he was lovely,
 And meek and sweet in company;
 But wha in battle might him see
 All other countenance had he.
 And in speak⁸ lispit he some deal;
 But that sat him right wonder weil.
 Till gud Ector of Troy might he
 In mony thinges likent be.
 Ector had black hair, as he had;
 And stark limmes, and right weil made;
 And lispit alsua⁹ as did he;
 And wes fulfillit of leauty;
 And was curtais, and wise, and wight.
 But of manheid and mickle might
 Till Ector dar I nane compare
 Of all that ever in warldes ware.
 The whether,¹⁰ in his time sa wrought he
 That he suld greatly lovit be.

The only other passage for which we can make room is a short extract from the narrative of the great day of Bannockburn, which

¹ Loyal, true, faithful.

² He deigned (it deigned him).

³ Falsehood.

⁴ Contained, held him in?

⁵ I.

⁶ These three words seem not to be in the MS., and the last of them at least may be doubted.

⁷ Cheerful, in good spirits.

⁸ Speech

⁹ Also.

¹⁰ However.

occupies altogether about 2000 lines of the poem, or the whole of the eighth and ninth Books of Dr. Jamieson's edition: —

There might men see men felly fight ;
 And men that worthy war and wight
 Do mony worthy vassalage.¹
 They faught as they war in a rage ;
 For, when the Scottis archery
 Saw their fayes ² sa sturdily
 Stand in to battle them again,³
 With all their might and all their main
 They laid on as men out of wit ;
 And where they with full strak ⁴ might hit
 There might na armour stint their strak.
 They to-frushit ⁵ that they might ower-tak ; ⁶
 And with axes sic dushes ⁷ gave,
 That they helmes and heades clave.
 And their fayes right hardily
 Met them, and dang on them doughtily
 With wapins ⁸ that were styth ⁹ of steel :
 There was the battle strekit ¹⁰ weil.
 Sa great din there wes of dints,
 As wapins upon armour stints ; ¹¹
 And of speares sa great bresting ; ¹²
 And sic thrang, and sic thristing ; ¹³
 Sic girning ¹⁴ graning, ¹⁵ and sa great
 A noise as they gan other beat ;
 And ensenies ¹⁶ on every side ;
 Givand and takand woundes wide ;
 That it was hideous for to hear.
 All their four battles with that were
 Fechtand ¹⁷ in a front halily. ¹⁸
 Ah ! mighty God, how doughtily
 Schir Edward the Bruce and his men
 Amang their fais conteinit them ¹⁹ then !
 Fechtand in sa gud covine, ²⁰
 Sa hardy, worthy, and sa fine,

¹ Acts of valiant service.

² Foes.

³ Against.

⁴ Stroke.

⁵ Quite broke in pieces.

⁶ Whatever they might overtake.

⁷ Such blows.

⁸ Weapons.

⁹ Strong.

¹⁰ Struck, foughten.

¹¹ Rest, strike.

¹² Breaking.

¹³ Thrusting.

¹⁴ Grinning.

¹⁵ Groaning.

¹⁶ War-cries.

¹⁷ Fighting

¹⁸ Wholly. Fighting all at once front to front ?

¹⁹ Maintained themselves.

²⁰ Combination (covenant).

That their vaward rushit was,
 And maugre theirs, left the place;¹
 And, till their great rout,² to warrand³
 They went, that tane had upon hand⁴
 Sa great annoy that they war effrayit
 For Scottis, that them hard arrayit,
 That than war in a schiltrum⁵ all.
 Wha happent into that fight to fall,
 I trow again he suld nought rise.
 There men might see on mony wise
 Hardiments⁶ eschevit⁷ doughtily;
 And mony, that wight war and hardy,
 Soon lyand under feet all dead,
 Where all the field of blud was red.
 Armes and whites⁸ that they bare
 With blud war sa defoulit there,
 That they might not descroyit be.⁹
 Ah, mighty God! wha then might see
 That Stewart, Walter, and his rout,
 And the gud Douglas, that was sa stout,
 Fechtand into that stalwart stour,¹⁰
 He suld say¹¹ that till all honour
 They war worthy. that in that fight
 Sa fast pressit their fayes might,
 That them rushit whar they yede.¹²
 There men might see mony a steed
 Fleand on stray,¹³ that lord had nane.
 Ah Lord! wha then gud tent had tane¹⁴
 Till the gud Earl of Murrave¹⁵
 And his, that sa great routes gave,
 And faught sa fast in that betail,
 Tholand¹⁶ sic paines and travail,
 That they and theirs made sic debat
 That where they come they made them gat;¹⁷

¹ The meaning evidently is, that the van of the English was broken, and left its ground, in spite of the efforts of its own side to support it.

² To their great confusion.

³ A place of shelter or refuge.

⁴ Who had received?

⁶ Supposed to mean a body of troops drawn up in a round form.

⁶ Hardy deeds.

⁷ Achieved.

⁸ Coats of white woollen.

⁹ Described.

¹⁰ Fighting in that strong tumult of battle.

¹¹ He would say.

¹² That drove them back wherever they went.

¹³ Flying astray, at large.

¹⁴ Good heed had taken.

¹⁵ Murray.

¹⁶ Sustaining.

¹⁷ Get? But the word is perhaps wrong. Dr. Jamieson, whose pointing fre

Then might men hear enseignies ¹ cry,
 And Scottis men ery hardily,
 On them! On them! On them! They fail;
 With that sa hard they gan assail,
 And slew all that they might ower ta; ²
 And the Scottis archers alsua ³
 Shot amang them sa deliverly,⁴
 Engrievand them sa greatumly,⁵
 That, what for them that with them faught,
 That swa great routes to them raught,⁶
 And pressit them full eagerly;
 And what for arrows that felly
 Mouy great woundes gan them ma,⁷
 And slew fast of their horse alsua,
 That they wandyst ⁸ a little wey;
 They dread sa greatly then to dey ⁹
 That their covine was wer and wer; ¹⁰
 For they that fechtand with them wer
 Set hardiment, and strength, and will,
 And heart, and courage als, theretill!
 And all their main, and all their might,
 To put them fully to the flight.

This, it must be allowed, if not quite a Homeric strain, is strenuous and valiant writing for a Scottish archdeacon, advanced in years, of the fourteenth century.



COMPOUND ENGLISH PROSE. — MANDEVIL. — TREVISA. —
 WICLIF. — CHAUCER.

To the fourteenth century belong the earliest specimens of prose composition in our present mixed English that have been preserved.

quently shows that he did not understand the text, affords us no light or assistance in any of its difficulties by the miserable glossary which he has appended to his edition.

¹ Dr. Jamieson's only interpretation of the term is *word of war*. Here at least 't seems rather to mean *ensigns* or *standard-bearers*, who raised the war-cry.

² Overtake.

³ Also.

⁴ Nimble, dexterously (our modern *cleverly*).

⁵ Distressing them so **greatly**.

⁶ It should probably be *wraught* (wrought).

⁷ Make.

⁸ Recoil for fear.

⁹ Die.

¹⁰ That their combination was worse and worse.

Among Sir Henry Ellis's contributions to the Pictorial History of England are two very curious extracts from the Arundel MS., No. 57, in the British Museum, entitled *Ayenbyte of Inwyt*, exemplifying the dialect of Kent in 1340. At the beginning of the MS. is this inscription:—"This boc is dan Michelis of Northgate, ywrite an Englis of his ozene hand; and is of the bochouse of Saynt Austine's of Canterberi under the letters CC." The first of the passages (which occurs on folio 48) is as follows:—

The yonge grihound that is yet al novis that yernth efter eche beste that yernth bevore him, and ne maketh bote him weri and his time lyese. Ther of zet Ysopes the fable of the little hounde and of the lesse. The hond at eche time that he yherth his lhord cometh hom, he yernth to yens hym, and lharth about his zwere, and the lhord him maketh uayre chiere and him froteth, and maker him greate feste. The asse him be thozte thous ssolde ich do, and zuo wolde mi lhord me louie, betterre he ssolde me make joye thet ich serui eche daye thanne thise hounde thet him serueth of nazt. Hit nes naz longe efterward thet the asse ne yzez his lhord come hom, he beginth to lheap and yernth to yens him, and him prauth the net aboute his zuere and beginth zinge grauntliche. The sergons thet hit y zeze nome steues and byete than asse rizt to the nolle, and ther of thet he wende hadde worthssipe and guod he hedde ssame and harm.

The other passage (which occurs on folio 82, and which gives the date of the manuscript) comprises the Kentish version of the Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria, and Creed, after an introductory paragraph, which, it will be observed, although written as prose, is really in rhyme:—

Nou iche wille that ye ywryte hou hit is y went: thet this boc is ywrite mid Engliss of Kent. This boc is ymad uor lewede men, vor uader and uor moder and uor other ken ham uor to berze uram alle manyere zen that ine hare in wytte ne bleue ne uoul wen. Huo ase God is his name yred thet this boc made God him yene thet bread of angles of heuene and ther to his red and onderuonge his zaule huanne thet he is dyad. Amen.

Ymende thet this boc is uolued ine the eue of the holy apostles Symon and Judas of ane brother of the cloystre of Sauynt Austin of Caunterberi ine the yeare of our lhordes beringe, 1340.

Pater Noster. — Vader oure thet art ine heuenes y halzed by thi name, cominde thi riche, y worthe thi wil ase in heuene ine erthe, bread oure eche dayes yef ous to day, and uor let ous oure yeldinges ase and we norleteth oure yelderes, and ne ous led nazt in to uondinge, ac vri ous uram queade. zo by hit.

Ave Maria. — Hayl Marie of thonke uol. H. . dby mid the, yblissed thou ine wymmen, and yblissed thet ouet of thine wombe. zuo by hit.

Credo. — Ich leue ine God uader almizti, makere of heuene and of erthe, and ine Jesu Crist his zone onlepi our lhord, that ykend is of the holy Gost, ybore of Marie mayde, ypynd under Pontis Pilate, ynayled a rode, dyade and be bered, yede down to helle, thane thridde day aros uran the dyade, steaz to heuenes, zit athe rizt half of God the uader almizti, thannes to comene he is to deme the quike and the dyade. Ich yleue ine the holy Gost, holy cherche generalliche, menesse of halzen, lesnesse of zennes, of ulesse arizinge, and lyf eurelestinde. zuo by hit.

The sound here represented by *z* in certain words, such as *almizti*, it should be noticed, is really a guttural, the same which at a later date came to be usually indicated by *gh*. In fact the character is a *g*, or something between a *g* and a *y*, and not at all our modern *z*.

Sir Henry adds that the Harleian MS., No. 1022, contains several tracts in Northern English, of nearly the same age; among which is a poem on the Decalogue, translated from the Latin in 1357, at the request of Archbishop Horesley, by John de Taystoke, a monk of St. Mary's, York. "The reader," it is further stated, "who is inquisitive as to dialects will find among the Harleian manuscripts one, No. 221, which contains a Dictionary in English and Latin, the former language in the dialect of the East Country, compiled ninety years later by a friar preacher, a recluse at Lynne in Norfolk."

Our oldest Mixed English prose author is Sir John Mandevil, whose *Voyages and Travels*, a singular repertory of the marvellous legends of the Middle Ages, have been often printed. The best editions are that published in 8vo., at London, in 1725, and the reprint of it in the same form in 1839, "with an introduction, additional notes, and a glossary, by J. O. Halliwell, Esq., F.S.A., F.R.A.S." The author's own account of himself and of his book is given in an introductory address, or Prologue:—

And, for als moch as it is long time passed that there was no general passage ne vyage over the sea, and many men desiren for to hear speak of the Holy Lond, and han¹ thereof great solace and comfort, I, John Maundeuille, knight, all be it I be not worthy, that was born in Englonde, in the town of Saint Albons, passed the sea in the year of our Lord Jesu Christ 1322, in the day of Saint Michel; and hider-to have ben² longtime over

¹ Have.

² Been.

the sea, and have seen and gone thorough many divers londs, and many provinces, and kingdoms, and isles, and have passed thorough Tartary, Persie, Ermonie¹ the Little and the Great; thorough Libye, Chaldee, and a great part of Ethiop; thorough Amazoyne, Ind the Lass and the More, a great party; and thorough out many other isles, that ben abouten Ind; where dwellen many divers folks, and of divers manners and laws, and of divers shapps of men. Of which londs and isles I shall speak more plainly hereafter. And I shall devise you some party of things that there ben,² whan time shall ben after it may best come to my mind; and specially for hem³ that will⁴ and are in purpose for to visit the Holy City of Jerusalem, and the holy places that are thereabout. And I shall tell the way that they should holden thider. For I have often times passed and ridden the way, with good company of many lords, God be thonked.

And ye shall understand that I have put this book out of Latin into French, and translated it agen out of French into English, that every man of my nation may understand it. But lords and knights, and other noble and worthy men, that con⁵ Latin but little, and han ben beyond the sea, knowen and understanden gif I err in devising, for forgetting or else; that they mowe⁶ redress it and amend it. For things passed out, of long time, from a man's mind, or from his sight, turnen soon into forgetting; because that mind of man ne may not ben comprehended ne withhelden for the freely of mankind.

Mandevill is said to have returned to England in 1356, or after an absence of thirty-four years; and, as he is recorded to have died at Liege in 1371, his book must have been written early in the latter half of the fourteenth century. Of the many copies of it which exist in manuscript, some are as old as the close of that century; so that the language may be presumed to have been preserved nearly as he wrote it. Divested of the old spelling, it will be seen from the above specimen to be still very readily intelligible; indeed it is remarkable for its clearness and correctness. Our other extracts, however, shall be given with the spelling of the time, as exhibited in the Cottonian MS. Titus c. xvi., which is believed to have been written about the year 1400. The following is the Seventh Chapter, entitled *Of the Pilgrimages in Jerusalem, and of the Holy Places thereabout*, as contributed after that MS. to the *Pictorial History of England* by Sir Henry Ellis.

¹ Armenia.

² Be.

³ Them ('em).

⁴ Wish.

⁵ Know.

⁶ May.

After for to speke of Jerusalem the holy cytee, zee schull undirstonde that it stont full faire betwene hilles. and there be no ryveres ne welles but watar cometh by condyte from Ebron. And zee schulle understonde that Jerusalem of olde tyme, unto the tyme of Melchisedech, was cleped Jebus: and after it was clept Salem, unto the tyme of Kyng David, that put these two names to gider, and cleped it Jebusalem. And after that Kyng Salomon cleped it Jerosolomye. And after that men cleped it Jerusalem, and so it is cleped zit. And aboute Jerusalem is the kyngdom of Surrye.¹ And there besyde, is the lond of Palestyne. And besyde it is Ascalon. And besyde that is the lond of Maritanie. But Jerusalem is in the lond of Judee; and it is clept Jude, for that Judas Machabeus was kyng of that contree. And it marcheth estward to the kyngdom of Arabye; on the south syde to the lond of Egypt; and on the west syde to the grete see. On the north syde toward the kyngdom of Surrye, and to the see of Cypre.

In Jerusalem was wont to be a Patriark and Erchebyssshopes, and Bisshoppes abouten in the contree. Abowte Jerusalem be these cytees; Ebron at seven myle, Jerico at six myle, Bersabee at eyght myle, Ascalon at xvii myle, Jaff at xvi myle, Ramatha at iij myle, and Bethleem at ij myle. And a ij myle from Bethleem toward the southe is the chirehe of Seynt Karitot that was abbot there, for whom thei maiden meche doel amongs the monks whan he scholde dye, and zit be in-moornyng in the wise that thei maden her² lamentacon for him the first tyme, and it is full gret pytee to beholde. This contree and lond of Jerusalem hath ben in many dyverse nacones hondes. And often therfore hath the contree suffred meche tribulacion for the synne of the people that duelle ther: for that contree hath be in thē hondes of all nacyonns: that is to seyne of Jewes, of Chananees, Assiryenes, Perses, Medoynes, Macedoynes, of Grekes, Romaynes, of Cristenemen, of Sarrazines, Barbaryenes, Turkes, Tartaryenes, and of manye othere dyverse nacyonns. For God wole not that it be longe in the hondes of traytours ne of synneres, be thei cristene or other. And now have the hethene men holden that lond in her hondes xl zer and more. But thei schull not holde it longe zif God wold.

And zee schull undirstonde that whan men comen to Jerusalem her first pilgrymage is to the chirehe of the Holy Sepuler wher oure Lord was buried, that is with oute the cytee on the north syde. But it is now enclosed in with the ton wall. And there is a full fair chirehe 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 chirehe is a tabernacle as itwer a lytyll hows, made with a low lityll dore; and that tabernacle is made in maner of a half a compas right curiously and richely made of gold and azure and othere riche coloures. ful

¹ Syria.² Dolor, sorrow (*Sc. dule*).³ Tazir.

nobelyche made. And in the ryght side of that tabernacle is the sepulchre of oure Lord. And the tabernacle is viij fote long and v fote wyde, and xj fote in heghte. And it is not longe sithe the sepulchre 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 Soudan¹ hath do make a wall aboute the sepulchre that noman may towche it. But in the left syde of the wall of the tabernacle is well the heichte of a man, is a gret ston, to the quantytee of a mannes hed, that was of the holy sepulchre, 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 sepulchre. And there is a lampe that hongeth before the sepulchre that brenneth light, and on the Gode fryyday it goth out be him self, at that hour that our Lord roos fro deth to lyve. Also within the chirche at the right syde besyde the queer of the chirche is the Mount of Calvarye, wher our Lord was don on the cros. And it is a roche of white colour, and a lytill medled with red. And the cros was set in a morteyes in the same roche, and on that roche dropped the woundes of our Lord, whan he was pyned on the cros, and that is cleped Golgatha. And men gon up to that Golgatha be degrees.² And in the place of that morteyes was Adames hed found after Noes flode, in tokene that the synnes of Adam scholde ben bought in that same place. And upon that roche made Abraham sacrificise to our Lord. And there is an Awter, and before that Awtier lyzn Godefray de Boleync, and Bawdewyn. and othere cristene Kyngs of Jerusalem. And ther nygh wher our Lord was crucyfyed is this writen in Greew,³ *Otheos basilion ysmon psionas ergasa, sothias emesotis gye,*⁴ that is to seyne in Latyn, ‘Hic Deus noster Rex, ante secula, operatus est salutem in medio terre;’ that is to seye ‘This God oure Kyng, before the worldes, hath wrought hele in mydds of the Erthe.’ And also on that roche where the cros was sett, is writen with in the roche these wordes, *Cyos myst ys basis toupisteos they thesmofy,*⁵ that is to sayne in Latyn, ‘Quod vides est fundamentum tocius fidei Mundi hujus;’ that is to seye, ‘That thou seest is ground of all the world and of this feyth.’ And zee schull vndirstonde that whan oure Lord was don upon the cros, he was xxxij zer and iij monethes of elde. And the propheeye of David sayth that, ‘Quadragesima annis proximus fui generacioni huic;’ that is to seye, ‘Forty zeer was I neighbore to this kynrede.’ And thus scholde it seme that the propheeyes ne wor not trewe, but thei ben bothe trewe: for in old tyme men maden o zeer of x monethes, of the whiche March was the firste and Decembr was the last. But Gayus that was Emperour of Rome

¹ Sultan.² Steps.³ Greek.⁴ In the printed editions the Greek is *ὁ θεὸς βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν πρὸ αἰώνων εἰργάσατο σωτηρίαν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς.*⁵ In the printed editions, *ὁ εἶδεις, ἐστὶ βᾶσις τῆς πίστεως ὅλης τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.*

putten these ij moneths there to Janyuer and Feverer, and ordeyned the zeer of xij monethes, that is to seye ecc.lxv dayes, without leep zeer, after the propre cours of the Sonne. And therefore after cowntyng of x monethes of the zeer, he dyede in the xl zeer as the prophete seyde: and after the zeer of xij monethes he was of age xxxiiij zeer and iij monethes. Also within the Mount of Calvarie, on the right side, is an Awter, wher the piler lyzth that oure lord Jhesu was bounden to whan he was scourged; and there besyde iiij fote, ben iiij pilers of ston that allweys droppen water. And summe seyn that thei wepen for our Lordes deth. And nygh that awtier is a place under erthe xlij degrees of depnesse, wher the only croys was founden by the wytt of Seynte Elyne, under a roche wher ther Jewes had hidde it. And that was the verray croys assayed. For thei founden iij crosses, on of our Lord, and ij of the ij thefes. And Seynte Elyne preved hem on a ded body that aros from deth to lyve, whan that it was leyd on it that our Lord dyed on. And there by in the wall is the place wher the iiij nayles of our Lord were hidd, for he had ij in his honds, and ij in his feet: and of on of these the Emperour of Constantynople made a brydill to his hors, to ber him in bataylle, and thorgh vertue there of he overcam his enemyes, add wan all the lond of Asye the lesse, that is to seye Turkye, Ermouye the lasse and the more, and from Surrye to Jerusalem, from Arabye to Persie, from Mesopotayme to the kingdom of Halappe,¹ from Egypte the highe and the lowe, and all the othere kyngdomes unto the depe of Ethiope, and in to Ynde the lesse that thanne was cristerne. And there was in that tyme many gode holy men and holy Heremytes of whom the book of Fadres lyfes speketh and thei ben now in paynemes and Sarazines honds. And in mydds of that chirche is a compas, in the whiche Joseph of Aramathie leyde the body of our Lord whan he had taken him down of the croys, and wer he wassched the wounds of our Lord. And that compas, sey men is the mydds of the world. And in the chirche of the Sepulchre on the north syde is the place wher oure Lord was put in preson. For he was in preson in many places. And ther is a partye of the cheyne that he was bounden with. And ther he appered first to Marie Magdaleyne, whan lie was rysen, and sche wende² that he had ben a gardener. In the chirche of Seynt Sepuler was wont to be chanons of the ordre of Seynt Augustyn, and hadden a Priour, but the Patriark was her sovereyn. And with oute the dores of the chirche, on the right syde as men gone upward xviiij greces,³ seyde our Lord to his moder, '*Mulier, ecce filius tuus,*' that is to seye, 'Woman, lo thi sone.' And after that he seyde to John his disciple, '*Ecce Mater tua,*' that is to seyne, 'Lo behold thi moder.' And these words he seyde on the cros. And on these greces went our Lord whan he bar the cross on his schulder. And under this grees is a chapell and

¹ Aleppo.² Weened, thought.³ Steps.

in that chapell synge-prestes, Yndyenes,¹ that is to seye prests of Ynde, nocht after oure law, but after her, and al wey thei maken her sacrement of the awtier, seyenge *Pater noster* and othere prayeres there with. With the whiche preyeres thei seye the words that the sacrement is made of. For thei ne knowe not the addicions that many Popes han made, but thei synge with gode devocioen. And there ner is the place where that oure Lord rested him whan he was wery for berynge of the cros. And zee schull understonde that before the chirche of the Sepulere is the cytee more feble than in ony other partie, for the grete playn that is betwene the chirche and the citee. And toward the est syde, with oute the walles of the cytee, is the Vale of Josaphath, that toucheth to the walles as though it wer a large dych. And above that Vale of Josaphath out of the cytee is the chirche of Seynt Stevene wher he was stoned to deth. And there beside is the gildene² zate that may not be opened, be the which zate our Lord entred on Palmesonday upon an asse, and the zate opened azenst him whan he wolde go unto the Temple. And zit apperen the steppes of the asses feet in iij places of the degrees that ben of full harde ston. And before the chirche of Seynt Sepuler toward the south, a ce paas is the gret Hospitall of Seynt John, of the whiche the Hospitleres hadd here fundacion. And with inne the Palays of the seke men of that Hospitall be sixe score and iiij pileres of ston. And in the walles of the hows, with oute the nombre aboveseyd, there be liiij pileres that beren up the hows. And fro that Hospitall to go toward the est is a full fayr chirche that is clept Notre Dame la graund. And than is there another chirche right nygh that is clept Notre Dame de Latyne. And there were Marie Cleophes and Marie Magdaleyne and teren here heer,³ whan our Lord was peyned in the cros.

The following is the account of Mahomet in the fourteenth chapter.

And zee schull vnderstonde that Machamete was born in Arabye, that was first a pore knaue that kept cameles that wenten with marchantes for marchandise, and so befell that he wente with the marchandes in to Egipt, and thei were thanne cristene in tho⁴ partyes. And at the desartes of Arabye he wente in to a chapell wher a Eremyte duelte. And whan he entred in to the chapell, that was but a lytill and a low thing, and had but a lityl dor' and a low, than the entree began to waxe so gret and so large, and so high, as though it had be of a gret mynstr, or the zate of a paleys. And this was the first myracle the Sarazins seyn that Machomete dide in his zouth. After began he for to waxe wyse and riche; and he was a gret Astronomer; and, after, he was gouernour and prince of the lond of

¹ Indians.

² Gilded.

³ Tore their hair.

⁴ Those.

Corrodane, and he gouerned it full wisely, in such manere, that whan the Prince was ded, he toke the lady to wyfe that highte¹ Gadryge. And Machomete fell often in the grete sikeness that men calle the fallynge euyll. Wherefore the lady was full sory that euere sche toke him to husbonde. But Machomete made hire to beleue that all tymes when he fell so, Gabriel the angel cam for to speke with him, and for the grete light and brightnesse of the angell, he myghte not susteyne him fro fallynge. And therefore the Sarazines seyn that Gabriel cam often to speke with him. This Machomete regned in Arabye, the zeer of our Lord Jhesu Crist sixe hundred and ten, and was of the generacion of Ysmael, that was Abrahames sone that he gat upon Agar his chamberer;² and therefore ther be Sarazines that be clept Ismaelytenes; and sume Agarzenes, of Agar, and the othere properly be clept Sarrazines of Sarra; and summe be clept Moabytes, and summe Amonytes, for the two sones of Loth, Moab and Amon, that he begatt on his daughtres, that were aftirward grete erthely princes. And also Machomete loued wel a gode heremyte that duelled in the desertes, a myle from Mount Synay in the weye that men gon fro Arabye toward Caldee, and toward Ynde, o³ day iorney fro the See wher the Marchaunts of Venyse comen often for merchandize. And so often wente Machomete to this heremyte that all his men were wrothe, for he wolde gladly here this heremyte preche, and make his men wake all nyght; and therefore his men thoughten to putte the heremyte to deth; and so befell vpon a nyght that Machomete was dronken of god wyn and he fell on slepe, and his men toke Machomete's swerd out of his schethe, whils he slepte, and there with thei slowgh this heremyte and putte his swerd al blody in his schethe azen. And at morwe whan he found the heremyte ded, he was fully sory and wroth, and wolde haue don his men to deth, but thei all with on accord [said] that he him self had slayn him whan he was dronken and schewed him his swerd all blody, and he trowed that thei hadden seyde soth.⁴ And than he cursed the wyn, and all tho that drynken it. And therefore Sarrazines that be denout drynken neuer no wyn, but sunn drynkon it priuily, for zif thei dronken it openly thei scholde ben reproued. But thei drynken gode beuerage, and swete and noryfshynge, that is made of Galamell, and that is that men maken sugr' of that is of right gode sauor, and it is gode for the breest. Also it be falleth sumtyme that cristene men become Sarazines outhur for pouertee or for sympleness, or elles for her owne wykkedness. And therefore the Archiflamyn or the Flamyn, os⁵ our Echebisshopp or Bisshopp, whan he reseeyueth hem seyth thus: *La ellec olla syla Machomet rores alla*, that is to seye, "There is no God but on and Machomete his messenger."

We have already had occasion to quote a short passage from

¹ Was called.

² Chambermaid.

³ One.

⁴ Sooth, true.

⁵ As.

John de Trevisa's translation of Higden's Polychronicon, in speaking of the new mode of teaching Latin in schools, through the medium of English instead of French, which Trevisa tells us had been introduced shortly before the time at which he was then writing, which was the year 1385. His translation of Higden, which was undertaken at the request of Thomas Lord Berkeley, to whom he was chaplain, is stated at the end to have been finished in 1387. It was printed by Caxton in 1482, with a continuator bringing down the narrative from 1357, at which Higden had stopped, to 1460; but, besides that Trevisa's text is extensively altered in this edition both by insertions and omissions, his language is modernized throughout. "I, William Caxton, a simple person," says the worthy printer, in his Preface, "have endeavoured me to writ first over all the said book of Polychronicon, and somewhat have changed the rude and old English, that is to wit, certain words which in these days be neither used ne understood." Yet not more than the ordinary span of a single human life had elapsed since the translation had been executed by Trevisa, no doubt in the current English of his day; such was the rapid growth of the language in the earlier half of the fifteenth century. Besides the Polychronicon, Trevisa rendered several other works from the Latin into his mother-tongue; and some of his other translations are still preserved in manuscript. Of a version of the whole of both the Old and New Testaments, however, which he is said to have executed, nothing is now known.

The oldest English translation we have of the Bible is that of Wiclif. John de Wiclif, or Wycliffe, died at about the age of sixty in 1384, and his translation of the Scriptures from the Vulgate appears to have been finished two or three years before. The New Testament has been several times printed: first in folio in 1731 under the care of the Rev. John Lewis; next in 4to. in 1810 under that of the Rev. H. H. Baber; lastly in 4to. in 1841, and again in 1846, in Bagster's English Hexapla. And now the Old Testament has also been given to the world from the Clarendon press, at the expense of the University of Oxford, admirably edited by the Rev. J. Forshall and Sir Frederick Madden, in four magnificent quartos, Oxford, 1850. The following extracts from Wiclif's Bible were communicated to the Pictorial History of England by Sir Henry Ellis from one of the best manuscripts of the entire translation, the Royal MS. 1 C. viii. in the British Museum. The

first, from the Old Testament, consists of part of the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, containing the Song of Moses : —

Thanne Moises song, and the sones of Israel, this song to the Lord ; and thei seiden, Synge we to the Lord for he is magnafied gloriousli ; he castide down the hors and the stiere into the see. My strengthe and my preisng is the Lord, and he is maad to me into heelthe ; this is my God : y schal glorifie hym the God of my fadir : and y schal enhance hym : the Lord is as a man *fizten* : his name is almizti. He castide down into the see the charis of Farao and his oost, his chosun princes weren drenchid in the reed see, the deepe watris hiliden them ; thei zeden down into the depthe as a stoon. Lord thy rizt hond is magnyfiyd in strengthe : Lord thi rizt hond smoot the enemye : and in the mychilnesse of thi glorie thou hast put down all thyn adversaryes ; thou sentist thine ire that devouride hem as stobil : and watris weren gaderid in the spirit of thi woodnesse ; flowinge watir stood : depe watris weren gaderid in the middis of the see : the enemy seide, Y schal pursue and y schal take, y schal departe spuylis : my soule schal be fillid : I schal drawe out my swerde : myn hond schal sle hem. Thi spirit blew ; and the see hilide hem, thei weren drenchid as leed, in grete watris. Lord, who is lyk thee in stronge men : who is lyk thee : thou art greet doere in hoolyneesse ; ferdful and p'isable, and doying miracles ; thou heldist forth thine hond, and the erthe devouride hem : Thou were ledere, in thi merci, to thi puple, which thou azen bonztest, and thou hast bore hym, in thi strengthe, to thin holi dwellyng place : pupilis stieden and weren wroothe : sorewis helden the dwelleris of Flistiym ; thane the pryncis of Edom weren disturblid ; trembling helde the stronge men of Moab : all the dwelleris of Canaan weren starke. Inward drede falle on hem : and outward drede in the greetnesse of thin arm. Be thei maad unmoovable as a stoon, til thi puple passe, lord, til this thi puple passe. Whom thou weldidist, thou schalt brynge hem in and thou schalt plaunte in the hil of thin eritage : in the moost stidefast dwellyng place which thou hast wrodzt, Lord, Lord, thi seyntuarie which thin hondis made stidefast. The Lord schal regne in to the world and ferth'e. Forsothe Farao a ridere entride with his charis and knyztis in to the see : and the Lord brouzte the watris of the see on him ; sotheli the sones of Israel zeden bi the drie place, in the myddis of the see.

Therefore Marie profetesse, the sister of Aaron, tooke a tympan in hir hond, and all the wynmen zeden out afir hyr with tympanis companyes : to which sche song before and seide, Synge we to the Lord : for he is magnyfiyd gloriously, he castide down into the see the hors and the stiere of hym.

The specimen selected from the New Testament is the last chapter of St. Luke : —

But in o day of the weke ful eerli thei camen to the graue, and broughten swete smelling spices that thei hadden araved. And thei founden the stoon turnyd away fro the graue. And thei geden in and foundun not the bodi of the Lord Jhesus. And it was don, the while thei weren astonyed in thought of this thing, lo t'wee men stodun bisidis hem in schynnyng cloth. And whanne thei dreden and bowiden her semblaunt into erthe, thei seiden to hem, what seeken ye him that lyueth with deede men? He is not here: but he is risun: haue ye mind how he spak to you whanne he was yit in Golilee, and seide, for it behoueth mannes sone to be bitakun into the hondis of synful men: and to be crucifyed: and the thridde day to rise agen? And thei bithoughten on hise wordis, and thei geden agen fro the graue: and teelden alle these thingis to the elleven and to all othere. And there was Marye Maudeleyn and Jone and Marye of James, and othere wymmen that weren with hem, that seiden to Apostlis these thingis. And these wordis were seyn bifore hem as madnesse and thei bileueden not to hem; but Petre roos up and ran to the graue, and he bowide doun, and sigh the lynen clothis liynge aloone; and he wente by himsilf, wondrynge on that that was don.

And lo tweyne of him wenten in that day into a castel, that was fro Jerusalem the space of sixty furlongis, by name Emaws. And thei spoken togidre of alle these thingis that hadden bifalle. And it was don, the while thei talkiden, and soughten by hemsilf: Jesus himsilf neighede and wente with hem. But her yghen weren holdun, that thei knewen him not. And he seide to hem, What ben these wordis that ye speken togidere wondrynge: and ye ben sorewful? And oon, whos name was Cleofas, auswerde and seyde, Thou thi silf art a pilgrim in Jerusalem, and hast thou not knowun what thingis ben don in it these dayes? To whom he seyde, What thingis? and thei seiden to him, Of Jhesus of Nazareth, that was a man profete myghti in werk and word bifore God and al the puple. And how the higheste prestis of our Princis bitokun him into dampnaciour of death: and crucifieden him. But we hopiden that he schulde haue agen boughte Israel: and now on alle these thingis, the thirdd day is to day that these thingis weren don. But also summe wymmen of ouris maden us aferd whiche bifore day weren at the graue. And whan his bodi was not foundun, thei camen and seiden that they sighen also a sight of aungels, which seiden that he lyueth. And summe of ouren wenten to the graue, and thei foundun so as the wymmen seiden; but they foundun not him. And he seide to him, A foolis and slowe of herte to bileue in alle thingis that the profetis han spoken: Wher it binofte not Crist to suffre these thingis, and so to entre into his glorye? And he began at Moyses and at alle the profetis and declaride to hem in alle scripturis that weren of him. And thei camen nygh the castel whidir thei wenten: and he made countenance that he wolde go ferthir. And thei constreyneder

him and seiden, Dwelle with us, for it draweth to nyght, and the day is now bowed down; and he entride with them. And it was don the while he sat at the mete with hem, he took breed and blisside and brak, and took to hem. And the yghen of hem weren opened, and thei knewen hem; and he vanyshide fro her yghen. And thei seiden togidere, Wher oure herte was not biernynge in us, while he spak to us in the weye, and opened to us Scripturis? And thei risen up in the same our and wenten agen into Jersusalem, and foundun the ellevene gaderid togidre, and hem that weren with him, seiynge, that the Lord is risun verily: and apperid to Symount. And thei tolden what thingis weren don in the weye, and how thei knewen him in the braking of bred. And the while thei spaken these thingis Jhesus stood in the myddil of hem and seide to hem; Pees to you, I am, nyl ye drede: but thei weren affrayed and agast and gessiden him to be a spirit. And he seide to hem, what ben ye troubled: and thoughtis camen up into youre hertis? Se ye my hondis and my feet: for I my silf am, feele ye and se ye, for a spirit hath not flesch and boones as ye seen that I haue. And whenne he hadde seid this thing; he schewide hondis and feet to hem. And yet while thei bileueden not and wondriden for joye: he seide, Han ye here ony thing that schal be etun? and thei profriden to him a part of a fisch roostyd, and a honycorb. And whanne he hadde etun bifore hem, he toke that that lefte and gaf to hem, and seyde to hem, These ben the wordis that I spak to you, whanne I was yit with you, for it is nede that alle thingis ben fulfilled that ben writun in the Lawe of Moyses and in the profetis and in Salmes of me. Thanne he openide to hem with that thei schulden undirstonde Scripturis. And he seide to hem, For thus it is writun, and thus it bihofte Crist to suffre: and rise agen fro death in the thridde day: and penaunce and remissioun of synnes to be prechid in his name into all folkis bigynnyng at Jersusalem. And ye ben witnessis of these thingis. And I schal send the biheest of my fadir into you, but sitte ye in the citee till that ye ben clothed with vertu fro an high. And he ledde hem forth into Bethanye; and whan hise hondes weren lift up, he blesside hem. And it was don the while he blessid hem he departede fro hem, and was borun into hevene. And thei worschipiden and wenten agen into Jersusalem, with gret ioye, and weren euer more in the temple heriynge and blessinge God.

It would appear from these two specimens that the English of this early version of the Bible is considerably less antique in the New Testament than in the Old. Wiclif is also the author of many original writings in his native language, in defence of his reforming views in theology and church government, some of which have been printed, but most of which that are preserved still remain in manuscript. His style is everywhere coarse and

slovenly, though sometimes animated by a popular force or boldness of expression.

Chaucer is the author of three separate works in prose: a translation of Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiæ, printed by Caxton, in folio, without date, under the title of 'The Boke of Consolacion of Philosophie, wich that Boecius made for his Comforte and Consolacion; a Treatise on the Astrolabe, addressed to his son Lewis, in 1391, and printed (at least in part) in the earlier editions of his works; and The Testament of Love, an apparent imitation of the treatise of Boethius, written towards the end of his life, and also printed in the old editions of his collected works. But, perhaps, the most highly finished, and in other respects also the most interesting of the great poet's prose compositions are the Tale of Melibœus and the Parson's Tale, in the Canterbury Tales. The former, which he tells himself as one of the company of pilgrims, and which is a very close translation from a French treatise entitled *Le Livre de Melibee et de Dame Prudence* (existing both in prose and verse), has been supposed, as mentioned in a preceding page, to be written in a sort of blank measure or rhythm, perhaps, Mr. Guest thinks, the same that is called *cadence* in the House of Fame. The following extract is from the earlier portion of the Tale, where the rhythmical style is conceived to be most marked:—

This Melibee answered unto his wife Prudence; I purpose not, quod he, to werken by thy counsel for many causes and reasons, for certes every wight wold hold me than ¹ a fool; this is to sayn, if I for thy counseling wold change things that been ordained and affirmed by so many wise men. Secondly, I say that all women ben wick, and none good of hem ² all; for of a thousand men, saith Salomon, I found o ³ good man; but certes of all women good woman found I never. And also, certes, if I governed me y thy counsel it should seem that I had yeve ⁴ thee over me the maistry; and God forbid that it so were; for Jesus Sirach saith, that if the wif have the maistry she is contrarious to her husband; and Salomon sayeth, Never in thy life, to thy wife, ne to thy child, ne to thy friend, ne yeve ne power over thyself; for better it were that thy children ax ⁵ of thee things that hem needeth, than thou see thyself in the hands of thy children. And also, if I wol werch by they counselling, certes it must be some time secrete ⁶ till it were time that it be knowen; and this ne may not be if I should be counselled by thee. For it is written, the jangler

¹ Then.

² Them.

³ One.

⁴ Given.

⁵ Ask.

⁶ Secret

of women ne can nothing hide, save that which they wot not. After, the philosopher sayeth, In wicked counsel women venquishen men. And for these reasons I ne owe not ¹ to be counselled by thee.²

Whan Dame Prudence, full debonairly and with great patience, had heard all that her husband liked for to say, than axed she of him licence for to speak, and said in this wise: My lord, quod she, as to your first reason it may lightly been answered, for I say that it is no folly to change counsel when the thing is changed, or else when the thing seemeth otherwise than it seemed before. And moreover I say, though that ye have sworn and behight ³ to perform your emprise, and nevertheless ye waive to perform thilk same emprise by just cause, men should not say therefore ye were a liar ne forsworn, for the book saith that the wise man maketh no leasing when he turneth his courage ⁴ for the better. And, all be it that your emprise be established and ordained by great multitude of folk, yet thar ⁵ you not accomplish thilk ordinance, but you liketh,⁶ for the truth of things and the profit ben rather founden in few folk that ben wise and full of reason, than by great multitude of folk there ⁷ every man cryeth and clattereth what him liketh; soothly swich ⁸ multitude is not honest. As to the second reason, whereas ye say that all women ben wick; save your grace, certes ye despise all women in this wise, and he that all despiseth, as saith the book, all displeaseth. And Senek saith, that who so wol have sapience shall no man dispraise, but he shall gladly teach the science that he can ⁹ without presumption or pride, and swich things as he nought can he shall not be ashamed to lear hem,¹⁰ and to inquere of less folk thar himself. And, sir, that there hath ben full many a good woman may lightly be preved; for certes, sir, our lord Jesu Christ wold never han descended to be born of a woman if all women had be wicked; and after that, for the great bounty that is in women, our lord Jesu Christ, whan he was risen from death to life, appeared rather to a woman than to his apostles. And, though that Salomon said he found never no good woman, it followeth not therefore that all women be wicked; for, though that he ne found no good woman, certes many another man hath found many a woman full good and true; or else, peradventure, the intent ¹¹ of Salomon was this, that in sovereign bounty ¹² he found no woman; this is to say, that there is no wight that hath sovereign bounty save God above, as he himself recordeth in his Evangelies; for there is no creature so good that him ne wanteth somewhat of the perfection of God that is his maker. Your

¹ Ought not.

² These three last sentences are not in the MSS., but are an insertion of Tyrwhitt's, translated from the French *Melibée*.

³ Engaged, pledged yourself.

⁴ Heart, inclination.

⁵ It behooveth.

⁶ Unless it liketh you.

⁷ Where.

⁸ Such.

⁹ Knows, undertsands.

¹⁰ Learn them.

¹¹ Meaning

¹² Goodness.

third reason is this : ye say that if that ye govern you by my counsel it should seem that ye had yeve me the maistry and the lordship of your person. Sir, save your grace, it is not so ; for, if so were that no man should be counselled, but only of hem that han lordship and maistry of his person, men nold not be counselled so often ; for, soothly, thilk man that asketh counsel of a purpose, yet hath he free choice whether he wol werk after that counsel or none. And as to your fourth reason, there as yesain,¹ that the janglerly of women can hide things that they wot not, as whoso saith that a woman cannot hide that she wot ; sir, these words ben understood of women that ben jangleresses and wicked, of which women men sain that three things driven a man out of his house, that is to say: smoke, dropping of rain, and wicked wives ; and of swich women Salomon saith, that a man were better dwell in desert than with a woman that is riotous ; and, sir, by your leave, that am not I ; for ye have full often assayed my great silence and my great patience, and eke how well that I can hide and hele² things that men oughten secretly to hiden. And soothly, as to your fifth reason, whereas ye say that in wicked counsel women venquishen men, God wot that thilk reason stant here in no stead ; for understondeth now ye axen counsel for to do wickedness, and if ye wol werken wickedness, and your wife restraineth thilk wicked purpose, and overcometh you by reason and by good counsel, certes your wife ought rather to be praised than to be blamed : thus should ye understond the philosopher that saith. In wicked counsel women venquishen hir³ husbonds. And there as ye blamen all women and hir reasons, I shall show you by many ensamples that many women have been full good, and yet ben,⁴ and hir counsel wholesome and profitable. Eke some men han said that the counsel of women is either too dear or else too little of price ; but all be it so that full many a woman be bad, and hir counsel vile and nought worth, yet han men founden full many a good woman, and discreet and wise in counselling. Lo Jacob thorough the good counsel of his mother Rebeck, wan the benison of his father and the lordship over all his brethren. Judith, by her good counsel, delivered the city of Bethuly, in which she dwelt, out of the hond of Holofern, that had it besieged and wold it all destroy. Abigail delivered Nabal, her housbond, fro David the king, that wold han slain him, and appeased the ire of the king by her wit, and by her good counselling. Hester, by her counsel, enhanced greatly the people of God, in the reign of Assuerns the king. And the same bounty in good counselling of many a good woman moun⁵ men read and tell. And, further more, whan that our Lord had created Adam, our form⁶ father, he said in this wise ; It is not good to be a man alone ; make we to him an help semblable to himself. Here moun ye see that if that women weren

¹ Whereas you say

² Conceal.

³ Their.

⁴ Still are.

⁶ May.

⁶ First, original.

not good, and hir counsel good and profitable, our Lord God of heaven wold neither had wrought hem ne called hem help of man, but rather confusion of man. And then said a clerk once in two verses, what is better than gold? Jasper. What is better than Jasper? Wisdom. And what is better than wisdom? Woman. And what is better than a good woman? Nothing. And, sir, by many other reasons moun ye seen that many women ben good, and hir counsel good and profitable. . . .

Whan Melibee had heard the words of his wife Prudence, he said thus: I see well that the word of Salomon is sooth; for he saith that words that ben spoken discretely by ordinance ben honeycombs, for they yeven sweetness to the soul and wholesomeness to the body; and, wife, because of thy sweet words, and eke for I have preved and assayed thy great sapience and thy great truth, I wol govern me by thy counsel in all thing.

This is probably one of the passages that have been conceived to have most of a rhythmical character; yet its balanced style does not go beyond what is not uncommon in rhetorical prose. Part of the measured march of the language may arise from the French tale, in perhaps its original form, having been in verse. What is called the *Persones* (or *Parson's*) *Tale*, which winds up the *Canterbury Tales*, as we possess the work, is a long moral discourse, which, for the greater part, is not very entertaining, but which yet contains some passages curiously illustrative of the age in which it was written. Here is part of what occurs in the section headed *De Superbia* (*Of Pride*), the first of the seven mortal sins. Tyrwhitt justly recommends that the whole "should be read carefully by any antiquary who may mean to write *De re Vestiaria* of the English nation in the fourteenth century."

Now ben there two manner of prides: that on of hem¹ is within the heart of a man, and that other is without; of which soothly these foresaid things, and mo² than I have said, appertainen to pride that is within the heart of man. And there be other spieces³ that ben withouten; but, natheless, that on of these spieces of pride is sign of that other, right as the gay levesell⁴ at the tavern is sign of the wine that is in the cellar. And this is in many things, as in speech and countenance, and outrageous array of clothing; for certes if there had ben no sin in clothing Christ wold not so soon have noted and spoken of the clothing of thilk rich man

¹ The one of them.

² More.

³ Species, kinds.

⁴ The meaning of this word, which at a later date appears to have been pronounced and written *lessel*, is unknown. See Tyrwhitt's note to *Cant. Tales*, v. 4059, and *Glossary, ad verbum*; and note by the editor, Mr. Albert Way, on pp. 300, 301, of the *Promptorium Parvulorum*, vol. i., printed for the Camden Society, 4to. Lond. 1843.

in the Gospel : and, as Saint Gregory saith, that precious clothing is culpable, for the dearth of it, and for his softness, and for his strangeness and disguising, and for the superfluity or for the inordinate scantiness of it. Alas ! may not a man see as in our days the sinful costlew array of clothing, and namely ¹ in too much superfluity, or else in too disordinate scantiness.

As to the first sin, in superfluity of clothing, which that maketh it so dear, to the harm of the people, not only the cost of the embrouding,² the disguising, indenting or barring, ownding,³ paling,⁴ winding, or bending, and semblable waste of cloth in vanity ; but there is also the costlew furring in hir gowns, so moch pounsoning⁵ of elisel to maken holes, so moch dagging⁶ of shears, with the superfluity in length of the foresaid gowns, trailing in the dong and in the mire, on horse and eke on foot, as well of man as of woman, that all thilk training is verily (as in effect) wasted, consumed, threadbare, and rotten with dong, rather than it is yeven to the poor, to great damage of the foresaid poor folk, and that in sondry wise ; this is to sayn, the more that cloth is wasted, the more must it cost to the poor people, for the scarceness ; and, furthermore, if so be that they wolden yeve swich pounsoned and dagged clothing to the poor people, it is not convenient to wear for hir estate, ne suffisant to bote⁷ hir necessity, to keep hem fro the distemperance of the firmament. . . .

Also the sin of ornament or of apparel is in things that appertain to riding, as in too many delicate horse that ben holden for delight, that ben so fair, fat, and costlew ; and also in many a vicious knave that is sustained because of hem ; in curious harness, as in saddles, croppers, peitrels, and bridles, covered with precious cloth and rich, barred and plated of gold and of silver ; for which God saith by Zachary the prophet, I wol confound the riders of swich horse. These folk taken little regard of the riding of God's son of heaven, and of his harness, whan he rode upon the ass, and had none other harness but the poor clothes of his disciples, ne we read not that ever he rode on any other beast. I speak this for the sin of superfluity, and not for honesty whan reason it requireth. And, moreover, certes pride is greatly notified in holding of great meiny,⁸ whan they ben of little profit, or of right no profit, and namely whan that meiny is felonious and damageous to the people by hardiness of high lordshp, or by way of office ; for certes swich lords sell than hir lordshp to the devil of hell, whan they sustain the wickedness of hir meiny ; or else whan these folk of low degree, as they that holden hosteltries, sustainen theft of hir hostellers, and that is in many manner of deceits ; thilk manner of folk ben the flies that followen the honey, or else the hounds that followen

¹ Especially.

² Embroidering.

³ Imitating waves.

⁴ Imitating pales.

⁵ Punching.

⁶ Slitting.

⁷ Help (boot).

⁸ Body of menials.

the carrain; swich foresaid folk stranglen spiritually hir lordships; for which thus saith David the prophet, Wicked death mot come unto thilk lordships, and God yeve that they mot descend into hell all down, for in hir houses is iniquity and shrewedness, and not God of heaven: and certes, but if they done amendment, right as God yave his benison to Laban by the serviee of Jacob, and to Pharaoh by the service of Joseph, right so wol God yeve his malison to swich lordships as sustain the wick-edness of hir servants, but they come to amendment. Pride of the table appeareth eke full oft; for certes rich men be eleped¹ to feasts, and poor folk be put away and rebuked; and also in excess of divers meats and drinks, and namely swich manner bake meats and dish meats brenning² of wild fire, and painted and castled with paper, and semblable waste, so that it is abusion to think; and eke in too great preciousness of vessel, and curiosity of minstrelsy, by which a man is stirred more to the delights of luxury.



LITERATURE AND LEARNING IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. UNIVERSITIES.

A FEW facts which are important rather as forming epochs in the chronology of our subject, and for the results by which they were followed, than in themselves, constitute the main part of the history of learning and literature in England during the fifteenth century. The actual contributions of this age to our national literature are smaller in amount and value than those of any preceding space of time of the same length since the Norman Conquest. The ferment of studious enthusiasm which had been excited in men's minds in the beginning of the preceding century had, in a great measure, spent itself before the beginning of this. According to an oration delivered before the pope and cardinals by Richard Fitz-Ralph, Archbishop of Armagh, in 1357, the 30,000 students of the University of Oxford had even by that time decreased to about 6000. The popular veneration for learning had also, from various causes, undergone a corresponding decline; and, instead of the honors formerly paid by all classes to talent and scholarship, and the crowding of eager multitudes around every eminent doctor wherever he appeared, we perceive now the aspect of a general indifference, and encounter occasional instances of the

¹ Called, invited

² Burning.

votaries of science and letters begging their bread, and of their unappreciated acquirements being turned into matter of ridicule and mockery by the insolence of rank and wealth. Anthony Wood, the quaint historian of the University of Oxford, relates a story of two itinerating students of this age, who, having one day presented themselves at a baronial castle, and sought an introduction by the exhibition of their academical credentials, in which they were each described as gifted, among other accomplishments, with a poetical vein, were ordered by the baron to be suspended in a pair of buckets over a draw-well, and dipped alternately into the water, until each should produce a couplet on his awkward situation ; it was not till after a considerable number of duckings that the unfortunate captives finished the rhymes, while their involuntary ascents and descents during the process of concoction were heartily enjoyed by the baron and his company. It would be unfair, indeed, to judge of the general state of things from one or two anecdotes of this kind, although such consequences are only what might be expected when scholars took to perambulating the country as mendicants, with recommendations to the charity of the benevolent by the chancellors of their universities, as we are assured was now become customary ; but the circumstances of our own country at least, in this age, must have proved in no small degree depressing to all liberal pursuits.

Although much of the popular effervescence had evaporated, however, the love of knowledge was still alive and active in many of the more select order of minds, prompting them to zealous exertions both in its acquisition and its diffusion. In the course of the fifteenth century, very nearly forty new universities were founded in the different countries of Europe. In our own, several new colleges were added both to Oxford and Cambridge. In the former university, Lincoln College was founded in 1430 by Richard Flemyng, Bishop of Lincoln, though only completed about 1475 by his successor, Thomas Rotherham ; All Souls was founded in 1437 by Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, with the design of providing a perpetual service of prayers and masses for the souls of all the faithful departed, and especially of those who had fallen or should fall in the French wars ; and Magdalen, which soon became one of the wealthiest academical establishments in Europe, was founded by William Pattyn, or De Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor of England, who began the erection of

the fabric in 1458, and lived to witness its completion in 1479. Cambridge received the additions, of King's College, founded in 1441, on a scale of great liberality and magnificence, by Henry VI., who established, about the same time, the celebrated school of Eton, to be a nursery for his college; of Queen's College, founded in 1446, by Henry's consort, Margaret of Anjou; and of Catherine Hall, founded in 1475, by Robert Woodlark, the third provost of King's College. Extensive public buildings, which came to be known by the name of the New Schools, were also erected at Oxford in 1439, by Thomas Hokenorton, Abbot of Osney, for the delivery of lectures in metaphysics, natural philosophy, moral philosophy, astronomy, geometry, music, arithmetic, logic, rhetoric, and grammar. The foundation of a divinity school and of a public library was laid in the same university about 1427; and, although the building was often interrupted, it was, at length, through the liberal donations of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, Cardinal John Kemp, Archbishop of York, his nephew Thomas Kemp, Bishop of London, and other benefactors, completed in 1480, when it formed the most magnificent structure of which the university yet had to boast. The building of public schools was also begun at Cambridge, in 1443, at the expense of the university, and finished, by the aid of various contributors, about 1475.

More interesting, however, than these extensions of former establishments, is the founding of a Temple to Learning in a part of the island in which no permanent abode had ever before been built for her. The first of the Scottish universities, that of St. Andrews, rose a few years after the commencement of the fifteenth century, out of the scheme of a few men of letters in that city, who, probably on the suggestion of the Bishop, Henry Wardlaw, formed themselves into an association for giving instruction in the sciences then usually taught in universities to all who chose to attend their lectures, and are supposed to have begun teaching about the year 1410. Their names, as recorded by the father of Scottish history, and eminently worthy to be preserved, were Lawrence Lindores, who undertook to explain the Fourth Book of the Master of the Sentences; Richard Cornel, Archdeacon of Lothian, John Litster, canon of St. Andrews, John Shevez, official of St. Andrews, and William Stephen, who lectured on the civil and canon laws; and John Gyll, William Fowler, and William Cro-

sier, who taught logic and philosophy.¹ The institution, with this apparatus of professors, was already, in everything but in form, a university, — and such it is styled in the charter or grant of privileges which Wardlaw hastened to bestow upon it. In that instrument, which is dated the 27th of February, 1411, the bishop speaks of the university as having been already actually instituted and founded by himself, saving the authority of the apostolic see, and laudably begun by those to whom he addresses himself, the venerable doctors, masters, bachelors, and scholars dwelling in his city of St. Andrews. He now proceeded more formally to endow the new seminary, in so far as his jurisdiction extended, with all the rights and liberties of a university. Two years afterwards, bulls of confirmation, &c., in the usual terms, were obtained from Benedict XIII., the one of the three contending popes who was acknowledged by the kingdom of Scotland. Benedict's bulls are six in number, all dated the same day, the 25th of August, 1413, at Paniscola, in Aragon, where that pope kept his court. They profess to be granted at the request of the Scottish king (though James I. was then a prisoner in England), and of the bishop, prior, and chapter of St. Andrews, whose project of establishing a university, or *studium generale*, in that city, is expressly stated to have been formed with the counsel, consent, and common participation of the three estates of the realm of Scotland.² The bishop and his associates, it is declared, had been stirred up to the undertaking by the consideration of the many dangers and inconveniences to which the clergy of that kingdom who desired to be instructed in theology, the canon and civil laws, medicine, and the liberal arts were exposed, from wars and other impediments in their journeys to foreign *studia generalia*, in consequence of there being no such institution to which they might resort in their own country. The several papal bulls were brought to St. Andrews by Henry de Ogilby, M. A., on the 3d of February, 1414, when they were received with processions and ringing of bells, and every demonstration of public joy. When King James returned ten years after this from England, he found the new seminary already firmly established, and still flourishing under the protection of its founder,

¹ Fordun, *Scotichronicon*.

² *Quod olim de consilio, consensu, et communi tractatu trium statuum personarum regni Scotiæ* — are the words of the bull of foundation. — See Evidence taken by the Commissioners for visiting the Universities of Scotland, vol. iii. p. 171.

Wardlaw, who had also been the instructor of his own boyhood. James granted it a charter confirming all its privileges and immunities, dated at Perth, the 31st of March, 1432; and, if we may believe the historian Hector Boecius, it flourished so greatly under his patronage, that it soon came to have among its teachers no fewer than thirteen doctors of divinity, and eight doctors of laws, as well as a prodigious multitude of students. The good and enlightened Bishop Wardlaw presided over the see of St. Andrews till the year 1444, when the university found in James Kennedy a worthy successor to his virtues and public spirit, as well as to his place. As yet the institution was little more than an incorporated association, without any permanent endowments, and with scarcely any buildings except a few public lecturing rooms; it was a university, therefore, but as yet without a college. Its first college — that of St. Salvator — was built and endowed by Kennedy, whose original foundation charter was confirmed, in a bull no longer extant, by Pope Nicholas V., who died in 1455. A second charter was granted by Kennedy, at his castle of St. Andrews, on the 4th of April, 1458, and confirmed by Pope Pius II., in a bull dated at Rome, the 13th of September, in the same year. In this the whole scheme of the establishment is minutely detailed, and a complete body of rules laid down for its government. One of the bishop's ordinances is curiously illustrative of the easy morality of the time. Having given some solemn directions as to the hours at which masses were to be said in all time coming by the members of the college, who were all to be clergymen, he proceeds to enjoin that all the members of the said college shall live decently as becomes ecclesiastics, "so as not," it is added, "to keep concubines publicly, nor to be common nightwalkers or robbers, or habitually guilty of other notorious crimes; and if any of them is so (which it is earnestly hoped may not be the case) let him be corrected by his superior; if he prove incorrigible, let him be deprived and another put in his place."¹ By another bull, dated the 25th of February, 1468, Pope Paul II. granted to the Principal and Masters of the college of St. Salvator the right of bestowing degrees in theology and the arts, "in consideration," as it is

¹ Ordinamus insuper, quod omnes dicti collegii honestè vivant, ut decet ecclesiasticos, ita quod non habeant publicas concubinas, nec sint communes noctivagi seu brigantes, aut alii notoriis criminibus intenti: et si talis sit (quod absit) per superiorem suum, &c. — See Evidence taken by the Commissioners for visiting the Universities of Scotland, vol. iii. 272.

expressed, "of its high and well-known reputation among the other colleges of the realm of Scotland."¹ The other colleges here spoken of could be nothing more than grammar schools; but the passage proves, what indeed is well established by other evidence, that such schools already existed in many of the monasteries and principal towns. It was at these that the Scottish youth were prepared for their attendance upon foreign universities.

Another of the Scottish universities — that of Glasgow — was also founded within this same century. The bull of foundation was granted at the request of James II. in 1450, by Nicholas V., who was "distinguished by his talents and erudition, and particularly by his munificent patronage of Grecian literature."² Other royal and episcopal charters were subsequently granted by King James II. (20th April, 1453); by Bishop Turnbull (1st December, 1453); by Bishop Muirhead (1st July, 1461); and by King James III. (10th December, 1472).³ But, "in none of the papal, royal, or episcopal letters of privilege, of a date prior to the Reformation," observes the writer of the able and elaborate account of the University of Glasgow appended to the General Report of the late Commission of Inquiry into the State of the Universities of Scotland, "is there any distinct trace of the constitution of the university; and it can scarcely be said that any of these documents refer to the existence of a *college*, or to the possession of any property. It does not appear that it was the intention of the founder of the university that the members should live *collegialiter*, maintained at a public table, and resident within the walls of a separate building. . . . Universities might be established (and some still exist on the Continent) without having even class-rooms for the students. The University of Paris subsisted in great efficiency from the age of Charlemagne to the middle of the thirteenth century (a period of nearly five hundred years) without having any schools or places of auditory, except such as were hired in the houses of individuals. During the first twenty years after the foundation of the university of St. Andrews, great inconvenience

¹ Quod inter alia collegia regni Scotæ collegium ejusdem ecclesiæ egregium ac notabile reputatur. — See Evidence taken by the Commissioners for visiting the Universities of Scotland, vol. iii. 273.

² Report of the Scottish University Commissioners, p. 213. See a character of Pope Nicholas V. by Gibbon — who observes that his "fame has not been adequate to his merits" — in *Decline and Fall of Rom. Emp.* ch. 66.

³ Evidence of Univ. Com. ii. 230–263.

was suffered, not merely from the want of such rooms, but from the multiplicity of schools in the different religious houses, all of them claiming to be considered as constituent parts of the university; and even after a Pædagogium was founded, in 1430, for the schools and halls of the Faculty of Arts, and for chambers to be used by the students in that Faculty, the studies of the Faculties of Theology and Law were conducted in other buildings; and the congregations of the university continued for at least 130 years to be held in the Augustinian Priory.”¹ A piece of ground, however, with the buildings upon it, in the High-street of the city, was granted to the University of Glasgow by James, the first Lord Hamilton, in 1460, being the site on which the college stands at the present day.



REVIVAL OF LETTERS. — INVENTION OF PRINTING.

DARK and unproductive as was the greater part of the fifteenth century in England and France, the revival of letters in the western world dates from this age. For a considerable time before the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, in 1453, the course of political events in the eastern empire had led to a more frequent intercourse than heretofore between its subjects and their fellow-Christians of the West, and had not only drawn some of the most distinguished ornaments of the Byzantine court, including three of the emperors themselves, to visit the Latin kingdoms, but had induced several learned Greeks to come over and settle in Italy. “In their lowest servitude and depression,” as Gibbon has said in one of his well-poised sentences, “the subjects of the Byzantine throne were still possessed of a golden key that could unlock the treasures of antiquity, — of a musical and prolific language, that gives a soul to the objects of sense, and a body to the abstractions of philosophy.” It cannot, perhaps, be said that the knowledge of the Greek tongue was ever entirely lost in western Europe; there were probably in every age a few scholars who had more than a merely elementary acquaintance with it. It is certain, however, that it was not a common study even among the most

¹ Report, p. 214.

learned. The most eminent universities—such as Bologna, Paris, and Oxford—were without any regular professor of Greek. Even the few who did read the language seem to have read only the writings in it on science and philosophy. Warton has shown that both the Iliad and the Odyssey were apparently wholly unknown, or at least not understood, in Europe from the fourth to the fourteenth century.¹ The renewed intercourse that has been mentioned between the East and the West, beginning in the early part of the latter century, rapidly effected a great revolution in this respect. Petrarch, about the year 1340, began the study of the language of Homer, under the instructions of the learned Barlaam, who had come to Italy as ambassador from Andronicus the Younger; and, although the separation of the two friends soon after stopped the Tuscan at the threshold of the new literature, his friend Boccaccio twenty years later was more fortunate in obtaining the assistance of Leontius Pilatus, a disciple of Barlaam, and, under his guidance, penetrated to its inner glories. At a still later date, the destruction of their ancient empire drove a crowd of illustrious Greek exiles to Italy,—the Cardinal Bessarion, Theodore Gaza, George of Trebizond, John Argyropulus, Demetrius Chalcondyles, Janus Lascaris, and others,—some of whom taught their native language in the universities and chief towns of that country, while the rest, by their translations, by their writings, and their converse with the public mind in various ways, assisted in diffusing a taste for it and a knowledge of it even beyond the Alps. Nor, as Gibbon has remarked, was the ardor of the Latins in receiving and treasuring up this new knowledge inferior to that of their Greek guests in imparting it. The merits of Pope Nicholas V., in the patronage of Greek literature, have been already noticed. During the eight years that he wore the tiara (from 1447 to 1455) this active and liberal head of the Christian Church added five thousand volumes to the library of the Vatican. Many of these were Greek books, or translations of them into Latin. “To his munificence,” continues the great historian, “the Latin world was indebted for the versions of Xenophon, Diodorus, Polybius, Thucydides, Herodotus, and Appian; of Strabo’s Geography, of the Iliad, of the most valuable works of Plato and Aristotle, of Ptolemy and Theophrastus, and of the Fathers of the Greek Church. The example of the Roman pontiff was preceded

¹ Hist. of Eng. Poetry, i. 128, and ii. 392.

or imitated by a Florentine merchant, who governed the republic without arms and without a title. Cosmo of Medicis was the father of a line of princes whose name and age are almost synonymous with the restoration of learning: his credit was ennobled into fame; his riches were dedicated to the service of mankind; he corresponded at once with Cairo and London; and a cargo of Indian spices and Greek books was often imported in the same vessel. In his palace distress was entitled to relief, and merit to reward; his leisure hours were delightfully spent in the Platonic academy; he encouraged the emulation of Demetrius Chalcondyles and Angelo Politian; and his active missionary, Janus Lascaris, returned from the East with a treasure of two hundred manuscripts, fourscore of which were as yet unknown in the libraries of Europe.¹

Gibbon adds, that, "after a short succession of foreign teachers, the tide of emigration subsided; but the language of Constantinople was spread beyond the Alps; and the natives of France, Germany, and England imparted to their country the sacred fire which they had kindled in the schools of Florence and Rome." Although, however, it has been necessary, for the sake of chronological distinctness, to notice the revival of learning in Europe in this place, the light of that great dayspring scarcely reached our own country within the period with which we are now occupied. The Greek language did not begin to be taught at Oxford till towards the very close of the fifteenth century. The case was different with regard to the other most memorable incident in the history of literature which illustrates the age of which we are now treating. The three towns, of Haerlem in Holland and of Mayence and Strasburg in Germany, contend for the honor of having given birth, shortly before the middle of this century, to the art of printing. The claim of Haerlem rests upon a tradition that one of its citizens, Lawrence (or Laurent) Janszoon Coster, had, without assistance or communication with any other individual, not only invented the art, but brought it to perfection, through the successive stages of wooden types, types of cut metal, and types cast in the modern fashion, before the year 1441; in which year one of his servants named John — whom some suppose to have been John Faust — made his escape to Mayence, carrying with him both the secret and a quantity of Coster's types and implements, with which

¹ Decline and Fall of Rom. Emp. ch. 66.

he began to print in the last-mentioned city in the following year. Among those who reject this story there is little disagreement as to the persons to whom the several parts of the invention are to be attributed; the principal dispute is, whether the art was first practised at Mayence or at Strasburg. The supporters of the pretensions of Coster of Haerlem, we have said, assert his claims to the invention both of the art of printing and of the art of type-founding. These are properly to be considered as two perfectly distinct inventions; and, though coming the one in aid of the other, the latter was nearly as great an improvement upon the former, as the notion of printing with movable types was upon the process, long previously practised in China, of producing impressions from blocks of wood and other materials.¹ The principle of the one consisted in making the same type available in the production of many different words and pages; the principle of the other consisted in making one cutting serve for the production of many copies of the same type. They proceeded, in fact, in opposite directions: the object of the former was attained by the contrivance of separate types, by the breaking down of the one block into many pieces; the latter was suggested by viewing the different types of each letter as essentially the same, that is to say, by bringing together, as it were, the many into one. The Germans agree in venerating three names as those of the fathers of the whole art of printing, — John Gutenberg, or Gutenbergger; Peter Schœffer, otherwise called Opilio; and John Faust. The share which Faust had in the matter is involved in some obscurity. According to one account, he merely interested himself warmly in the invention, and, being wealthy, assisted Gutenberg, who was poor, with the means of carrying on his operations. It is admitted that the grand fundamental conception of printing with separate or movable types is due to Gutenberg alone. And to Schœffer is attributed, with equal unanimity, the invention of casting types of metal by means of a matrix. For this happy improvement — without which, indeed, printing with movable types would have been checked in its natural development, like an animal or a plant left without adequate nourishment — Schœffer, who was at the time in the service of Gutenberg and Faust, is said to have received from the latter his only daughter

¹ We have elsewhere endeavored to state more distinctly than had previously been done in what it really is that the invention of printing essentially consists. — See Art. *Printing* in Penny Cyclopædia, xix. 14-18.

in marriage. The first servants of this high mystery, however, were not of the class of ordinary workmen; the fabrication of books, which even in its most mechanical forms had hitherto always been an employment of an intellectual nature, was not now committed to persons without any literary education; Schœffer had studied in his youth at the University of Paris, and his scholarly acquirements had no doubt in the first instance recommended him to Gutenberg as a fit assistant in his scholarly craft.

PRINTING IN ENGLAND.—CAXTON.

THE art of printing had been practised nearly thirty years in Germany before it was introduced either into England or France — with so tardy a pace did knowledge travel to and fro over the earth in those days, or so unfavorable was the state of these countries for the reception of even the greatest improvements in the arts. At length a citizen of London secured a conspicuous place to his name forever in the annals of our national literature, by being, so far as is known, the first of his countrymen that learned the new art, and certainly the first who either practised it in England, or in printing an English book. William Caxton was born, as he tells us himself, in the Weald of Kent, it is supposed about the year 1412. Thirty years after this date his name is found among the members of the Mercers' Company in London. Later in life he appears to have repeatedly visited the Low Countries, at first probably on business of his own, but afterwards in a sort of public capacity, — having in 1464 been commissioned, along with another person, apparently also a merchant, by Edward IV. to negotiate a commercial treaty with the Duke of Burgundy. He was afterwards taken into the household of Margaret Duchess of Burgundy. It was probably while resident abroad, in the Low Countries or in Germany, that he commenced practising the art of printing. He is commonly supposed to have completed before the end of the year 1471 impressions of Raoul le Fevre's *Recueil des Histoires de Troyes*, in folio; of the Latin oration of John Russell on Charles Duke of Burgundy being created a Knight of the Garter, in quarto; and of an English translation by himself of Le

Fevre's above-mentioned history, in folio; "whyche sayd translation and werke," says the title, "was begonne in Brugis in 1468, and ended in the holy cyte of Colen, 19 Sept. 1471." But these words undoubtedly refer only to the translation; and sufficient reasons have lately been advanced by Mr. Knight for entertaining the strongest doubts of any one of the above-mentioned books having been printed by Caxton.¹ The earliest work now known, which we have sufficient grounds for believing to have been printed by Caxton, is another English translation by himself, from the French, of a moral treatise entitled *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, a folio volume, which is stated to have been "finished the last day of March, 1474." It is generally supposed that this work was printed in England; and the year 1474 accordingly is assumed to have been that of the introduction of the art into this country. It is certainly known that Caxton was resident in England in 1477, and had set up his press in the Almonry, near Westminster Abbey, where he printed that year, in folio, *The Dictes and Notable Wyse Sayenges of the Phylosophers*, translated from the French by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers. From this time Caxton continued both to print and translate with indefatigable industry for about a dozen years, his last publication with a date having been produced in 1490, and his death having probably taken place in 1491, or 1492.² Before he died he saw the admirable art which he had introduced into his native country already firmly established there, and the practice of it extensively diffused. Theodore Rood, John Lettow, William Machelina, and Wynkyn de Worde, foreigners, and Thomas Hunt, an Englishman, all printed in London both before and after Caxton's death. It is probable that the foreigners had been his assistants, and were brought into the country by him. A press was also set up at St. Albans by a schoolmaster of that place, whose name has not been preserved; and books began to be printed at Oxford so early as the year 1478. It would even appear that before the end of this period some exportation of the productions of the English press had commenced. At the end of a Latin translation of the *Epistles of Phalaris*, printed at Oxford in 1485, is a Latin conplet, boasting that the English, who

¹ See William Caxton, a Biography, 12mo. Lond. 1844, pp. 103, &c. This work has since been expanded into *The Old Printer and The Modern Press*, 8vo. 1851.

² See article on Caxton in *Penny Cyclopædia*, vol. vi. p. 393; and with much more fulness of detail and illustration in Mr. Knight's *Biography of Caxton*.

had been wont to be indebted for books to the Venetians, now sold books themselves to other nations.¹

An enumeration of the principal works printed by Caxton will present the best view that can be given of the popular literature of the time; for of course he employed his press in the multiplication, and his pen in the translation, of the kind of books most in request among the reading portion of his countrymen. The predominant spirit of the age was still a mixture of devotion and romance; the clergy and the nobility were also at once the best educated and the wealthiest classes; accordingly the religious books and the romances form the two largest divisions in the list. The former comprises the *Pilgrimage of the Soul*, from the French; *Liber Festivalis*, or *Directions for keeping Feasts all the Year*; *Quatuor Sermones* (or *Four Sermons*), in English; *The Golden Legend* (a collection of *Lives of the Saints*), three editions; *The Art and Craft to know well to Die*, from the French; *Infantia Salvatoris* (the *Infancy of our Saviour*); *The Life of St. Catherine of Sens*; *Speculum Vitæ Christi*, or *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesu Christ*; *Directorium Sacerdotum* (a *Directory of Church Worship*); *A Book of Divers Ghostly Matters*; *The Life of St. Wynefrid*; *The Provincial Constitutions of Bishop Lyndwood of St. Asaph*, in Latin; the *Profitable Book of Man's Soul*, called the *Chastising of God's Children*; and one or two others. Several of these — such as the *Lives of the Saints* — might come almost equally under the title of books of romance. The works more properly relating to romance and chivalry, however, are the following: *The History of Troy*, already mentioned (which Caxton at least translated, if he did not print it); *The Book of the whole Life of Jason*; *Godfrey of Boloyn*; *The Knight of the Tower*, from the French; *The Book of the Order of Chivalry or Knighthood*, from the French; *The Book Royal*, or the *Book for a King*; *A Book of the Noble Histories of King Arthur and of Certain of his Knights*; *The History of the Noble, Right Valiant, and Right Worthy Knight Paris and of the Fair Vienne*; *The Book of Feats of Arms and of Chivalry*, from the French of *Christine of Pisa*; and the *History of King Blanchardine and Queen Eglantine his Wife*. To these may be added, the *History of*

¹ *Celatos, Veneti, nobis transmittere libros
Cedite; nos aliis vendimus, O Veneti.*

Middleton's *Origin of Printing in England*, p. 10

Renard the Fox, translated by Caxton from the German; and the Subtle Histories and Fables of Æsop, from the French. In English poetry there are the following works of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate: — of the first, The Tales of Canterbury, two editions; The Book of Fame; Troilus and Creseide; and some minor poems: — of the second, The Confessio Amantis, that is to say, in English, the Confession of the Lover: — of the third, The Work (or Court) of Sapience; The Life of our Lady; and some minor poems along with those of Chaucer. And here we may take note of the honorable conscientiousness of our first English printer, so worthy of his high vocation as the leader in the great enterprise of giving at once universal diffusion and an imperishable existence to the literature of his country. The manuscript from which he had printed his first edition of the Canterbury Tales happened unluckily, to quote Tyrwhitt's description, "to be one of the very worst, in all respects, that he could possibly have met with." This he himself, as he tells us in the preface to his second edition, discovered some time afterwards, whereupon he did not rest till he had produced this second edition from another much more correct manuscript — "for to satisfy the auctor," as he expresses it, "whereas tofore by ignorance I erred in hurting and defaming his book in divers places, in setting in some things that he never said ne made, and leaving out many things that he made which been requisite to be set in it." None of the ancient Latin classics were printed in England during the fifteenth century; but the list of the productions of Caxton's press contains English translations of Cicero's Treatises on Old Age and on Friendship; of Boëthius's Consolation of Philosophy, by Chaucer; of the Sayings of the Philosophers; of Virgil's Æneid, from the French; and of the works called Cato Magnus and Cato Parvus, also from the French. This was by no means a contemptible beginning of the work of transfusing the wisdom and poetry of antiquity into the mother-tongue. Provision was also made for the readers of history, though not so plentifully as for those of romance. The list contains the following historical and topographical works: The Chronicles of England; The Description of Britain; The Polyclonicon; The Life of Charles the Great, twice printed; and the Siege of the Noble and Invincible City of Rhodes. Caxton also printed the statutes of the first year of Richard III., and those of the first, second, and third parliaments of Henry VII. Among

a few other publications of a miscellaneous description, the following may be mentioned as relating to morals and the conduct of life: The Game of Chess, already noticed; The Moral Proverbs of Christine of Pisa; The Book of Good Manners; The Doctrinal of Sapience, from the French; and A Boke for Travellers. On the whole, the first books that were printed in England were, for the most part, we see, books for the general reader: none of them were works of recondite learning or science, or adapted to the tastes and studies only of particular classes; if they were not all equally edifying, they were all as much as possible addressed to the great body of the reading public—the only audience that was then sufficiently numerous to call into profitable exercise the multiplying powers of the press.



BOOKS AND LIBRARIES.

It follows, that it was only books of a certain description the price of which was at first reduced by the new invention. For a considerable time after the art of printing came into use, we find the price of many books still as excessive as ever, and the same anxious precautions taken for their security that had been usual when the only mode of multiplying a volume was by its repeated transcription. In 1471, for example, when Louis XI. of France wished to borrow from the Faculty of Medicine at Paris a copy of the works of the Arabian physician Rhasis, that he might have a transcript made for his own library, the Faculty, in a formal letter, took credit for extraordinary loyalty in assenting to the application, and, after all, would not let the king have the book until he had not only deposited in pledge for it a considerable quantity of valuable plate, but procured a nobleman to join with him as surety in a deed by which he bound himself to return it uninjured under a considerable forfeiture.¹ On a manuscript of Matthew Paris, now in the British Museum, there is an inscription, in Latin, dated 1st June, 1488, in the handwriting and with the signature of John Russell, then Bishop of Lincoln, in which whosoever shall obliterate or destroy the bishop's memorandum respecting the

Crevier, *Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris*, iv. 337.

ownership of the volume is solemnly declared to be accursed.¹ At this time by far the greater number of books were still unprinted; and every considerable library consisted chiefly of manuscripts, just as it did before the invention of the art of printing. Warton has collected the following facts respecting the libraries of the fifteenth century, and the inconveniences and impediments to study which must have been produced by the scarcity of books. "The famous library established in the University of Oxford by that munificent patron of literature, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, contained only 600 volumes. [It was opened in the year 1480.] About the commencement of the fourteenth century, there were only four classics in the Royal Library at Paris: these were, one copy of Cicero, Ovid, Lucan, and Boëthius; the rest were chiefly books of devotion, which included but few of the Fathers; many treatises of astrology, geomancy, chiromancy, and medicine, originally written in Arabic, and translated into Latin or French; pandects, chronicles, and romances. The whole consisted of 900 volumes. They were deposited in three chambers (in the Louvre), which, on this occasion, were wainscoted with Irish oak, and ceiled with cypress, curiously carved. The windows were of painted glass, fenced with iron bars and copper wire. The English became masters of Paris in the year 1425; on which event the Duke of Bedford, Regent of France, sent this whole library — then consisting of only 853 volumes, and valued at 2223 livres — into England; where, perhaps, they became the groundwork of Duke Humphrey's library, just mentioned."² In another place the same writer furnishes the following additional information respecting Duke Humphrey, and his munificence as a book collector: — "About the year 1440 he gave to the University of Oxford a library, containing 600 volumes, only 120 of which were valued at 1000*l*. They were the most splendid and costly copies that could be procured, finely written on vellum, and elegantly embellished with miniatures and illuminations: among the rest was a translation into French of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Only a single specimen of these valuable volumes was suffered to remain: it is a beautiful manuscript, in folio, of Valerius Maximus, enriched

¹ Warton, *Dissert. on Introd. of Learning into Eng.* p. cxi. The volume is one of the Royal MSS., marked 14 C vii. It appears, from an inscription in the author's own hand, to have been a presentation copy from himself, probably to some church or monastery.

² *Diss. on Introd. of Learning*, p. cxiii

with the most elegant decorations, and written in Duke Humphrey's age, evidently with a design of being placed in this sumptuous collection. All the rest of the books — which, like this, being highly ornamented, looked like missals, and conveyed ideas of popish superstition — were destroyed or removed by the pious visitors of the University in the reign of Edward VI., whose zeal was equalled only by their ignorance, or perhaps by their avarice.”¹ Several of the volumes of Duke Humphrey's library, however, still remain in various collections. In the library of Oriel College, Oxford, is a copy of John Capgrave's Commentary on Genesis, in the author's handwriting, preceded by a Dedication to the Duke, the beautifully illuminated initial letter of which represents Capgrave humbly presenting his book to his patron. The volume contains also an entry, in French, in the handwriting of the Duke, recording it to have been presented to him in the year 1438. Warton goes on to state that the patronage of Duke Humphrey was not confined to English scholars. Many of the most celebrated writers of France and Italy solicited his favor and shared his bounty. He also employed several learned foreigners in transcribing and in making translations of Greek works into Latin. The only literary production which has been ascribed to this distinguished patron of letters is a small tract on Astronomy; and it appears to have been only compiled at his instance, after tables which he had constructed. In the library of Gresham College, however, there is a scheme of astronomical calculations which bears his name. “Astronomy,” says Warton, “was then a favorite science; nor is it to be doubted that he was intimately acquainted with the polite branches of knowledge, which now began to acquire estimation, and which his liberal and judicious attention greatly contributed to restore.”²



TIPTOFT, EARL OF WORCESTER. — WOODVILLE, EARL RIVERS.

THE most distinguished among the English nobility of this rude age for learning and intellectual tastes, was John Tiptoft, originally

¹ Hist. of Eng. Poetry, ii. 355.

² Ibid. 359.

Lord Tiptoft, who was created Earl of Worcester by Henry VI. He afterwards, however, attached himself to the Yorkist family, for which he was put to death by Warwick, during the short restoration of Henry VI., in 1470, — his execution being the only vindictive act of bloodshed by which that revolution was stained. The latest continuation of the history of the Abbey of Croyland (printed by Fulman, in his *Rerum Anglic. Scriptor.*, pp. 449-546) asserts that the Earl had, by his cruelty in the office of Constable of the Tower, acquired the hatred of the people, who called him “the Butcher”; but general and passionate imputations of this kind cannot be allowed to go for much in the inflammation and ferocity of such a contest as then agitated men’s minds. The more specific statement of other writers is, that Worcester was sent to the block under the pretence of punishing him for cruelty of which he had been guilty many years before, while exercising the government of Ireland, particularly towards two infant sons of the Earl of Desmond. As Walpole has well said, “it was an unwonted strain of tenderness in a man so little scrupulous of blood as Warwick, to put to death so great a peer for some inhumanity to the children of an Irish lord; nor does one conceive why he sought for so remote a crime: he was not often so delicate. Tiptoft seems to have been punished by Warwick for leaving Henry for Edward, when Warwick had thought fit to quit Edward for Henry.”¹ Others of the old chroniclers ascribe the charges brought against him to the malice of his enemies. He was probably singled out for destruction as being the ablest and most dangerous man of his party; for Worcester was distinguished for his political and military talents, as well as for his scholarship. It would be strange, at any rate, if his intellectual acquirements — which raised him so high above the herd of his fellow-nobles, and the great body of his countrymen — should, instead of softening and humanizing him, according to the ancient poet’s celebration of the effect of “having faithfully learned the ingenuous arts,”² have had an influence of the very opposite kind upon his nature and conduct. The Earl of Worcester was an ardent lover of books, and was, as well as Duke Humphrey, a liberal contributor to the shelves of the rising public library of the University of Oxford. On his return from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, after residing for

¹ Royal and Noble Authors.

² Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, Lib. ii. Ep. 9, v. 47.

some years at Padua and Venice, and making great purchases of manuscripts in both those places, he repaired to Rome to satisfy his longing curiosity with a sight of the library of the Vatican, and drew tears of delight from Pope Pius II. (the learned Æneas Sylvius) by a Latin oration which he pronounced before him. Of his literary performances, the principal one that remains is the translation of Cicero's Treatise on Friendship, which was published by Caxton. He was one of the chief patrons of this earliest English printer, who says of him that he was one "to whom he knew none like among the lords of the temporality for science and moral virtue," — a far better testimony to his worth than the party-spirit of the Croyland historian, or even the temporary clamor of the populace, if such did make itself heard against him in the triumph of the opposite faction, is of the reverse. He was only in his forty-second year when he was put to death; "at which death," says Caxton, "every man that was there might learn to die, and take his death patiently."

Fuller has said that "the axe then did at one blow cut off more learning than was left in the heads of all the surviving nobility." Yet there still survived a noble contemporary of Tiptoft, "by no means," to use the words of Walpole, "inferior to him in learning and politeness, in birth his equal, by alliance his superior, greater in feats of arms, and in pilgrimages more abundant." This was Anthony Widville, or Woodville, Lord Scales and Earl Rivers, the brother of the fair queen of Edward IV. By a fate closely resembling that of the Earl of Worcester, the brave and accomplished Lord Rivers was beheaded at Pomfret Castle, by order of the Protector Gloucester, afterwards Richard III., along with the queen's son Sir Richard Grey, and other victims, on the 23d of June, 1483. The Earl, when he thus perished, had not completed his forty-first year. At a famous combat which took place in Smithfield, between Rivers, then Lord Scales, and Anthony the Bastard of Burgundy, in 1467, the Earl of Worcester presided as Lord High Constable; so that two of the chief figures at this one of the latest real passages of arms held in England, were the two Englishmen the most distinguished of their time for those intellectual tastes and accomplishments in the diffused light of which the empire of chivalry and the sword was ere long to fade away, as the stars disappear before the sun. Walpole has drawn the character of Earl Rivers in his most graphic style: — "The credit of

his sister, the countenance and example of his prince, the boisterousness of the times, nothing softened, nothing roughened the mind of this amiable lord, who was as gallant as his luxurious brother-in-law, without his weaknesses — as brave as the heroes of either Rose, without their savageness — studious in the intervals of business — and devout after the manner of those whimsical times, when men challenged others whom they never saw, and went barefoot to visit shrines in countries of which they had scarce a map.” He was also one of Caxton’s great patrons, and was the author of several of those translations from the French which the latter printed. In a manuscript copy, in the archbishop’s library at Lambeth, of one of these translations — that of the Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers (which Rivers executed for the instruction of his nephew, the young Prince of Wales, to whom he was governor) — there is an interesting illumination, in which the Earl is represented introducing Caxton to Edward IV., his queen, and the prince. In this instance, Earl Rivers condescended to translate a translation, for the original of the Dicts and Sayings is in Latin. He was also the author of the metrical version of the Proverbs of Christine of Pisa, and of another of Caxton’s publications named Cordial, or Memorare Novissima, both from the French. But these and the other translations in which the art of printing, on its first establishment among us, exercised its powers of multiplying the fountains of knowledge and of mental gratification were, as Walpole observes, as much new and real presents to the age as original works would have been. To Lords Worcester and Rivers this writer conceives their country to have been in a great measure indebted for the restoration of learning. “The countenance, the example,” he remarks, “of men in their situation, must have operated more strongly than the attempts of an hundred professors, benedictines, and commentators.”¹



SCIENCE IN ENGLAND. — ALCHEMISTS.

ALTHOUGH Chaucer had already set the example of writing on scientific subjects in the mother-tongue by his treatise on the

¹ Royal and Noble Authors, vol. i.

Astrolabe, — the oldest work in English now known to exist on any branch of science,¹ — this department of study was but very little cultivated in England during the present period. The short list of English scientific works during the fifteenth century does not contain a single name remembered, or deserving of being remembered, in the history of science.² The dreams of astrology and alchemy still captivated and bewildered almost all who turned their attention either to mathematical or natural philosophy. The only difference of opinion with regard to these mysterious pursuits was whether they were or were not forbidden by the law of God. Nobody doubted the most marvellous of their pretensions; but many thought a skill in them was rather an inspiration from the prince of darkness than light from heaven. Probably, however, it was not any feeling of this kind that occasioned an act of parliament passed in the beginning of the reign of Henry IV., making it felony to practise the transmutation of metals, there designated “the multiplying of gold or silver, or the craft of multiplication:”³ the prohibition has more the look of having been dictated by political or economical considerations, as if there had been some apprehension that the operations of the multipliers might possibly affect the value of the king’s coin. Henry IV., at any rate, with all his piety, was as great a patron of the alchemists as Edward III. had been before him. These impostors practised with abundant success upon his weakness and credulity, repeatedly inducing him to advance them money wherewith to prosecute their idle operations, as well as procuring from him protections, which he sometimes prevailed upon the Parliament to confirm, from the penalties of the statute that has just been mentioned. In one of these protections granted to the three “famous men,” John Fauceby, John Kirkeby, and John Rayny, which was confirmed by Parliament 31st May 1456, the object of the researches of the said philosophers is described to be “a certain most precious medicine, called by some the mother and queen of medicines; by some the inestimable glory; by others the quintessence; by others the philosopher’s stone; by others the elixir of life; which cures all curable

¹ See Book of Table Talk, i. 199.

² See all those whose names have been recovered enumerated, with notices of their insignificant performances, in a paper on the English Mathematical and Astronomical Writers between the Norman Conquest and the year 1600, in the Companion to the Almanac for 1837, pp. 22-26.

³ Stat Henry IV., c. iv.

diseases with ease, prolongs human life in perfect health and vigor of faculty to its utmost term, heals all healable wounds, is a most sovereign antidote against all poisons, and is capable," the enumeration of virtues concludes, "of preserving to us, and our kingdom, other great advantages, such as the transmutation of other metals into real and fine gold and silver."¹ The philosopher's stone, and the elixir of life, it will be observed, are here spoken of as one and the same medicine, contrary, we believe, to the common notion. The power attributed to the medicine, also, in the prolongation of life scarcely goes the length of the accounts usually given. Fanceby, here mentioned, is elsewhere designated the king's physician. Another of Henry's physicians was Gilbert Kymer, who was a clergyman, and, among other ecclesiastical promotions, held the offices of dean of Salisbury and chancellor of the University of Oxford. From this example we may perceive that the practice of medicine was still, to some extent, in the hands of the clergy. The art itself appears to have made little or no progress within the present period; indeed it may be doubted if the knowledge that had formerly been derived from the Arabic authors and schools was not now diminished rather than increased. Almost the only medical work that appeared in England in the fifteenth century, even the title of which is now remembered, is the *Dietarium de Sanitatis Custodia* (or *Dietary for the Preservation of Health*) of this Dr. Gilbert Kymer. It is a tract consisting of twenty-six chapters, and is dedicated, like so many others of the productions of the learned of this age, both in England and other countries, to the great patron of literature, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester. Surgery was also in as rude a state as ever. It appears, from a record in the *Fœdera*, that in Henry V.'s army which won the battle of Agincourt there was only one surgeon, a certain John Morstede, fifteen assistants, whom he had pressed under a royal warrant, not having yet landed. Of these assistants three were also to act as archers, the whole number having the pay of common archers, and Morstede himself only that of a man-at-arms. The art, indeed, was hardly yet considered as anything more than a species of mechanical handicraft. It deserves to be noted, however, that the operation of lithotomy was successfully performed at Paris for the first time, at least by any modern surgeon, in the year 1474, on a condemned criminal, whose life was

¹ *Fœdera*, xi. 379.

granted by the king to the petition of the physicians and surgeons of the city, that he might serve, according to the philosophic maxim, as the *corpus vile*, or worthless subject, of the experiment.

LATIN CHRONICLERS.

OF the literary productions of this age the literary merits are in general of the humblest description. Among the Latin historians, or chroniclers, Thomas Walsingham may be accounted one of the best, if not the chief. He was a Benedictine of the Abbey of St. Albans, and is the author of two works: one, a History of England, entitled *Historia Brevis*, which begins at 1273, where Matthew Paris ends, and extends to the beginning of the reign of Henry VI.; the other, a History of Normandy, under the title of *Ypodigna Neustriæ*, from the first acquisition of the duchy by Rollo the Dane. The style of these chronicles is sufficiently rude and unpolished; but they are very full and circumstantial; and the English History, even in the earlier part of it, contains many things not mentioned by any contemporary writer.¹ The compilation of English History by Thomas Otterbourne, a Franciscan friar, from the landing of Brutus to the year 1420, is held in small estimation.² A much more valuable performance is the *Chronicon* of John de Whethamstede, Abbot of St. Albans, although it only extends from the year 1441 to 1461.³ Whethamstede was a person of judgment as well as of considerable learning. He was an especial favorite with Duke Humphrey, who was accustomed to visit him in his monastery, where the monks, however, accused their abbot of spending too much of his time in study and in writing books, though he was a most liberal benefactor to their establishment. But probably neither the libraries he built and furnished both at St. Albans and at Oxford, the organs and pictures with which he adorned the church and chapels of his monastery, nor the extensive additions which he made to its buildings, compensated in their esti-

¹ Published together by Archbishop Parker, fol. Lon. 1574. Also in Camden's *Anglica*, &c., fol. Francof. 1603.

² Published by Hearne, in 2 vols. 8vo. Oxon. 1732.

³ Published by Hearne, along with Otterbourne.

mation for tastes and habits so different from their own. Another of the Latin historians of this period whose name is connected with Duke Humphrey is the Italian, Titus Livius Forojuliensis, as he calls himself, the author of a *Life of Henry V.*¹ He was invited to England by the Duke, who appointed him to be his poet and orator. His *Life of Henry V.*, however, is very little else than an abridgment of the work on the same subject by Thomas de Elmham,² Prior of Linton, whose barbarous style does not prevent his performance from being one of great historical value. The Italian affects to imitate the style of the illustrious ancient whose name he assumes; but he is, as may be supposed, a very modern Livy. Another of these annalists is William Botoner, or William of Worcester, the author of a chronicle extending from 1324 to 1491, which is nearly all a compilation, and of very little value.³ Botoner is also the author of the translation of Cicero's *Treatise on Old Age*, already mentioned as one of Caxton's publications. The last of this class of writers we shall mention is John Rossus, or Rouse, of Warwick, the author of what he calls a *History of the Kings of England*,⁴ which, nevertheless, commences with the creation of the world. Although it does not contain much that is interesting till the author comes down to his own age, the latter part of the fifteenth century, it furnishes some curious details both of the events and the manners of that time.



FRENCH CHRONICLERS.

Two French writers, Monstrelet and Comines, may be considered as in some sort belonging to this period of English history. Monstrelet, whose narrative extends from 1400 to 1452 (with a supplement coming down to 1467 by another hand), is a very faithful but not a very lively chronicler of the contentions of the houses of Orleans and Burgundy, and of the wars of the English in France, in his own day. Comines, an actor to a considerable extent in the

¹ Published by Hearne, 8vo. Oxon. 1716.

² *Ibid.* 1727.

³ Published by Hearne, in the Appendix to the *Liber Niger Scaccarii*, 2 vols. 8vo. Oxon. 1728.

⁴ Published by Hearne, 8vo. Oxon. 1716

affairs which he relates, is a writer of a superior stamp. His *Memoirs* extend from 1464 to 1498, a period comprehending nearly the whole reign of Louis XI. of France, whom Comines may be said to make his hero, and whose singular character gives much of a dramatic life to the narrative of the historian. Comines has none of the chivalrous enthusiasm of Froissart, and no other excitement of a very warm or imaginative character to make up for the want of it; but observation, sagacity, and an unaffected, straightforward way of writing, give him a great power of carrying his reader along with him. He is the best authority for the French transactions of the reign of our Edward IV.



ENGLISH CHRONICLERS.

THIS age also affords us two or three English chroniclers. The series of our modern English chronicles may perhaps be most properly considered as commencing with John de Trevisa's translation of Higden, with various additions, which, as already mentioned, was finished in 1387, and was printed, with a continuation to 1460, by Caxton in 1482. After Trevisa comes John Harding, who belongs to the fifteenth century; his metrical *Chronicle of England* coming down to the reign of Edward IV.¹ The metre is melancholy enough; but the part of the work relating to the author's own times is not without value. Harding is chiefly notorious as the author, or at least the collector and producer, of a great number of charters and other documents attesting acts of fealty done by the Scottish to the English kings, which are now generally admitted to be forgeries. Caxton himself must be reckoned our next English chronicler, as the author both of the continuation of Trevisa and also of the concluding part of the volume entitled *The Chronicles of England*, published by him in 1480, — the body of which is translated from a Latin chronicle by Douglas, a monk of Glastonbury, who lived in the preceding century. Neither of these performances, however, is calculated to add to the fame of the celebrated printer. To this period we may also in part assign the

¹ First printed by Grafton in 1543. The most recent edition is that by Sir H. Ellis, 4to. Lond. 1812.

better known Concordance of Histories of Robert Fabyan, citizen and draper of London; though the author only died in 1512, nor was his work printed till a few years later. Fabyan's history, which begins with Brutus and comes down to his own time, is in the greater part merely a translation from the preceding chronicles; its chief value consists in a number of notices it has preserved relating to the city of London.¹



BISHOP PECOCK. — FORTESCUE. — MALORY.

OF the English theological writers of the age immediately following that of Wiclif, the most noteworthy is Reynold Pecoek, Bishop of Asaph and afterwards of Chichester. As may be inferred from these ecclesiastical dignities, Pecoek was no Wiclifite, but a defender of the established system both of doctrine and of church government: he tells us himself, in one of his books, that twenty years of his life had been spent for the greater part in writing against the Lollards. But, whatever effect his arguments may have produced upon those against whom they were directed, they gave little satisfaction to the more zealous spirits on his own side, who probably thought that he was too fond of reasoning with errors demanding punishment by a cautery sharper than that of the pen; and the end was that he was himself, in the year 1457, charged with heresy, and, having been found guilty, was first compelled to read a recantation, and to commit fourteen of his books, with his own hands, to the flames at St. Paul's Cross, and then deprived of his bishopric, and consigned to an imprisonment in which he was allowed the use neither of writing-materials nor of books, and in which he is supposed to have died about two years after. One especial heresy alleged to be found in his writings was, that in regard to matters of faith the Church was not infallible. Bishop Pecoek's Life has been ably and learnedly written by the Rev. John Lewis, to whom we also owe biographies of Wiclif and of Caxton. His numerous treatises are partly in English, partly in Latin. Of those in English the most remarkable is one entitled

¹ First published in 1516. The last edition is that of Sir H. Ellis, Lond. 4to. 1811.

The Repressor, which he produced in 1449. A short specimen, in which the spelling, but only the spelling, is modernized, will give some notion of his manner of writing, and of the extent to which the language had been adapted to prose eloquence or reasoning of the more formal kind in that age: —

“Say to me, good sir, and answer hereto: when men of the country upland bringen into London in Midsummer eve branches of trees fro Bishop’s Wood, and flowers fro the field, and betaken tho¹ to citizens of London for to therewith array her² houses, shoulde[n] men of London, receiving and taking the branches and flowers, say and hold that the branches grewen out of the carts which broughten hem³ to London, and that the carts or the hands of the bringers weren grounds and fundaments of the branches and flowers? God forbid so little wit be in her heads. Certes, though Christ and his apostles weren now living at London, and would bring, so as is now said, branches from Bishop’s Wood, and flowers from the fields, into London, and woulden hem deliver to men, that they make therewith her houses gay, into remembrance of St. John Baptist, and of this that it was prophesied of him, that many shoulde[n] joy of his birth, yet the men of London, receiving so the branches and flowers, oughten not say and feel that the branches and flowers grewen out of Christ’s hands. Tho branches grewen out of the boughs upon which they in Bishop’s Wood stoden, and tho boughs grewen out of stocks or truncheons, and the truncheons or shafts grewen out of the root, and the root out of the next earth thereto, upon which and in which the root is buried. So that neither the cart, neither the hands of the bringers, neither the bringers ben the grounds or fundaments of the branches.”

The good bishop, we see, has a popular and lively as well as clear and precise way of putting things. It may be doubted, nevertheless, if his ingenious illustrations would be quite as convincing to the earnest and excited innovators to whom they were addressed as they were satisfactory to himself.

Another eminent English prose-writer of this date was Sir John Fortescue, who was Lord Chief Justice of the King’s Bench under Henry VI., and to whom the king is supposed to have also confided the great seal at some time during his expulsion from the throne. Fortescue is the author of various treatises, some in English, some in Latin, most of which, however, still remain in manuscript. One in Latin, which was first sent to press in the reign of Henry VIII., and has been repeatedly reprinted since, is commonly referred to

¹ Take them, or those.

² Their.

³ Them.

under the title of *De Laudibus Legum Angliæ*. It has also been several times translated into English. This treatise is drawn up in the form of a dialogue between the author and Henry's unfortunate son, Edward Prince of Wales, so barbarously put to death after the battle of Tewkesbury. Fortescue's only English work that has been printed was probably written at a later date, and would appear to have had for its object to secure for him, now that the Lancastrian cause was beaten to the ground, the favor of the Yorkist king, Edward IV. It was first published, in 1714, by Mr. John Fortescue Aland, of the Middle Temple, with the title of *The Difference between an Absolute and Limited Monarchy*, as it more particularly regards the English Constitution, — which, of course, is modern, but has been generally adopted to designate the work. The following passage (in which the spelling is again reformed) will enable the reader to compare Fortescue as a writer with his contemporary Peacock, and is also curious both for its matter and its spirit:—

And how so be it that the French king reigneth upon his people *dominio regali*, yet St. Lewis, sometime king there, ne any of his predecessors set never tallies ne other impositions upon the people of that land without the consent of the three estates, which, when they may be assembled, are like to the court of Parliament in England. And this order kept many of his successors till late days, that Englishmen kept such a war in France that the three estates durst not come together. And then, for that cause, and for great necessity which the French king had of goods for the defence of that land, he took upon him to set tallies and other impositions upon the commons without the assent of the three estates; but yet he would not set any such charges, nor hath set, upon the nobles, for fear of rebellion. And, because the commons, though they have grudged, have not rebelled, nor be hardy to rebel, the French kings have yearly sithen¹ set such charges upon them, and so augmented the same charges as the same commons be so impoverished and destroyed that they may uneth² live. They drink water, they eat apples, with bread, right brown, made of rye. They eat no flesh, but if it be selden³ a little lard, or of the entrails or heads of beasts slain for the nobles and merchants of the land. They wear no woollen, but if it be a poor coat under their uttermost garment, made of great canvas, and passen not their knee; wherefore they be gartered and their thighs bare. Their wives and children gone barefoot. They may in none otherwise live; for some of them that was wont to pay to his land

¹ Since.

² Scarcely, with difficulty (uneasily).

³ Seldom, on rare occasions.

lord for his tenement which he hireth by the year a seute¹ payeth now to the king, over² that seute, five scutes. Where-through they be artied³ by necessity, so to watch, labour, and grub in the ground for their sustenance, that their nature is much wasted, and the kind of them brought to nought. They gone crooked, and are feeble, not able to fight nor to defend the realm; nor have they weapon, nor money to buy them weapon, withal; but verily they live in the most extreme poverty and misery; and yet they dwell in one of the most fertile realms of the world. Where-through the French king hath not men of his own realm able to defend it, except his nobles, which bearen not such impositions, and therefore they are right likely of their bodies; by which cause the king is compelled to make his armies, and retinues for defence of his land, of strangers, as Scots, Spaniards, Aragoners, men of Almayne,⁴ and of other nations: else all his enemies might overrun him; for he hath no defence of his own, except his castles and fortresses. Lo! this the fruit of his *jus regale*.

It is in the same spirit that the patriotic chief justice elsewhere boasts, that there were more Englishmen hanged for robbery in one year than Frenchmen in seven, and that "if an Englishman be poor, and see another having riches which may be taken from him by might, he will not spare to do so."

Fortescue was probably born not much more than thirty years after Pecock; but the English of the judge, in vocabulary, in grammatical forms, in the modulation of the sentences, and in its air altogether, might seem to exhibit quite another stage of the language.

Although both Pecock and Fortescue lived to see the great invention of printing, and the latter at any rate survived the introduction of the new art into his native country, no production of either appears to have been given to the world through the press in the lifetime of the writer. Perhaps this was also the case with another prose-writer of this date, who is remembered, however, less by his name than by the work of which he is the author, and which still continues to be read, the famous history of King Arthur, commonly known under the name of the *Morte Arthur*. This work was first printed by Caxton in the year 1485. He tells us in his prologue, or preface, that the copy was given him by Sir Thomas Malory, Knight, who took it, out of certain books in French, and reduced it into English. Malory himself states at

¹ An *escut*, or *écu (d'or)*, about three shillings and fourpence.

² In addition to, over and above.

³ Compelled.

⁴ Germany.

the end, that he finished his task in the ninth year of King Edward IV., which would be in 1469 or 1470. The *Morte Arthur* was several times reprinted in the course of the following century and a half, the latest of the old editions having appeared in a quarto volume in 1634. From this, two reprints were brought out by different London booksellers in the same year, 1816; one in three duodecimos, the other in two.¹ But the standard modern edition is that which appeared in two volumes quarto in the following year, 1817, exactly reprinted from Caxton's original edition, with the title of *The Byrth, Lyfe, and Actes of Kyng Arthur; of his noble Knyghtes of the Rounde Table, &c.*, with an Introduction and Notes, by Robert Southey. Malory, whoever he may have been (Leland says he was Welsh), and supposing him to have been in the main only a translator, must be admitted to show considerable mastery of expression; his English is always animated and flowing, and, in its earnestness and tenderness, occasionally rises to no common beauty and eloquence. The concluding chapters in particular have been much admired. We extract a few sentences:—

Then Sir Lancelot, ever after, eat but little meat, nor drank, but continually mourned until he was dead: and then he sickened more and more, and dried and dwindled away. For the bishop, nor none of his fellows, might not make him to eat, and little he drank, that he was soon waxed shorter by a cubit than he was, that the people could not know him. For evermore day and night he prayed [taking no rest], but needfully as nature required; sometimes he slumbered a broken sleep; and always he was lying grovelling upon King Arthur's and Queen Guenever's tomb; and there was no comfort that the bishop, nor Sir Bors, nor none of all his fellows could make him; it availed nothing.

Oh! ye mighty and pompous lords, winning in the glorious transitory of this unstable life, as in reigning over great realms and mighty great countries, fortified with strong castles and towers, edified with many a rich city; yea also, ye fierce and mighty knights, so valiant in adventurous deeds of arms, behold! behold! see how this mighty conqueror, King Arthur, whom in his human life all the world doubted,² yea also the noble Queen Guenever, which sometime sat in her chair adorned with gold, pearls, and precious stones, now lie full low in obscure foss, or pit, covered with clods

¹ In Mr. Bohn's new edition of Lowndes's "Bibliographer's Manual" it is stated that the *former* was edited by Haslewood. Should it not be the *latter*? It is the more correct of the two, and forms part of the series known as *Walker's Classics*.

² Dreaded (held as *redoubtable*).

of earth and clay! Behold also this mighty champion, Sir Lancelot, peerless of all knighthood; see now how he lieth grovelling upon the cold mould; now being so feeble and faint, that sometime was so terrible: how, and in what manner, ought ye to be so desirous of worldly honour so dangerous? Therefore, me thinketh this present book is right necessary often to be read; for in all¹ ye find the most gracious, knightly, and virtuous war, of the most noble knights of the world, whereby they got praising continually; also me seemeth, by the oft reading thereof, ye shall greatly desire to accustom yourself in following of those gracious knightly deeds; that is to say, to dread God and to love righteousness, faithfully and courageously to serve your sovereign prince; and, the more that God hath given you the triumphal honour, the meeker ought ye to be, ever fearing the unstableness of this deceitful world.

And so, within fifteen days, they came to Joyous Guard, and there they laid his corpse in the body of the quire, and sung and read many psalters and prayers over him and about him; and even his visage was laid open and naked, that all folk might behold him. For such was the custom in those days, that all men of worship should so lie with open visage till that they were buried. And right thus as they were at their service there came Sir Ector de Maris, that had sought seven years all England, Scotland, and Wales, seeking his brother Sir Lancelot. . . .

And then Sir Ector threw his shield, his sword, and his helm from him; and when he beheld Sir Lancelot's visage, he fell down in a swoon; and, when he awoke, it were hard for any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. "Ah, Sir Lancelot," said he, "thou wert head of all Christian knights." — "And now, I dare say," said Sir Bors, "that Sir Lancelot, there thou liest, thou wert never matched of none earthly knight's hands. And thou wert the courtliest knight that ever bare shield; and thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse; and thou wert the truest lover, of a sinful man, that ever loved woman; and thou wert the kindest man that ever stroke with sword; and thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights; and thou wert the meekest man, and the gentlest, that ever eat in hall among ladies; and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in rest."

¹ It?

ENGLISH POETS. — OCCLEVE; LYDGATE.

THE most numerous class of writers in the mother-tongue belonging to this time are the poets, by courtesy so called. We must refer to the learned and curious pages of Warton, or to the still more elaborate researches of Ritson,¹ for the names of a crowd of worthless and forgotten versifiers that fill up the annals of our national minstrelsy from Chaucer to Lord Surrey. The last-mentioned antiquary has furnished a list of about seventy English poets who flourished in this interval. The first known writer of any considerable quantity of verse after Chaucer is Thomas Occleve. Warton places him about the year 1420. He is the author of many minor pieces, which mostly remain in manuscript, — although “six of peculiar stupidity,” says Ritson, “were selected and published” by Dr. Askew in 1796; — and also of a longer poem, entitled *De Regimine Principum* (On the Government of Princes), chiefly founded on a Latin work, with the same title, written in the thirteenth century by an Italian ecclesiastic Egidius, styled the Doctor Fundatissimus, and on the Latin treatise on the game of chess of Jacobus de Casulis, another Italian writer of the same age, — the latter being the original of the *Game of the Chess*, translated by Caxton from the French, and printed by him in 1474. Occleve’s poem has never been published — and is chiefly remembered for a drawing of Chaucer by the hand of Occleve, which is found in one of the manuscripts of it now in the British Museum.² Occleve repeatedly speaks of Chaucer as his master and poetic father, and was no doubt personally acquainted with the great poet. All that Occleve appears to have gained, however, from his admirable model is some initiation in that smoothness and regularity of diction of which Chaucer’s writings set the first great example. His own endowment of poetical power and feeling was very small, — the very titles of his pieces, as Warton remarks, indicating the poverty and frigidity of his genius.

By far the most famous of these versifiers of the fifteenth century is John Lydgate, the monk of Bury, whom the Historian of

¹ *Bibliographia Poetica*.

² Harl. MS. 4866. This portrait, which is a half-length, is colored. There is a full-length portrait in another copy of Occleve’s *Poems* in Royal MS. 17 D. vi. — See *Life of Chaucer*, by Sir Harris Nicolas, pp. 104, &c.

our Poetry considers to have arrived at his highest point of eminence about the year 1430. Ritson has given a list of about 250 poems attributed to Lydgate. Indeed he seems to have followed the manufacture of rhymes as a sort of trade, furnishing any quantity to order whenever he was called upon. On one occasion, for instance, we find him employed by the historian Whethamstede, who was abbot of St. Albans, to make a translation into English, for the use of that convent, of the Latin legend of its patron saint. "The chronicler who records a part of this anecdote," observes Warton, "seems to consider Lydgate's translation as a matter of mere manual mechanism; for he adds, that Whethamstede paid for the translation, the writing, and illuminations, one hundred shillings."¹ Lydgate, however, though excessively diffuse, and possessed of very little strength or originality of imagination, is a considerably livelier and more expert writer than Occleve. His memory was also abundantly stored with the learning of his age; he had travelled in France and Italy, and was intimately acquainted with the literature of both these countries; and his English makes perhaps a nearer approach to the modern form of the language than that of any preceding writer. His best-known poem consists of nine books of Tragedies, as he entitles them, respecting the falls of princes, translated from a Latin work of Boccaccio's: it was printed at London in the reign of Henry VIII. A Selection from the Minor Poems of Dan John Lydgate, edited by Mr. Halliwell, has been printed for the Percy Society, 8vo. Lond. 1840.



SCOTTISH POETS. — WYNTON; JAMES I.; HENRYSON; HOLLAND; BLIND HENRY.

THE most remarkable portion of our poetical literature belonging to the fifteenth century (as also, we shall presently find, of that belonging to the first half of the sixteenth) was contributed by Scottish writers. The earliest successor of Barbour was Andrew of Wyntown, or Wynton, a canon regular of the Priory of St. Andrews, and Prior of the Monastery of St. Serf's Inch in Lochleven, one of the establishments subordinate to that great house,

¹ Hist. Eng. Poetry, vol. ii. p. 363.

who is supposed to have been born about 1350, and whose *Originale Cronykil* of Scotland appears to have been finished in the first years of the fifteenth century. It is a long poem, of nine books, written in the same octosyllabic rhyme with the *Bruce* of Barbour, to which it was no doubt intended to serve as a kind of introduction. Wynton, however, has very little of the old archdeacon's poetic force and fervor; and even his style, though in general sufficiently simple and clear, is, if anything, rather ruder than that of his predecessor, — a difference which is probably to be accounted for by Barbour's frequent residences in England and more extended intercourse with the world. The *Cronykil* is principally interesting in an historical point of view, and in that respect it is of considerable value and authority, for Wynton, besides his merits as a distinct narrator, had evidently taken great pains to obtain the best information within his reach with regard to the events both of his own and of preceding times. The work begins (as was then the fashion) with the creation of the world, and comes down to the year 1408; but the first five books are occupied rather with general than with Scottish history. The last four books, together with such parts of the preceding ones as contain anything relating to British affairs, were very carefully edited by the late Mr. David Macpherson (the author of the well-known *Annals of Commerce* and other works), in two volumes, 8vo. Lon. 1795. It is deserving of notice that a considerable portion of Wynton's *Chronicle* is not his own composition, but was the contribution of another contemporary poet; namely, all from the 19th chapter of the Eighth to the 10th chapter of the Ninth Book inclusive, comprising the space from 1324 to 1390, and forming about a third of the four concluding books. This he conscientiously acknowledges, in very careful and explicit terms, both at the beginning and end of the insertion. We may give what he says in the latter place, as a short sample of his style: —

This part last treated beforne,
 Fra Davy the Brus our king wes born,
 While ¹ his sister son Robert
 The Second, our king, than called Stuert,
 That nest ² him reigned successive,
 His days had ended of his live,
 Wit ye well, wes nought my dite; ³

¹ Till.² Next.³ Writing.

Thereof I dare me well acquite.
 Wha that it dited, nevertheless,
 He showed him of mair cunningness
 Than me commendis ¹ his treatise,
 But ² favour, wha ³ will it clearly prize.
 This part wes written to me send ;
 And I, that thought for to mak end
 Of that purpose I took on hand,
 Saw it was well accordand
 To my matere ; I wes right glad ;
 For I was in my travail sad ;
 I eked ⁴ it here to this dite,
 For to mak me some respite.

This is interesting as making it probable that poetical, or at least metrical, composition in the national dialect was common in Scotland at this early date.

Of all our poets of the early part of the fifteenth century the one of greatest eminence must be considered to be King James I. of Scotland, even if he be only the author of *The King's Quair* (that is, the King's *quire* or *book*), his claim to which has scarcely been disputed. It is a serious poem, of nearly 1400 lines, arranged in seven-line stanzas; the style in great part allegorical; the subject, the love of the royal poet for the Lady Joanna Beaufort, whom he eventually married, and whom he is said to have first beheld walking in the garden below from the window of his prison in the Round Tower of Windsor Castle. The poem was in all probability written during his detention in England, and previous to his marriage, which took place in February 1424, a few months before his return to his native country. In the concluding stanza James makes grateful mention of his

maisters dear
 Gower and Chaucer, that on the steppes sate
 Of rhetorick while they were livand here,
 Superlative as poets laureate,
 Of morality and eloquence ornate ;

and he is evidently an imitator of the great father of English poetry. The poem too must be regarded as written in English rather

¹ He showed himself of more cunning (skill) than I who commend.

² Without.

³ Whosoever.

⁴ Added.

than in Scotch, although the difference between the two dialects, as we have seen, was not so great at this early date as it afterwards became, and although James, who was in his eleventh year when he was carried away to England in 1405 by Henry IV., may not have altogether avoided the peculiarities of his native idiom. The Quair was first published from the only manuscript (one of the Selden Collection in the Bodleian Library), by Mr. W. Fytler at Edinburgh, in 1783; there have been several editions since. The following specimen is transcribed from the text given by Mr. George Chalmers, in his *Poetic Remains of some of the Scottish Kings*, now first collected, Svo. Lon. 1824; though without adhering in all cases either to his spelling, his pointing, or his explanations:—

Where as in ward full oft I would bewail
 My deadly life, full of pain and penance,
 Saying right thus, What have I guilt to fail¹
 My freedom in this world and my pleasance?
 Sen² every wight has thereof suffisance
 That I behold, and I a creature
 Put from all this, hard is mine aventure.³

The bird, the beast, the fish eke in the sea,
 They live in freedom everich in his kind,
 And I a man, and lacketh liberty!
 What shall I sayn, what reason may I find,
 That fortune should do so? Thus in my mind
 My folk I would argue;⁴ but all for nought;
 Was none that might that on my paines wrought.⁵

Then would I say, Gif God me had devised
 To live my life in thraldom thus and pine,
 What was the cause that he more me comprised⁶
 Than other folk to live in such ruine?
 I suffer alone among the figures nine;⁷

¹ What guilt have I (what have I been guilty of) so that I should want (be deprived of).

² Since.

³ Hap, lot, fate.

⁴ According to Chalmers this means, "I would argue with my attendants—the Earl of Orkney and others of his train." We suspect the word *folk* to be a mis-transcription—perhaps for *fate*.

⁵ There was no one that might do what had any effect in relieving my sufferings?—if the line be not corrupt.

⁶ Doomed, forced (compressed).

⁷ "Of all the nine numbers mine is the most unlucky."—*Chalmers*.

Ane woeful wretch, that to no wight may speed,¹
 And yet of every lives² help has need !

The longe days and the nightes eke
 I would bewail my fortune in this wise ;
 For which again³ distress comfort to seek
 My eustom was on mornes for to rise,
 Early as day ; O happy exercise !
 By thee came I to joy out of torment : —
 But now to purpose of my first intent.

Bewailing in my chamber thus alone,
 Despaired of all joy and remedy,
 Fortirit⁴ of my thought and woe-begone,
 And to the window gan I walk in hy⁵
 To see the world and folk that went forby,⁶
 As, for the time though I of mirthes food
 Might have no more, to look it did me good.

Now was there made, fast by the Toures wall,
 A garden fair, and in the corners set
 Ane herber⁷ green, with wandes long and small
 Railed about ; and so with treës set,
 Was all the place, and hawthorn hedges knet,⁸
 That life⁹ was none walking there forby
 That might within scarce any wight espy.

So thick the bewes¹⁰ and the leaves green
 Beshaded all the alleys that there were,
 And middes¹¹ every herber might be seen
 The sharpe, greene, sweete juniper,
 Growing so fair with branches here and there,
 That, as it seemed to a life without,
 The bewes spread the herber all about.

And on the smale greene twistes sate
 The little sweete nightingale, and sung

¹ To no man may do service.

² Living person.

³ Against.

⁴ Tired. The termination here is Scotch. The MS. appears to have been written in Scotland. Other printed editions have *Fortired*.

⁵ Haste.

⁶ Past ? "Forby" in modern Scotch means *besides*.

⁷ Ellis says, "probably an arbor" : — Chalmers, "a garden plot set with plants and flowers ; a grove with an arbor railed with trellis-work, and close set about with trees."

⁸ Knit.

⁹ Living person.

¹⁰ Boughs.

¹¹ Amidst.

So loud and clear the hymnes consecrate
 Of loves use, now soft now loud among,
 That all the gardens and the walles rung
 Right of their song and on the couple next¹
 Of their sweet harmony ; and lo the text : —

Worshippe, ye that lovers been, this May,
 For of your bliss the kalends are begun,
 And sing with us, Away, winter, away !
 Come summer, come, the sweet season and sun ;
 Awake, for shame ! that have your heavens won,²
 And amorously lift up your heades all ;
 Hark Love, that list you to his mercy call.

The description of the lady whom he afterwards sees “ walking under the Tower,” — at whose sudden apparition, “ anon,” he says, —

— “ astart³

The blood of all my body to my heart ” —

is exceedingly elaborate, but is too long to be quoted. Ellis has given the greater part of it in his *Specimens*.⁴ Two other poems of considerable length, in a humorous style, have also been attributed to James I., — *Peebles to the Play*, and *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, both in the Scottish dialect ; but they are more probably the productions of his equally gifted and equally unfortunate descendant James V. (b. 1511, d. 1542). Chalmers, however, assigns the former to James I. As for the two famous comic ballads of *The Gaberlunzie Man*, and *The Jolly Beggar*, which it has been usual among recent writers to speak of as by one or other of these kings, there seems to be no reasonable ground — not even that of tradition of any antiquity — for assigning them to either.

Chaucer, we have seen, appears to have been unknown to his contemporary Barbour ; but after the time of James I. the Scottish poetry for more than a century bears evident traces of the imitation of the great English master. It was a consequence of the relative circumstances of the two countries, that, while the literature of Scotland, the poorer and ruder of the two, could exert

¹ Not understood. Tytler thinks “ couple ” relates to the pairing of the birds ; Ellis and Chalmers, that it is a musical term.

² “ Ye that have attained your highest bliss.” — *Tytler*.

³ Started up.

⁴ Vol. i. pp. 305–309.

no influence upon that of England, the literature of England could not fail powerfully to affect and modify that of its more backward neighbor. No English writer would think of studying or imitating Barbour; but every Scottish poet who arose after the fame of Chaucer had passed the border would seek, or, even if he did not seek, would still inevitably catch, some inspiration from that great example. If it could in any circumstances have happened that Chaucer should have remained unknown in Scotland, the singular fortunes of James I. were shaped as if on purpose to transfer the manner and spirit of his poetry into the literature of that country. From that time forward the native voice of the Scottish muse was mixed with this other foreign voice. One of the earliest Scottish poets after James I. is Robert Henryson, or Henderson, the author of the beautiful pastoral of Robin and Makyne, which is popularly known from having been printed by Bishop Percy in his *Reliques*.¹ He has left us a continuation or supplement to Chaucer's *Troilus and Creseide*, which is commonly printed along with the works of that poet under the title of *The Testament of Fair Creseide*. All that is known of the era of Henryson is that he was alive and very old about the close of the fifteenth century. He may therefore probably have been born about the time that James I. returned from England. Henryson is also the author of a translation into English or Scottish verse of *Æsop's Fables*, of which there is a MS. in the Harleian Collection (No. 3865), and which was printed at Edinburgh in 8vo. in 1621, under the title of *The Moral Fables of Æsop the Phrygian*, compyled into eloquent and ornamental meter, by Robert Henrison, schoolemaster of Dumferling. A reimpression of this edition (limited to 68 copies) was executed at Edinburgh, in 4to., in 1832, for the members of the Maitland Club. To Henryson, moreover, as has been already noticed, Mr. Laing attributes the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice contained in the collection of old poetry, entitled *The Knightly Tale of Golagrus and Gawane, &c.*, reprinted by him in 1827.

Contemporary, too, with Henryson, if not perhaps rather before him, was Sir John or Richard Holland, whose poem entitled *The Buke of the Howlat* (that is, the owl) was printed, under the care

¹ Vol. ii. pp. 73-78. It was first printed in Ramsay's *Evergreen*, 12mo. Edin. 1724. (Or see second edition, Glasgow, 1824.) It is also in Lord Hailes's *Ancient Scottish Poems* (from the Bannatyne MS.) 8vo. Edin. 1770. And an edition of this Poem, and of the *Testament of Creseide*, by the late George Chalmers, was printed for the Bannatyne Club, in 4to. at Edinburgh, in 1824.

of Mr. Laing, in 4to. at Edinburgh in 1823 for the Bannatyne and Abbotsford Clubs. It had been previously printed, with less correctness, by Pinkerton in his *Scottish Poems*, 3 vols. 8vo. 1792, and also in the first volume of Sibbald's *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*, 4 vols. 8vo. 1802. Holland's poem, a wild and rugged effusion in alliterative metre, cannot be charged as an imitation of Chaucer, or of any other English writer of so late a date.

Another Scottish poet of this time, the style and spirit as well as the subject of whose poetry must be admitted to be exclusively national, is Henry the Minstrel, commonly called Blind Harry, author of the famous poem on the life and acts of Wallace. The testimony of the historian John Major to the time at which Henry wrote is sufficiently express: "The entire book of William Wallace," he says, "Henry, who was blind from his birth, composed in the time of my infancy (*meae infantiae tempore cudit*), and what things used popularly to be reported wove into popular verse, in which he was skilled." Major is believed to have been born about 1469; so that Henry's poem may be assigned to the end of the third quarter of the fifteenth century. There is reason to believe that it was printed at Edinburgh as early as 1520; but the oldest impression now known is an Edinburgh one in 4to. of the year 1570. There were many reprints of it in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some of them greatly modernized in the language and otherwise altered: the standard edition is that published from a manuscript dated 1488 by Dr. Jamieson along with Barbour's poem, 4to. Edin. 1820. The Wallace, which is a long poem of about 12,000 decasyllabic lines, used to be a still greater favorite than was The Bruce with the author's countrymen; and Dr. Jamieson does not hesitate to place Harry as a poet before Barbour. In this judgment, however, probably few critical readers will concur, although both Warton and Ellis, without going so far, have also acknowledged in warm terms the rude force of the Blind Minstrel's genius. It may be remarked, by the way, that were it not for Major's statement, and the common epithet that has attached itself to his name, we should scarcely have supposed that the author of Wallace had been either blind from his birth or blind at all. He nowhere himself alludes to any such circumstance. His poem, besides, abounds in descriptive passages, and in allusions to natural appearances and other objects of sight: perhaps, indeed, it might be said that there is an ostentation of that kind of writing, such

as we meet with also in the modern Scotch poet Blacklock's verses and which it may be thought is not unnatural to a blind person. Nor are his apparent literary acquirements to be very easily reconciled with Major's account, who represents him as going about reciting his verses among the nobility (*coram principibus*), and thereby obtaining food and raiment, of which, says the historian, he was worthy (*victum, et vestitum, quo dignus erat, nactus est*). "He seems," as Dr. Jamieson observes, "to have been pretty well acquainted with that kind of history which was commonly read in that period." The Doctor refers to allusions which he makes in various places to the romance histories of Hector, of Alexander the Great, of Julius Cæsar, and of Charlemagne; and he conceives that his style of writing is more richly strewed with the more peculiar phraseology of the writers of romance than that of Barbour. But what is most remarkable is, that he distinctly declares his poem to be throughout a translation from the Latin. The statement, which occurs toward the conclusion, seems too express and particular to be a mere imitation of the usage of the romance-writers, many of whom appeal, but generally in very vague terms, to a Latin original for their marvels: —

Of Wallace life wha has a further feel¹
 May show furth mair with wit and eloquence;
 For I to this have done my diligence,
 Efter the proof given fra the Latin book
 Whilk Maister Blair in his time undertook,
 In fair Latin compiled it till ane end:
 With thir witness the mair is to commend.²
 Bishop Sinclair than lord was of Dunkell;
 He gat this book, and confirmed it himsell
 For very true; therefore he had no drede;³
 Himself had seen great part of Wallace deed.
 His purpose was till have sent it to Rome,
 Our fader of kirk thereon to give his doom.
 But Maistre Blair and als Shir Thomas Gray
 Efter Wallace they lestit⁴ mony day:
 Thir twa⁵ knew best of Gud Schir William's deed,
 Fra sixteen year while⁶ nine and twenty yeid.⁷

¹ Knowledge.

² We do not profess to understand this line. *Thir* is Scotch for *these*. *Mair* is *war* in Jamieson.

³ Doubt.

⁴ Survived (lasted).

⁵ These two.

⁶ Till.

⁷ Went, passed.

In another place (Book V. v. 538 *et seq.*) he says : —

Maistre John Blair was oft in that message,
 A worthy clerk, baith wise and right savage.
 Lewit¹ he was before in Paris town
 Amang maisters in science and renown.
 Wallace and he at hame in schul had been :
 Soon efterwart, as verity is seen,
 He was the man that principal undertook,
 That first compiled in dite² the Latin book
 Of Wallace life, right famous in renown ;
 And Thomas Gray, person of Libertown.

Blind Harry's notions of the literary character are well exemplified by his phrase of a "worthy clerk, baith wise and right savage." He himself, let his scholarship have been what it may, is in spirit as thorough a Scot as if he had never heard the sound of any other than his native tongue. His gruff patriotism speaks out in his opening lines : —

Our antecessors, that we suld of read,
 And hold in mind their noble worthy deed,
 We lat owerslide,³ through very sleuthfulness,
 And casts us ever till other business.
 Till honour enemies is our hail⁴ intent ;
 It has been seen in thir times bywent :
 Our auld enemies comen of Saxons blud,
 That never yet to Scotland wald do gud,
 But ever on force and contrar hail their will,
 How great kindness there has been kythe⁵ them till.
 It is weil knawn on mony divers side
 How they have wrought into their mighty pride
 To hald Scotland at under evermair :
 But God above has made their might to pair.⁶

Of the fighting and slaying, which makes up by far the greater part of the poem, it is difficult to find a sample that is short enough for our purpose. The following is a small portion of what is called the battle of Shortwoodshaw : —

¹ Dr. Jamieson's only interpretation is "allowed, left."

² Writing.

³ Allow to slip out of memory.

⁴ Whole.

⁵ Shown.

⁶ Diminish, impair.

On Wallace set a bicker bauld and keen ;
 A bow he bare was big and well beseen,
 And arrows als, baith lang and sharp with aw ;¹
 No man was there that Wallace bow might draw.
 Right stark he was, and in to souer gear ;²
 Bauldly he shot amang they³ men of wer.⁴
 Ane angel heade⁵ to the huiks he drew
 And at a shot the foremost soon he slew.
 Inglis archers, that hardy war and wight,
 Amang the Scots bickered with all their might ;
 Their aweful shot was felon⁶ for to bide ;
 Of Wallace men they woundit sore that tide ;
 Few of them was sicker⁷ of archery ;
 Better they were, an they gat even party,
 In field to bide either with swerd or spear.
 Wallace perceivit his men tuk mickle deir :⁸
 He gart⁹ them change, and stand nought in to stead ;¹⁰
 He cast all ways to save them fra the dead.¹¹
 Full great travail upon himself tuk he ;
 Of Southron men feil¹² archers he gart dee.¹³
 Of Longcashier¹⁴ bowmen was in that place
 A sair¹⁵ archer aye waitit on Wallace,
 At ane opine,¹⁶ whar he usit to repair ;
 At him he drew a sicker shot and sair
 Under the chin, through a collar of steel
 On the left side, and hurt his halse¹⁷ some deal.
 Astonied he was, but nought greatly aghast ;
 Out fra his men on him he followit fast ;
 In the turning with gud will has him ta'en
 Upon the crag,¹⁸ in sunder straik the bain.

It will be seen from this specimen that the Blind Minstrel is a vigorous versifier. His descriptions, however, though both clear and forcible, and even not unfrequently animated by a dramatic abruptness and boldness of expression, want the bounding airy

¹ Dr. Jamieson's only interpretation is *owe*. It would almost seem as if we had here the modern Scottish *witha'* for *withall*.

² In sure warlike accoutrements.

³ Those.

⁴ War.

⁵ The barbed head of an arrow.

⁶ Terrible.

⁷ Sure.

⁸ Took much hazard, ran much risk.

⁹ Caused.

¹⁰ Stand not in their place. Perhaps it should be "o stead," that is, *one place*.

¹¹ Death.

¹² Many.

¹³ Caused die.

¹⁴ Lancashire

¹⁵ Skilful.

¹⁶ Open place ?

¹⁷ Neck.

¹⁸ Throat.

spirit and flashing light of those of Barbour. As a specimen of his graver style we may give his Envoy or concluding lines:—

Go, noble book, fulfillit of gud sentence,
 Suppose thou be barren of eloquence :
 Go, worthy book, fulfillit of suthfast deed ;
 But in langage of help thou hast great need.
 Whan gud makers¹ rang weil into Scotland,
 Great harm was it that nane of them ye fand.²
 Yet there is part that can thee weil avance ;
 Now bide thy time, and be a remembrance.
 I you besek of your benevolence,
 Wha will nought lou,³ lak nought⁴ my eloquence ;
 (It is weil knawn I am a burel⁵ man)
 For here is said as gudly as I can ;
 My sprite feeles ne termes asperans.⁶
 Now beseek God, that giver is of grace,
 Made hell and erd,⁷ and set the heaven above,
 That he us grant of his dear lestand⁸ love.



FIRST HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. — COLLEGES FOUNDED.

IN no age, as we have found, even the darkest and most barren of valuable produce, that has elapsed since learning was first planted among us, had there failed to be something done in the establishment of nurseries for its shelter and propagation. The fifteenth century, though it has left us little enduring literature of any kind, is distinguished for the number of the colleges that were founded in the course of it, both in this country and in the rest of Europe. This, indeed, was the natural and proper direction for the first impulse to take that was given by the revival of letters : the actual generation upon which the new light broke was not that in which it was to be expected it should do much more than awaken the taste for true learning, or at most the ambition of

¹ Poets.

² Found.

³ Love ?

⁴ Scoff not at.

⁵ Boorish, clownish.

⁶ Understands no lofty (aspiring) terms. But it seems impossible that *asperans* can rhyme to *grace*.

⁷ Earth.

⁸ Lasting.

excellence ; the power of accomplishment could only come in the next era. The men of the latter part of the fifteenth century, therefore, were most fitly and most usefully employed in making provision for the preservation and transmission to other times of the long-lost wisdom and eloquence that had been found again in their day, — in building cisterns and conduits for the precious waters that, after having been hidden for a thousand years, had burst their founts, and were once more flowing over the earth. The fashion of founding colleges, and other seminaries of learning, continued to prevail in this country both down to the Reformation in religion, and for some time after that mighty revolution. In the University of Oxford, Brazenose College was founded in 1511 by William Smith, Bishop of Lincoln, and Sir Richard Sutton, of Presbury, in Cheshire ; Corpus Christi in 1517, by Henry VII.'s minister, Richard Fox, successively Bishop of Exeter, of Bath and Wells, of Durham, and of Winchester ; Cardinal College by Wolsey in 1525, which, however, before the buildings had been half finished, was suppressed by the king on the cardinal's fall in 1529 ; the college of Henry VIII. by that king in 1532, a continuation, but on a much smaller scale, of Wolsey's design, which was also dissolved in 1545, when that of Christ Church was erected in its stead by Henry, to be both a college and at the same time a cathedral establishment for the new bishopric of Oxford ; Trinity, on the old foundation of Durham College, by Sir Thomas Pope, in 1554 ; St. John's, on the site of Bernard College, by Sir Thomas White, alderman and merchant-tailor of London, in 1557 ; and Jesus, by Dr. Hugh Price, Queen Elizabeth contributing part of the expense, in 1571. In Cambridge there were founded Jesus College, in 1496, by John Alcock, Bishop of Ely ; Christ's College, in 1505, by Margaret, Countess of Richmond, the mother of Henry VII. ; St. John's, by the same noble lady, in 1508 ; Magdalen, or Maudlin, begun in 1519 by Edward Stafford, the unfortunate Duke of Buckingham, and, after his execution for high treason in 1521, completed by the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Lord Audley ; Trinity, in 1536, by Henry VIII., who at the same time endowed four new professorships in the University, one of theology, one of law, one of Hebrew, and one of Greek ; Caius College, properly an extension of the ancient foundation of Gonville Hall, by Dr. John Caius, or Key, in 1557 ; Emanuel, in 1584, by Sir Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and

of the Exchequer ; and Sidney-Sussex College, in 1594, by the widow of Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, originally the Lady Frances Sidney. In Scotland a new university was erected in Aberdeen, under the name of King's College, by a bull of Pope Alexander VI., granted at the request of King James IV., in 1494, the principal endower, however, being William Elphinstone, bishop of the see ; a second college, that of St. Leonard's (now forming, with St. Salvator's, what is called the United College), was founded in the University of St. Andrews, in 1512, by Alexander Stuart, archbishop of the see, and John Hepburn, prior of the metropolitan church ; another college, that of St. Mary, now exclusively appropriated to the theological faculty, was founded in the same university in 1537, by Archbishop James Beaton ; a fourth university, that of Edinburgh, was erected by King James VI. in 1582 ; and a fifth, that of Marischal College, Aberdeen, by George Earl Marischal, in 1593. In Ireland, the university of Trinity College, Dublin, was founded by Queen Elizabeth, in 1591. Along with these seminaries might be mentioned a great number of grammar schools ; of which the chief were that of St. Paul's, London, founded by Dean Colet, in 1509 ; that of Ipswich, by Cardinal Wolsey, at the same time with his college at Oxford, the fate of which it also shared ; Christ Church, London, by Edward VI., in 1553 ; Westminster School, by Queen Elizabeth, in 1560 ; and Merchant Tailors' School by the London civic Company of that name, in 1568. In Scotland, the High School of Edinburgh was founded by the magistrates of the city in 1577.



CLASSICAL LEARNING.

MANY of these colleges and schools were expressly established for the cultivation of the newly revived classical learning, the resurrection of which in the middle of the fifteenth century revolutionized the ancient studies everywhere as soon as its influence came to be felt. It scarcely reached England, however, as we have already intimated, till towards the close of that century. Indeed, Greek is said to have been first publicly taught in this country in St. Paul's school, by the famous grammarian William Lilly,

who had studied the language at Rhodes, and who was appointed the first master of the new school in 1512. Dean Colet himself, the founder, although accounted one of the best-educated men of his time, had, during the seven years he spent at Magdalen College, Oxford, only acquired a knowledge of some of the Greek authors through the medium of Latin translations. Among the most distinguished of the early patrons of the new learning after it had been thus introduced were the two prelates and statesmen Fox and his greater *protégé* and successor Wolsey, both of whom, in the colleges founded by them that have just been mentioned, made especial provision for the teaching of the two classic tongues. The professor of Latin—or of Humanity, as he is designated—in Corpus Christi College, was expressly enjoined to extirpate *barbarism* from the new society (*barbariem a nostro alveario extirpet*). The Greek professor was ordered to explain the best Greek classics; “and the poets, historians, and orators in that language,” observes Warton, “which the judicious founder, who seems to have consulted the most intelligent scholars of the times, recommends by name on this occasion, are the purest, and such as are most esteemed even in the present improved state of ancient learning.”¹ Wolsey evinced the interest he took in the new studies, not only by his great school at Ipswich and his college at Oxford, but by founding in that university some years before, along with various other professorships, one for Rhetoric and Humanity and another for Greek. “So attached was Wolsey,” says the writer we have just quoted, “to the new modes of instruction, that he did not think it inconsistent with his high office and rank to publish a general address to the schoolmasters of England, in which he orders them to institute their youth in the most elegant literature.” And the high eulogium of Erasmus on the great cardinal is, that “he recalled to his country the three learned languages, without which all learning is lame.”

A violent struggle, however, was for some time maintained against these innovations by the generality of those who had been educated in the old system, and by the always numerous and powerful host of the enemies and mistrusters of all innovation, whether from self-interest or other motives. Colet, in a letter to Erasmus, relates that one of the prelates of the church, esteemed among the most eminent for his learning and gravity, had, in a great public

¹ Hist. Eng. Poet., Sect. xxxvi.

assembly, censured him in the severest terms for suffering the Latin poets to be taught in his new seminary, which on that account he styled a house of idolatry. This last expression would almost warrant us in suspecting that the prelate, whose name is not mentioned, was one of those inclined to the new opinions in religion: and at this time the new learning was probably rather distasteful than otherwise to that class of persons, zealously patronized as it was by Fox, Wolsey, and others, the heads of the party attached to the ancient faith. A few years afterwards a change took place in this respect: the reformers in religion became also the chief supporters of the reformation in learning, as was fit and natural both from the sameness in the general character and direction of the two movements, and also for an especial reason, which operated with very powerful effect. This was the surpassing importance speedily acquired in the contest between the two religions by the great principle on which the Reformers took their stand, of the omnipotence of the authority of the Scriptures in regard to all the points in debate between them and their opponents. Not custom or tradition, not the decrees of popes or councils, not even the Latin Vulgate translation, but the original text of the Greek New Testament alone, necessarily became, as soon as this principle was proclaimed, the grand ultimate criterion with them for the trial and decision of all doubts and disputes, and the armory from which they drew their chief weapons both of defence and of assault. At first, it is true, this view does not appear to have been generally taken either by the one party or the other. The first editions of the Greek Testament that were given to the world were that contained in the Complutensian Polyglot, the magnificent present to literature of Cardinal Ximenes, printed in 1514, but not published till 1522, and that of Erasmus, which appeared in 1516, both of which may be said to have proceeded from the bosom of the ancient church. Even from the first, however, many of the clergy, though principally rather from their extreme ignorance and illiteracy than from any fears they entertained of its unsettling people's faith, raised a considerable outcry against the New Testament of Erasmus: they seem to have seriously believed that the book was an invention of his own, and that he was attempting to establish a new religion. But the opposition to the Greek Scriptures, and to Greek literature generally, assumed a much more decided character when it was seen what use the friends of the new opinions in

religion made of both, and how commonly an inclination in favor of the said new opinions went along with the cultivation of the new language. Erasmus for some time attempted to expound the Greek Grammar of Chrysoloras in the public schools at Cambridge; but his lectures were nearly unattended, and a storm of clamor was raised against him on all hands. His New Testament was actually proscribed by the authorities of the University, and a severe fine was denounced against any member who should be detected in having the book in his possession. Both in England and throughout Europe the universities were now generally divided into Greeks and Trojans; the latter class, who were those opposed to the new learning, usually comprehending all the monks and other most bigoted partisans of the old faith.¹

Although, however, the revolt of Luther and his followers against the authority of Rome and many of the established doctrines in religion thus incidentally aided for a time the study and diffusion of classical scholarship, neither the subsequent progress of the Reformation in England nor its ultimate establishment operated with a favorable effect in the first instance upon the state of the universities or the general interests of learning. Henry VIII. himself, "from his natural liveliness of temper and love of novelty," as Warton puts it, or, as perhaps it might be more correctly expressed, from mere accident or caprice, was favorably disposed to the new studies, and his authority and influence were of considerable use in supporting them at first against their numerous and powerful opponents. Erasmus relates that, in 1519, when one of the university preachers at Oxford had harangued with great violence against the study of the Scriptures in their original languages, Henry, who happened to be resident at the time at the neighboring royal manor of Woodstock, and had received an account of the affair from his secretary, the learned Richard Pace, and Sir Thomas More, issued an order commanding that the said study of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures should not only be permitted for the future, but made an indispensable branch of the course of academical instruction. Some time after, one of the royal chaplains, preaching at court, having attacked the new Greek learning, was, after his sermon, commanded by the king to maintain his opinions in a solemn disputation with More, by whose wit and learning of course

¹ The reader will recollect Addison's humorous notices of the modern Greeks and Trojans, in the *Spectator*, Nos. 239 and 245.

he was very speedily vanquished, and forced to make a humiliating admission of his errors and ignorance: he at last declared that he was now better reconciled to the Greek tongue, inasmuch as he found that it was derived from the Hebrew; but, although he fell upon his knees and begged pardon for any offence he had given, Henry dismissed him with a command that he should never again presume to preach before him. One of the first causes, however, although it was only of temporary operation, that interrupted the progress of classical learning at the universities, has been thought to have been the stir excited throughout Christendom by the question of Henry's divorce from Queen Katherine. "The legality of this violent measure," observes Warton, "being agitated with much deliberation and solemnity, wholly engrossed the attention of many able philologists, whose genius and acquisitions were destined to a much nobler employment, and tended to revive for a time the frivolous subtleties of casuistry and theology." Then, the still more eager and widely extended doctrinal discussions to which the progress of the Reformation itself gave rise, came to operate over a much longer period with a similar effect. In this universal storm of polemics, "the profound investigations of Aquinas," continues Warton, "once more triumphed over the graces of the Ciceronian urbanity; and endless volumes were written on the expediency of auricular confession, and the existence of purgatory. Thus the cause of polite literature was for a while abandoned; while the noblest abilities of Europe were wasted in theological speculation, and absorbed in the abyss of controversy." Another great temporary check was now also given, Warton conceives, to the cause of the progress and diffusion of sound learning in England by the dissolution of the monasteries. "These seminaries," he observes, "though they were in a general view the nurseries of illiterate indolence, and undoubtedly deserved to be suppressed under proper restrictions, contained invitations and opportunities to studious leisure and literary pursuits. On this event, therefore, a visible revolution and decline in the national state of learning succeeded. Most of the youth of the kingdom betook themselves to mechanical or other illiberal employments, the profession of letters being now supposed to be without support or reward. By the abolition of the religious houses, many towns and their adjacent villages were utterly deprived of their only means of instruction. At the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth, Williams, Speaker of the House of

Commons, complained to her majesty, that more than an hundred flourishing schools were destroyed in the demolition of the monasteries, and that ignorance had prevailed ever since. Provincial ignorance, at least, became universal, in consequence of this hasty measure of a rapacious and arbitrary prince. What was taught in the monasteries was not always perhaps of the greatest importance, but still it served to keep up a certain degree of necessary knowledge." The many new grammar schools that arose in different parts of the country after the destruction of the monasteries were partly, no doubt, called into existence by the vacuum thus created; which, however, they did very little to fill up in so far as the rural population was concerned, although they may have sufficed for most of the great towns.

Both the old monastic schools and the new foundations, however, being considered, to a certain extent, as charitable institutions, were principally attended by the children of persons in humble or at least in common life; among the higher classes it seems to have been the general custom for boys as well as girls to be educated at home, or under the superintendence of private tutors. A notion of the extent and manner of training which youths of rank underwent in their earliest years may be obtained from some letters which have been printed, addressed to Henry's minister, Cromwell, by the tutor of his son Gregory.¹ This young man, whose capacity is described as rather solid than quick, divided his time under different masters among various studies and exercises, of which English, French, writing, playing at weapons, casting of accounts, and "pastimes of instruments," are particularly enumerated. One master is stated to be in the habit of "daily hearing him to read somewhat in the English tongue, and advertising him of the natural and true kind of pronunciation thereof, expounding also and declaring the etymology and native signification of such words as we have borrowed of the Latins or Frenchmen, not even so commonly used in our quotidian speech." According to a common practice, two other youths, probably of inferior station, appear to have been educated along with young Cromwell; and between him and them, the account continues, "there is a perpetual contention, strife, and conflict, and in manner of an honest envy, who shall do best not only in the French tongue (wherein Mr. Vallance, after a wondrously compendious, facile, prompt, and ready way,

¹ King Henry the Eighth's Scheme of Bishopricks, &c., 8vo. Lond. 1838.

not without painful diligence and laborious industry, doth instruct them), but also in writing, playing at weapons, and all other their exercises." In the end a confident hope is expressed that, "whereas the last summer was spent in the service of the wild goddess Diana," the present shall be consecrated to Apollo and the Muses, to the no small profit of the young man, as well as to his father's good contentation and pleasure. This letter is dated in April; another, written in September (apparently of the same year), by which time the boy had begun the study of some new branches, especially Latin and instrumental music, enters into some more minute and curious details of how he spent his time. "First," says his tutor, "after he hath heard mass, he taketh a lecture of a dialogue of Erasmus' colloquium called Pietas Puerilis, wherein is described a very picture of one that should be virtuously brought up; and, for cause it is so necessary for him, I do not only cause him to read it over, but also to practise the precepts of the same; and I have also translated it into English, so that he may confer therein both together, whereof, as learned men affirm, cometh no small profect, which translation pleaseth it you to receive by the bringer hereof, that ye may judge how much profitable it is to be learned." From this it may be inferred that the original Latin would have been unintelligible to Cromwell, and that that able man was above being flattered by having a knowledge of the learned tongues ascribed to him which he did not possess. The letter goes on — "After that he exerciseth his hand in writing one or two hours, and readeth upon Fabian's Chronicle as long; the residue of the day he doth spend upon the lute and virginal." Vocal music at least, it may be observed, if not instrumental, was always one of the branches of education taught at the old monastic, cathedral, and other free schools; a circumstance originating no doubt in the connection of those schools with the church, in the services of which singing bore so important a part. Lastly, the tutor gives an account of the out-of-door exercises followed by his pupil; intellectual instruction, however, being by no means disregarded even in some of these. "When he rideth, as he doth very oft, I tell him by the way," he says, "some history of the Romans or the Greeks, which I cause him to rehearse again in a tale. For his recreation he useth to hawk, and hunt, and shoot in his long bow, which frameth and succeedeth so well with him that he seemeth to be thereunto given by nature." This training, so

far as it is detailed, appears to have been judiciously contrived for laying the foundation of a good and solid education both of the mental and physical faculties.

The reforming spirit of the early part of the sixteenth century was, as always happens, in the shape it took in the popular mind, much more of a destructive than of a constructive character; and even the wisest of the persons in authority, by whom the mighty movement was guided and controlled, were necessarily, to a certain extent, under the influence of the same presumptuous temper, without a share of which, indeed, they would not have been fitted to restrain the more impetuous multitude to the extent they did. But in its application to the universities, as in other cases, this spirit of mere demolition, and contempt for all that was old and established, displayed itself in some things in a very rampant style. The scorn, in particular, with which it treated the whole mass of the ancient philosophy of the schools was of the most sweeping description. The famous Duns Scotus, so long the lord of opinion, now underwent, in full measure, the customary fate of deposed sovereigns. A royal visitation of the two universities, by commissioners of Cromwell's appointment, took place in 1535, when injunctions were issued abolishing altogether the reading of the works of the most subtle Doctor. The tone of triumph in which Dr. Layton, one of the Oxford commissioners, announces this reform to Cromwell is highly characteristic. "We have set Dunce," he writes, "in Bocardo,¹ and have utterly banished him Oxford for ever, with all his blind glosses." The despised tomes, formerly so much revered, Layton goes on to intimate, were now used by any man for the commonest uses; he had seen them with his own eyes nailed upon posts in the most degrading situations. "And the second time we came to New College," he proceeds, "after we had declared your injunctions, we found all the great quadrant court full of the leaves of Dunce, the wind blowing them into every corner. And there we found one Mr. Greenfield, a gentleman of Buckinghamshire, gathering up part of the same book leaves, as he said, therewith to make him sewers blawnshers to keep the deer within his wood, thereby to have the better cry with his hounds."² The scholastic philosophy,

¹ A Figure or form of syllogism of the school logic, which terminated in a negative conclusion. The expression, therefore, implies that Scotus was, as it were annihilated.

² Strype, Eccles. Mem. i. 335.

however, which was thus banished from the universities, was in fact the whole philosophy, mental and physical, then taught, and its abolition consequently amounted to the ejection, for the time, of philosophical studies from the academical course altogether. The canon law was another of the old studies, hitherto of chief importance, that was at the same time put down: degrees in the canon law were prohibited; and, in place of the canon lecture, a civil lecture, that is, a lecture on the civil law, was appointed to be read in every college, hall, and inn.

For a short space, the excitement of novelty, and the exertions of a few eminent instructors, made classical learning popular at Oxford and Cambridge, and enabled it in some degree to serve as a substitute for those other abandoned studies to which it ought only to have been introduced as an ally. The learned Ascham boasts, in one of his letters, that, whereas almost the only classics hitherto known at Cambridge had been Plautus, Cicero, Terence, and Livy, all the chief Greek poets, orators, and historians—Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon—were now universally and critically studied. This prosperous state of Greek scholarship was principally owing to the example and exertions of the two distinguished professors of that language, Thomas Smith and John Cheke: even the controversy about the proper pronunciation of the language that arose between the latter and Bishop Gardiner, who, as Warton observes, “loved learning, but hated novelties,” contributing its share to excite a general interest about Greek literature, as well as to throw new light upon the particular subject in dispute. But both Cheke and Smith were soon withdrawn from their academic labors to other fields; and with them the spirit of true learning and taste, which they had awakened at Cambridge, seems also to have taken its departure. At Oxford the case was no better; there, Ascham remarks that a decline of taste in both the classic tongues was decidedly indicated by a preference of Lucian, Plutarch, and Herodian, in Greek, and of Seneca, Gellius, and Apuleius, in Latin, to the writers of the older and purer eras of ancient eloquence. Even divinity itself, as Latimer complains, ceased to be studied. “It would pity a man’s heart,” he says, “to hear what I hear of the state of Cambridge: what it is in Oxford I cannot tell. There be few that study divinity but so many as of necessity must furnish the colleges.” So true is it that no one branch of learning or

science can long continue to flourish amid the general neglect and decay of the other branches that compose along with it the system of human knowledge.

The first establishment of the Reformation under Edward VI., instead of effecting the restoration of learning, only contributed to its further discouragement and depression. "The rapacious courtiers of this young prince," as Warton observes, "were perpetually grasping at the rewards of literature. . . . Avarice and zeal were at once gratified in robbing the clergy of their revenues, and in reducing the church to its primitive apostolical state of purity and poverty. The opulent see of Winchester was lowered to a bare title; its amplest estates were portioned out to the laity; and the bishop, a creature of the Protector Somerset, was contented to receive an inconsiderable annual stipend from the exchequer. The bishopric of Durham, almost equally rich, was entirely dissolved. A favorite nobleman in the court occupied the deanery and treasurer'ship of a cathedral, with some of its best canonries. . . . In every one of these sacrilegious robberies the interest of learning also suffered. Exhibitions and pensions were, in the mean time, subtracted from the students in the universities. Ascham, in a letter to the Marquis of Northampton, dated 1550, laments the ruin of grammar schools throughout England, and predicts the speedy extinction of the universities from this growing calamity. At Oxford the public schools were neglected by the professors and pupils, and allotted to the lowest purposes. Academical degrees were abrogated as anti-christian. Reformation was soon turned into fanaticism. Absurd refinements, concerning the inutility of human learning, were superadded to the just and rational purgation of Christianity from the papal corruptions. The spiritual reformers of these enlightened days, at a visitation of the last-mentioned university, proceeded so far in their ideas of a superior rectitude, as totally to strip the public library, established by that munificent patron, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, of all its books and manuscripts."

A very curious account of the state of the University of Cambridge in this reign is contained in a sermon, preached in 1550, by a Thomas Lever, Fellow of St. John's College, some extracts from which Strype has preserved. Formerly "there were," says Lever, "in houses belonging to the University of Cambridge, two hundred students of divinity, many very well learned, which be now

all clean gone home; and many young toward scholars, and old fatherly doctors, not one of them left. One hundred also, of another sort, that, having rich friends, or being beneficed men, did live of themselves in hostels and inns, be either gone away or else fain to creep into colleges and put poor men from bare livings. These both be all gone, and a small number of poor, godly, diligent students, now remaining only in colleges, be not able to tarry and continue their studies for lack of exhibition and help." The description which follows of the studies and mode of living of the poorer and more diligent students is very interesting:—"There be divers there which rise daily about four or five of the clock in the morning, and from five till six of the clock use common prayer, with an exhortation of God's word in a common chapel; and from six until ten of the clock use ever either private study or common lectures. At ten of the clock they go to dinner, whereas they be content with a penny piece of beef among four, having a few potage made of the broth of the same beef, with salt and oatmeal, and nothing else. After this slender diet, they be either teaching or learning until five of the clock in the evening; whenas they have a supper not much better than their dinner. Immediately after which they go either to reasoning in problems, or to some other study, until it be nine or ten of the clock; and then, being without fires, are fain to walk or run up and down half an hour, to get a heat on their feet when they go to bed."¹ Latimer, in a sermon preached about the same time, expresses his belief that there were then ten thousand fewer students in the kingdom than there had been twenty years before.

In the reign of Mary, who was herself a learned queen, and a considerable benefactress of both universities, classical learning had a distinguished patron in Cardinal Pole, who was as illustrious for his literary acquirements as he was for his birth and station. In his short tenure of power, however, he was not able to accomplish much against the adverse circumstances of the time. It appears that to him Sir Thomas Pope, the founder of Trinity College, Oxford, which was endowed in this reign more especially for the cultivation of classical scholarship, submitted the statutes of his new institution. "My Lord Cardinal's Grace," says Sir Thomas, in a letter of his which has been preserved, "has had the overseeing of my statutes. He much likes well that I have therein ordered

¹ Eccles. Mem. ii. 422.

the Latin tongue to be read to my scholars. But he advises me to order the Greek to be more taught there than I have provided. This purpose I well like; but I fear the times will not bear it now. I remember when I was a young scholar at Eton, the Greek tongue was growing apace; the study of which is now alate much decayed." The fact here stated is especially honorable to Pole, seeing that by this time the Greek language, as that of the original text of the New Testament, to which the Reformers made all their appeals, had come to be regarded by the generality of Romanists as a peculiarly Protestant and almost heretical study. The return of the old religion, however, with its persecutions and penal fires, did not prove on the whole more favorable to the interests of learning than to any of the other interests of the national happiness and civilization.

Nor did the final establishment of the reformed church, nor all the prosperity of the next reign, for a long time bring back good letters to the universities. A few facts will show their state throughout a great part of that reign. In the first place, so few persons now received a university education, that for many years a large proportion of the clergy of the new church were mere artificers and other illiterate persons, some of whom, while they preached on Sundays, worked at their trades on weekdays, and some of whom could hardly write their names. In the year 1563, we are informed by Anthony Wood, there were only three divines in the university of Oxford who were considered capable of preaching the public sermons. It has been sometimes alleged that the growing influence of Puritanism was one of the chief causes of the continued neglect and depression in which learning was now left; but it is a remarkable fact, that the three Oxford preachers were all Puritans, as were also many of the most distinguished ornaments of both universities at a later date. In 1567, so low was still the state of classical literature in the country, that when Archbishop Parker in that year founded three scholarships in Cambridge, the holders of which were to be "the best and ablest scholars" elected from the most considerable schools in Kent and Norfolk, all the amount of qualification he required in them was, that they should be well instructed in the grammar, "and, if it may be," it was added, "such as can make a verse." As one instance of the extreme ignorance of the inferior clergy in the latter part of the sixteenth century Warton mentions, on the authority of the episcopal register, tha

“in the year 1570, Horne, Bishop of Winchester, enjoined the minor canons of his cathedral to get by memory, every week, one chapter of St. Paul’s Epistles in Latin; and this formidable task, almost beneath the abilities of an ordinary schoolboy, was actually repeated by some of them, before the bishop, dean, and prebendaries, at a public episcopal visitation of that church.” The anecdote, at least, presents the bishops and minor canons of those times in a strange light. The accomplished critic we have just quoted is of opinion that the taste for Latin composition in the reign of Elizabeth had much degenerated from what it was in that of Henry VIII. The Latinity of Ascham’s prose, he maintains, has no eloquence; and even Buchanan’s Latin poetry, although he admits that its versification and phraseology are splendid and sonorous, he will not allow to be marked with the chaste graces and simple ornaments of the Augustan age. “One is surprised,” he adds, “to find the learned Archbishop Grindal, in the statutes of a school which he founded and amply endowed (in 1583), recommending such barbarous and degenerate classics as Palingenius, Sedulius, and Prudentius to be taught in his new foundation. These, indeed, were the classics of a reforming bishop; but the well-meaning prelate would have contributed much more to the success of his intended reformation by directing books of better taste and less piety.”¹

The whole of the sixteenth century, however, will deserve the epithet of a learned age, notwithstanding the state of the schools and universities, and of what are called the learned professions, if we look either to the names of eminent scholars by which every portion of it is adorned, or to the extent to which the study of the learned languages then entered into the education of all persons, women as well as men, who were considered to be well educated. In the earlier part of it, besides Cranmer, Ridley, Tunstal, Gardiner, Pole, and other churchmen of distinguished acquirements, we have Richard Pace, Sir John Cheke, and Sir Thomas Smith, Colet the founder and Lilly the first master of St. Paul’s School, — all already mentioned; William Grocyn, another of the first and also one of the very greatest of the English Grecians; the equally elegant and industrious John Leland, the father of English antiquities, and the chief preserver in his day of the old knowledge that would otherwise have perished, as well as one of the most

¹ Hist. of Eng. Poet. iii. 283.

successful cultivators of the new; Doctor Thomas Linacrer, the first English physician, and as a scholar scarcely second to any, of his country or of his age; and the all-accomplished Sir Thomas More, perhaps the happiest genius of his time, the one of its profound scholars, at all events, unless we are to except his illustrious friend Erasmus, whose natural genius was the least oppressed by his erudition, and whose erudition was the most brightened with wit, and informed by a living spirit better than that of books. Of somewhat later celebrity are the names of Roger Ascham, who is more famous, however, for his English than for his Latin writings; of Dr. Walter Haddon, the most Ciceronian of English Latinists; of Buchanan, perhaps the most of a poet of all the modern writers of Latin verse; not to mention Archbishop Parker, Bishop Andrews, and other eminent churchmen. The number of very great English scholars, however, in the reign of Elizabeth was not so considerable as in that of her father, when classical studies were not only cultivated with perhaps a truer appreciation of the highest models, but afforded, besides, almost the only field for intellectual exercise and display. Still this kind of learning continued to be fashionable; and a familiar, if not a profound, acquaintance with both the Latin and the Greek languages was diffused to an unusual extent among persons of the highest rank. Henry VIII. was himself a scholar of considerable pretensions; he is said to have, as a younger son, been educated for the church: and to this accident, which gave the country its first pedant king, it may perhaps have been also indebted for its succession of learned princes, which lasted for more than a century, — Henry, as it were, setting the fashion, which it afterwards became a matter of course to follow. His son, though born to the throne to which he succeeded, received a schoolmastering fit for a bishop; and so also did both his daughters. Erasmus has commended the Latin letters of Mary, some of which are preserved, as well as others, in French and in Spanish. Elizabeth was not only a Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian scholar, but also a proficient in Greek, in which language her tutor Ascham tells us she used, even after she came to the throne, to read more every day than some prebendaries of the church read of Latin in a whole week. But this was especially the age of learned ladies; and every reader will remember the names of Lady Jane Grey, of whose studies in Plato the same writer we have just mentioned has drawn so interesting a picture, and some of whose Latin epistles

are still extant, especially one to her sister, written the night before her death, in a Greek Testament, in which she had been reading of Mary, Countess of Arundel; her daughter-in-law, Joanna Lady Lumley; and the younger sister of the latter, Mary Duchess of Norfolk, all of whom were the authoresses of various translations from the Greek into Latin and English; of the two Margarets the female luminaries of the household of Sir Thomas More, the friend who became the wife of her learned tutor, Dr. John Clement, and who is said to have so delighted in and almost worshipped More, that she would sometimes commit a fault purely that she might be chid by him — such moderation and humanity were there in his anger; the other, his affectionate and favorite daughter who married his biographer Roper, and was accounted the most learned woman of her time; and of the four wonderful daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, — Mildred, the eldest, married to Lord Burghley, whose name has been embalmed by the muse of Buchanan; Anne, the second, the governess of Edward VI., and afterwards the wife of Sir Nicholas Bacon, and the mother of the illustrious Viscount St. Alban; Elizabeth, the third, the wife, first of Sir Thomas Hobby, then of Lord Russell; and the youngest, Catherine, who married Sir Henry Killigrew, and is celebrated not only for her Latin and Greek, but even for her Hebrew erudition. “It became fashionable in this reign (that of Elizabeth),” says Warton, “to study Greek at court. The maids of honor indulged their ideas of sentimental affection in the sublime contemplation of Plato’s Phædo; and the queen, who understood Greek better than the canons of Windsor, and was certainly a much greater pedant than her successor James I., translated Isocrates. But this passion for the Greek language soon ended where it began; nor do we find that it improved the national taste, or influenced the writings of the age of Elizabeth.”

Old Harrison has a curious and characteristic passage on this learned court. “This further,” he observes, “is not to be omitted, to the singular commendation of both sorts and sexes of our courtiers here in England, that there are very few of them which have not the use and skill of sundry speeches, besides an excellent vein of writing, before-time not regarded.” He does not, however, seem to have a more favorable notion of the moral effect of these novel and showy accomplishments than Warton has expressed respecting their influence on the national literature and taste.

“Would to God,” he exclaims, “the rest of their lives and conversations were correspondent to those gifts! For, as our common courtiers, for the most part, are the best learned and endued with excellent gifts, so are many of them the worst men, when they come abroad, that any man shall either hear or read of.” Harrison’s words, which are surprisingly bold to have been published at the time, seem here to be gallantly confined to the *men* of the court; but other contemporary testimonies do not disguise the fact that many of the women were as dissolute as their male associates. The honest old painter of the living manners of his time may be thought, perhaps, to hint at something of the kind in what follows: — “Truly it is a rare thing with us now to hear of a courtier which hath but his own language. And to say how many gentlemen and ladies there are that, beside sound knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues, are thereto no less skilful in Spanish, Italian, and French, or in some one of them, it resteth not in me; sith I am persuaded that, as the noblemen and gentlemen do surmount in this behalf, so these come very little or nothing at all behind them for their parts; which industry God continue, *and accomplish that which otherwise is wanting.*” Yet he winds up his description with a very laudatory flourish. “Beside these things,” he proceeds, “I could in like sort set down the ways and means, whereby our ancient ladies of the court do shun and avoid idleness, some of them exercising their fingers with the needle, others in caul-work, divers in spinning of silk, some in continual reading either of the Holy Scriptures, or histories of our own or foreign nations about us, and divers in writing volumes of their own, or translating of other men’s into our English and Latin tongue, whilst the youngest sort in the mean time apply their lutes, citherns, pricksong, and all kind of music, which they use only for recreation sake, when they have leisure, and are free from attendance upon the queen’s majesty, or such as they belong unto.” Many of the elder sort he goes on to celebrate as “also skilful in surgery and distillation of waters, besides sundry other artificial practices pertaining to the ornature and commendations of their bodies;” and “there are none of them,” he adds, “but when they be at home can help to supply the ordinary want of the kitchen with a number of delicate dishes of their own devising.” At last, coming directly to the morals of the court, he declares that, whereas some great princes’ courts beyond the seas have been likened unto

hell on account of the dissipation and debauchery prevailing in them, all such "enormities are either utterly expelled out of the court of England, or else so qualified by the diligent endeavour of the chief officers of her grace's household, that seldom are any of these things apparently seen there without due reprehension, and such severe correction as belongeth to those trespasses." "Finally," he concludes, "to avoid idleness, and prevent sundry transgressions otherwise likely to be committed and done, such order is taken that every office hath either a Bible, or the Book of the Acts and Monuments of the Church of England, or both, besides some histories and chronicles, lying therein, for the exercise of such as come into the same; whereby the stranger that entereth into the court of England upon the sudden shall rather imagine himself to come into some public school of the universities, where many give ear to one that readeth, than into a prince's palace, if you confer the same with those of other nations."¹

¹ Description of England, b. ii. c. 15. To this may be added a curious passage which Strype gives in his Life of Archbishop Parker, from an Epistle to Queen Katherine Parr by Nicholas Udall (of whom we shall have more to say some pages onward), found in a translation of The First Tome or Volume of the Paraphrase of Erasmus upon the New Testament, executed partly by himself, partly by others, among them the Princess Mary, who is said to have done part of the Gospel of St. John, which was published in 1549, in the reign of Edward VI.:—"But now in this gracious and blissful time of knowledge, in which it hath pleased God Almighty to reveal and show abroad the light of his most holy gospel, what a number is there of noble women, especially here in this realm of England, yea and how many in the years of tender virginity, not only as well seen and as familiarly traded in the Latin and Greek tongues as in their own mother language, but also both in all kinds of profane literature and liberal arts exacted, studied, and exercised, and in the Holy Scripture and Theology so ripe that they are able aptly, cunningly, and with much grace, either to indite or translate into the vulgar tongue, for the public instruction and edifying of the unlearned multitude. Neither is it now a strange thing to hear gentlewomen, instead of most vain communication about the moon shining in the water [so we still familiarly call a thing of no sense or significance a *matter of moonshine*], to use grave and substantial talk in Latin and Greek, with their husbands, of godly matters. It is now no news in England for young damsels, in noble houses and in the courts of princes, instead of cards and other instruments of idle trifling, to have continually in their hands, either Psalms, homilies, and other devout meditations, or else Paul's Epistles, or some book of Holy Scripture matters, and as familiarly to read or reason thereof in Greek, Latin, French, or Italian, as in English. It is now a common thing to see young virgins so nursed and trained in the study of letters, that they willingly set all other vain pastimes at nought for learning's sake. It is now no news at all to see queens, and ladies of most high state and progeny, instead of courtly dalliance, to embrace virtuous exercises of reading and writing, and with most earnest study, both early and late, to apply themselves to the acquiring of knowledge, as well in all other liberal arts and disciplines as also most or especially of God and his most holy word."

This flattering description of the English court is very different from that given by Ascham, in his *Schoolmaster*, who tells us that, although it did indeed contain many fair examples for youth to follow, yet they were, "like fair marks in the field out of a man's reach, too far off to shoot at well;" while the generality of persons to be found there were the worst of characters. Some private letters of the time of Elizabeth, also, which have been printed, describe the court as a place where there was "little godliness and exercise of religion," and where "all enormities reigned in the highest degree." But what it is more important for our present purpose to observe is, that the learning which existed in this age, however remarkably it may have shone forth in particular instances, was by no means generally diffused even among the higher classes, while the generality of the lower and many even of the middle classes remained to the end of the period almost wholly uneducated and illiterate. It is a question whether the father of Shakspeare, an alderman of Stratford, could write his name; and probably, throughout the community, for one that was scholar enough to subscribe his signature there were a dozen who could only make their marks. With all the advancement the country had made in many respects, it may be doubted if popular education was farther extended at the close of the reign of Elizabeth than it was at the commencement of that of her father or her grandfather. Even the length of time that printing had now been at work, and the multiplication of books that must have taken place, had probably but very little, if at all, extended the knowledge and the habit of reading among the mass of the people. The generation that grew up immediately after the discovery of the art of printing, and that first welcomed the Reformation and the translated Bible, perhaps read more than their grandchildren.



PROSE WRITERS. — MORE; ELYOT; TYNDAL; CRANMER;
LATIMER.

THE fact most deserving of remark in the progress of English literature, for the first half of the sixteenth century, is the cultivation that now came to be bestowed upon the language in the form

of prose composition, — a form always in the order of time subsequent to that of verse in the natural development of a national language and literature. Long before this date, indeed, Chaucer, in addition to what he did in his proper field, had given proof of how far his genius preceded his age by several examples of composition in prose, in which may be discerned the presence of something of the same high art with which he first elevated our poetry; but, besides that his genius drew him with greatest force to poetry, and that the foreign models upon which he seems chiefly to have formed himself led him in the same direction, the state of the English language at that day perhaps fitted it better for verse than for prose, or, rather, it had not yet arrived at the point at which it could be so advantageously employed in prose as in verse. At all events Chaucer had no worthy successor as a writer of prose, any more than as a writer of poetry, till more than a century after his death. Meanwhile, however, the language, though not receiving much artificial cultivation, was still undergoing a good deal of what, in a certain sense, might be called application to literary purposes, by its employment both in public proceedings and documents, and also in many popular writings, principally on the subject of the new opinions in religion, both after and previous to the invention of printing. In this more extended use and exercise, by persons of some scholarship at least, if not bringing much artistic feeling and skill to the task of composition, it must, as a mere language, or system of vocables and grammatical forms, have not only sustained many changes and modifications, but, it is probable, acquired on the whole considerable enlargement of its capacities and powers, and been generally carried forward towards maturity under the impulse of a vigorous principle of growth and expansion. But it is not till some time after the commencement of the sixteenth century that we can properly date the rise of our classical prose literature. Perhaps the earliest compositions that are entitled to be included under that name are some of those of Sir Thomas More, especially his *Life and Reign of King Edward V.*, which Rastell, his brother-in-law, by whom it was first printed in 1557, from, as he informs us, a copy in More's handwriting, states to have been written by him when he was under-sheriff of London, in the year 1513.¹ Most of More's other English writings

¹ Sir Henry Ellis, however, in the Preface to his edition of Harding's *Chronicle* (4to 1812), has called attention to what had not before been noticed, namely, that

are of a controversial character, and are occupied about subjects both of very temporary importance, and that called up so much of the eagerness and bitterness of the author's party-zeal as considerably to disturb and mar both his naturally gentle and benignant temper and the oily eloquence of his style; but this historic piece is characterized throughout by an easy narrative flow which rivals the sweetness of Herodotus. It is certainly the first English historic composition that can be said to aspire to be more than a mere chronicle.

The following is an extract from Sir Thomas More's Dialogue concerning Heresies (chap. 14), written in 1528:—

Some prieste, to bring up a pilgrimage in his parische, may devise some false felowe fayning himselfe to come seke a saint in hys chyrch, and there sodeinly say, that he hath gotten hys syght. Than shall ye have the belles rong for a miracle. And the fonde folke of the countrey soon made foles. Than women comynge thither with their candel. And the Person byenge of some lame begger iii or iiii payre of theyr olde crutches, with xii pennes spent in men and women of wex, thrust thorowe divers places, some with arrowes, and some wyth rusty knyves, wyll make his offerynges for one vij yere worth twice hys tythes.

Thys is, quoth I, very trowth that suche thynges may be, and sometime so be in dede. As I remember me that I have hard my father tell of a begger, that in Kyng Henry his daies the sixt cam with his wife to Saint Albonis. And there was walking about the towne begging, a five or six dayes before the kinges comynge thither, saienge that he was borne blinde, and never sawe in hys lyfe. And was warned in hys dreame, that he shoulde come out of Berwyke, where he said he had ever dwelled, to seke Saynt Albon, and that he had ben at his shryne, and had not bene holpen. And therefore he woulde go seke hym at some other place, for he had hard some say sins he came that Sainct Albonys body shold be at Colon, and in dede such a contencion hath ther ben. But of troth, as I am surely informed, he lieth here at Saint Albonis, saving some reliques of him, which thei there shew shrined. But to tell you forth, whan the kyng was comen, and the towne full, sodaynlye thys blind man, at Saint Albonis

the writer speaks as if he had been present with Edward IV. in his last sickness, which More could not have been, being then (in 1483) only a child of three years old; and Sir Henry infers that the manuscript from which the tract was printed by Rastell, although in More's handwriting, could have been only a copy made by him of a narrative drawn up by some one else, very probably Cardinal Morton. But, although Morton was a person of distinguished eloquence, the style is surely far too modern to have proceeded from a writer who was born within ten years after the close of the fourteenth century, the senior of More by seventy years.

shryne had his sight agayne, and a myracle solemply rongen, and *Te Deum* songen, so that nothyng was talked of in al the towne, but this myracle. So happened it than that duke Humfry of Glocester, a great wyse man and very wel lerned, having great joy to se such a myracle, called the pore man unto hym. And first shewing him self joyouse of Goddes glory so shewed in the getting of his sight, and exortinge hym to mekenes, and to none ascribing of any part the worship to him self nor to be proude of the peoples prayse, which would call hym a good and a godly man thereby. At last he loked well upon his eyen, and asked whyther he could never se nothing at al, in all his life before. And whan as well his wyfe as himself affermed fastely no, than he loked advisedly upon his eien again, and said, I beleve you very wel, for me thinketh that ye cannot se well yet. Yea syr, quoth he, I thanke God and his holy marter, I can se nowe as well as any man. Ye can, quoth the Duke; what colour is my gowne? Then anone the begger told him. What colour, quoth he, is this man's gowne? He told him also; and so forthe, without any sticking, he told him the names of al the colours that coude bee shewed him. And whan my lord saw that, he bad him "walke faytoure," and made him be set openly in the stockes. For though he coulde have sene soudenly by miracle the dyfference betwene divers colours, yet coude he not by the syght so sodenly tel the names of all these colours but if he had knowen them before, no more than the names of all the men that he should sodenly se. Lo therefore I say, quod your frende, who may bee sure of such thynges whan such pageantes be played before all the towne? ¹

The letter which Sir Thomas More wrote to his wife in 1528, after the burning of his house at Chelsea, affords one of the best specimens of the epistolary style of this period: —

Maistres Alyce, in my most hartly wise I recommend me to you; and, whereas I am enfourmed by my son Heron of the losse of our barnes and of 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 ther at, but take it in good worth, and hartely thank him, as well for adversitie as for prosperite. And

¹ Sir Thomas More's Works, by Rastell, 4to. 1557, p. 134. This story, it may be remembered, is introduced in the second part of what is called Shakespeare's Henry the Sixth (Act ii., Scene i.). And it also occurs in the older version of that play, first published, so far as is known, in 1594, under the title of The first part of the Contention between the two famous Houses of York and Lancaster.

peradventure we have more cause to thank him for our losse then for our winning; for his wisdome better seeth what is good for vs then we do our selves. Therefore I pray you be of good chere, and take all the howsold with you to church, and there thanke God, both for that he hath given us, and for that he hath taken from us, and for that he hath left us, which if it please hym he can encrease when he will. And if it please hym to leave us yet lesse, at his pleasure be it.

I pray you to make some good ensearche what my poore neighbours have loste, and bid them take no thought therefore: for and I shold not leave myself a sponer, ther shal no pore neighbour of mine bere no losse by any chaunce happened in my house. I pray you be with my children and your household merry in God. And devise some what with your frendes, what waye wer best to take, for provision to be made for corne for our household, and for sede thys yere comming, if ye thinke it good that we kepe the ground stil in our handes. And whether ye think it good that we so shall do or not, yet I think it were not best sodenlye thus to leave it all up, and to put away our folke of our farme till we have somewhat advised us thereon. How beit if we have more nowe then ye shall nede, and which can get them other maisters, ye may then discharge us of them. But I would not that any man were sodenly sent away he wote nere wether.

At my comming hither I perceived none other but that I shold tary still with the Kinges Grace. But now I shal (I think), because of this chance, get leave this next weke to come home and se you: and then shall we further devyse together uppon all thinges what order shalbe best to take. And thus as hartely fare you well with all our children as ye can wishe. At Woodestok the thirde daye of Septembre by the hand of
your louing husbnde

THOMAS MORE Knight.¹

Along with More, as one of the earliest writers of classic English prose, may be mentioned his friend Sir Thomas Elyot, the author of the political treatise entitled *The Governour*, and of various other works, one of which is a Latin and English Dictionary, the foundation of most of the compilations of the same kind that were published for a century afterwards. More was executed in 1535, and Elyot also died some years before the middle of the century. William Tyndal's admirable translations of the New Testament and of some portions of the Old, and also numerous tracts by the same early reformer in his native tongue, which he wrote with remarkable correctness as well as with great vigor and

¹ Sir Thomas More's Works, by Rastell, 4to. 1557, pp. 1418, 1419.

eloquence, appeared between 1526 and his death in 1536. Next in the order of time among our more eminent prose writers may be placed some of the distinguished leaders of the Reformation in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII. and in that of Edward VI., more especially Archbishop Cranmer, whose compositions in his native tongue are of considerable volume, and are characterized, if not by any remarkable strength of expression or weight of matter, yet by a full and even flow both of words and thought. On the whole, Cranmer was the greatest writer among the founders of the English Reformation. His friends and fellow-laborers, Ridley and Latimer, were also celebrated in their day for their ready popular elocution; but the few tracts of Ridley's that remain are less eloquent than learned, and Latimer's discourses are rather quaint and curious than either learned or eloquent in any lofty sense of that term. Latimer is stated to have been one of the first English students of the Greek language; but this could hardly be guessed from his Sermons, which, except a few scraps of Latin, show scarcely a trace of scholarship or literature of any kind. In addressing the people from the pulpit, this honest, simple-minded bishop, feeling no exaltation either from his position or his subject, expounded the most sublime doctrines of religion in the same familiar and homely language in which the humblest or most rustic of his hearers were accustomed to chaffer with one another in the market-place about the price of a yard of cloth or a pair of shoes. Nor, indeed, was he more fastidious as to matter than as to manner: all the preachers of that age were accustomed to take a wide range over things in general; but Latimer went beyond everybody else in the miscellaneous assortment of topics he used to bring together from every region of heaven and earth, — of the affairs of the world that now is as well as of that which is to come. Without doubt his sermons must have been lively and entertaining far beyond the common run of that kind of compositions; the allusions with which they abounded to public events, and to life in all its colors and grades, from the palace to the cottage, from the prince to the peasant, — the anecdotes of his own experience and the other stories the old man would occasionally intersperse among his strictures and exhortations, — the expressiveness of his unscrupulous and often startling phraseology, — all this, combined with the earnestness, piety, and real goodness and simplicity of heart that breathed from every

word he uttered, may well be conceived to have had no little charm for the multitudes that crowded to hear his living voice; even as to us, after the lapse of three centuries, these sermons of Latimer's are still in the highest degree interesting both for the touches they contain in illustration of the manners and social condition of our forefathers, and as a picture of a very peculiar individual mind. They are also of some curiosity and value as a monument of the language of the period; but to what is properly to be called its literature, as we have said, they can hardly be considered as belonging at all.

The following extract from Latimer's third sermon preached before King Edward VI. at Westminster, 22d March, 1549, was contributed by Sir Henry Ellis to the Pictorial History of England. "We copy the original edition," says Sir Henry, "with all its spellings and provincialisms; a volume of so great rarity as not to be found in any of the libraries which have been brought together at the British Museum:"—

Syr, what forme of preachinge woulde you appoynt me to preache before a kynge? Wold you have me for to preache nothyng as concernyng a kynge in the kynges sermon? Have you any commission to apoynt me what I shall preach? Besydes thys, I asked hym dyvers other questions, and he wold make no answeere to none of them all. He had nothyng to say. Then I turned me to the kyng, and submitted my selfe to his Grace, and sayed, I never thoughte my selfe worthy, nor I never sued to be a preacher before youre Grace, but I was called to it, would be wyllyng (if you mislyke me) to geve place to my betters. For I graunt ther be a great many more worthy of the roume than I am. And, if it be your Grace's pleasure so to allowe them for preachers, I could be content to bere ther bokes after theym. But if your Grace allowe me for a preacher I would desyre your Grace to geve me leave to discharge my conscience. Geve me leve to frame my doctrine accordyng to my audienee. I had byne a very dolt to have preached so at the borders of your realm as I preach before your Grace. And I thanke Almyghty God, whych hath alwayes byne remedy, that my sayinges were well accepted of the kynge, for like a gracious Lord he turned into a nother communicacyon. It is even as the Scripture sayeth *Cor Regis in manu Domini*, the Lorde dyrected the kynges hart. Certaine of my frendes came to me wyth teares in their eyes, and told me they loked I should have bene in the Tower the same nyghte. Thus have I ever more bene burdened wyth the werde of sedition. I have offended God grevouslye, transgressyng hys law, and but for his remedy and his mereye I wold not loke to be

saved. As for sedicion, for oughte that I knowe, me thynkes I shoulde not nede Christe, if I might so saye. But if I be cleare in any thyng, I am clear in thys. So farre as I knowe myne owne herte, there is no man further from sedicion then I, whyche I have declared in all my doynges, and yet it hath bene ever layed to me. An othher tyme, when I gave over myne offyce, I should have receyved a certaine dutye that they call a Pentecostall; it came to the summe of fyfye and fyve pound, I sent my Commissarye to gather it, but he coulde not be suffered. For it was sayed a sedicion should ryse upon it.

Thus they burdened me ever wyth sedicion. So thys gentilman comuneth up nowe wyth sedicion. And wott ye what? I chaunched in my last Sermon to speake a mery worde of the Newe Shilling (to refreshe my auditory), howe I was lyke to put away my newe shillynge for an olde grote; I was herein noted to speake sediciously. Yet I comfort my self in onethyng, that I am not alone, and that I have a fellowe. For it is *consolatio miserorum*, it is the comforte of the wretched, to have companye. When I was in trouble, it was objected an sayed unto me that I was syngular, that no man thought as I thought, that I love a syngularyte in all that I dyd, and that I tooke a way contrarye to the kyng and the whole parlimente, and that I was travayled wyth them that had better wyttes then I, that I was contrary to them al. Marye, syr, thys was a sore thunder bolte. I thought it an yrkesome thyng to be a lone, and to have no fellowe. I thoughte it was possyble it myghte not be true that they tolde me. In the vii of John the Priestes sente out certayne of the Jewes to bryng Christ unto them vyolentlye. When they came into the Temple and harde hym preache, they were so moved wyth his preachynge that they returned home agayne, and sayed to them that sente them, *Nunquam sic locutus est homo ut hic homo*, There was never man spake lyke thys man. Then answered the Pharysees, *Num et vos seducti estis?* What ye braynsycke fooles, ye hoddy peckes, ye doddye poulles, ye huddes, do ye beleve hym? are ye seduced also? *Numquis ex Principibus credidit in eum?* Did ye see any great man or any great offycer take hys part? doo ye se any boddy follow hym but beggerlye fyshers, and suche as have nothyng to take to? *Numquis ex Phariseis?* Do ye se any holy man? any perfect man? any learned man take hys parte? *Turba que ignorat legem execrabilis est.* Thys laye people is accursed; it is they that knowe not the lawe that takes hys parte, and none.

Lo here the Pharises had nothyng to choke the people wyth al but ignoraunce. They dyd as onre byshoppes of Englande, who upbrayded the people alwayes with ignoraunce, where they were the cause of it them selves. There were, sayeth St. John, *Multi ex principibus qui crediderunt in eum*; manye of the chyefe menne beleved in hym, and that was contrarye to the Pharisyes saying, Oh then by lyke they belyed him, he was not alone.

So, thoughte I, there be more of myne opinion then I; I thought I was not alone. I have nowe gotten one felowe more, a companyon of sedytyon, and wot ye who is my felowe? Esaye the prophete. I spake but of a lytle preaty shyllynge; but he speaketh to Hierusalem after an other sorte, and was so bold to meddle with theyr coine. Thou proude, thou covetouse, thou hautye cytye of Hierusalem, *Argentum tuum versum est in scoriam*; thy sylver is turned into what? into testyons? *Scoriam*, into drosse. Ah sedicious wretch, what had he to do wyth the mynte? Why should not he have lefte that matter to some master of policy to reprove? Thy silver is drosse, it is not fine, it is counterfaite, thy silver is turned, thou haddest good sylver. What pertayned that to Esay? Mary he espyed a peece of divinity in that polici, he threateneth them Gods vengeance for it. He went to the rote of the matter, which was covetousnes. He espyed two poyntes in it, that eythere it came of covetousnesse whych became hym to reprove, or els that it tended to the hurte of the pore people, for the noughtynes of the sylver was the occasion of dearth of all thynges in the realme. He imputeth it to them as a great cryme. He may be called a mayster of sedicion in dede. Was not this a sedycious harlot to tell them thys to theyr beardes? to theyr face?

Generally it may be observed, with regard to the English prose of the earlier part of the sixteenth century, that it is both more simple in its construction, and of a more purely native character in other respects, than the style which came into fashion in the latter years of the Elizabethan period. When first made use of in prose composition, the mother-tongue was written as it was spoken; even such artifices and embellishments as are always prompted by the nature of verse were here scarcely aspired after or thought of; that which was addressed to and specially intended for the instruction of the people was set down as far as possible in the familiar forms and fashions of the popular speech, in genuine native words, and direct unincumbered sentences; no painful imitation of any learned or foreign model was attempted, nor any species of elaboration whatever, except what was necessary for mere perspicuity, in a kind of writing which was scarcely regarded as partaking of the character of literary composition at all. The delicacy of a scholarly taste no doubt influenced even the English style of such writers as More and his more eminent contemporaries or immediate followers; but whatever eloquence or dignity their compositions thus acquired was not the effect of any professed or conscious endeavor to write in English as they would have written in what were called the learned tongues.

The age, indeed, of the critical cultivation of the language for the purposes of prose composition had already commenced; but at first that object was pursued in the best spirit and after the wisest methods. Erasmus, in one of his Letters, mentions that his friend Dean Colet labored to improve his English style by the diligent perusal and study of Chaucer and the other old poets, in whose works alone the popular speech was to be found turned with any taste or skill to a literary use; and doubtless others of our earliest classic prose writers took lessons in their art in the same manner from these true fathers of our vernacular literature. And even the first professed critics and reformers of the language that arose among us proceeded in the main in a right direction and upon sound principles in the task they undertook. The appearance of a race of critical and rhetorical writers in any country is, in truth, always rather a symptom or indication than, what it has frequently been denounced as being, a cause of the corruption and decline of the national literature. The writings of Dionysius of Halicarnassus and of Quintilian, for instance, certainly did not hasten, but probably rather contributed to retard, the decay of the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. The first eminent English writer of this class was the celebrated Roger Ascham, the tutor of Queen Elizabeth, whose treatise, entitled *Toxophilus, the School or Partitions of Shooting*, was published in 1545. The design of Ascham, in this performance, was not only to recommend to his countrymen the use of their old national weapon, the bow, but to set before them an example and model of a pure and correct English prose style. In his dedication of the work, To all the Gentlemen and Yeomen of England, he recommends to him that would write well in any tongue the counsel of Aristotle, — “To speak as the common people do, to think as wise men do.” From this we may perceive that Ascham had a true feeling of the regard due to the great fountain-head and oracle of the national language — the vocabulary of the common people. He goes on to reprobate the practice of many English writers, who by introducing into their compositions, in violation of the Aristotelian precept, many words of foreign origin, Latin, French, and Italian, made all things dark and hard. “Once,” he says, “I communed with a man which reasoned the English tongue to be enriched and increased thereby, saying, Who will not praise that feast where a man shall drink at

a dinner both wine, ale, and beer? Truly, quoth I, they be all good, every one taken by himself alone: but if you put malmsey and sack, red wine and white, ale and beer and all, in one pot, you shall make a drink neither easy to be known, nor yet wholesome for the body." The English language, however, it may be observed, had even already become too thoroughly and essentially a mixed tongue for this doctrine of purism to be admitted to the letter; nor, indeed, to take up Ascham's illustration, is it universally true, even in regard to liquids, that a salutary and palatable beverage can never be made by the interfusion of two or more different kinds. Our tongue is now, and was many centuries ago, not, indeed, in its grammatical structure, but in its vocabulary, as substantially and to as great an extent Neo-Latin as Gothic; it would be as completely torn in pieces and left the mere tattered rag of a language, useless for all the purposes of speaking as well as of writing, by having the foreign as by having the native element taken out of it. Ascham in his own writings uses many words of French and Latin origin (the latter mostly derived through the medium of the French); nay, the common people themselves of necessity did in his day, as they do still, use many such foreign words, or words not of English origin, and could scarcely have held communication with one another on the most ordinary occasions without so doing. It is another question whether it might not have been more fortunate if the original form of the national speech had remained in a state of celibacy and virgin purity; by the course of events the Gothic part of the language has, in point of fact, been married to the Latin part of it; and what God or nature has thus joined together it is now beyond the competency of man to put asunder. The language, while it subsists, must continue to be the product of that union, and nothing else. As for Ascham's own style, both in his *Toxophilus*, and in his *Schoolmaster*, published in 1571, three years after the author's death, it is not only clear and correct, but idiomatic and muscular. That it is not rich or picturesque is the consequence of the character of the writer's mind, which was rather rhetorical than poetical. The publication of Ascham's *Toxophilus* was soon followed by an elaborate treatise expressly dedicated to the subject of English composition—*The Art of Rhetorick*, for the use of all such as are studious of Eloquence, set forth in English, by Thomas Wilson, whose work appeared in 1553,

takes pains to impress the same principles that Ascham had laid down before him with regard to purity of style and the general rule of writing well. But the very solicitude thus shown by the ablest and most distinguished of those who now assumed the guardianship of the vernacular tongue to protect it from having its native character overlaid and debased by an intermixture of terms borrowed from other languages, may be taken as evidence that such debasement was actually at this time going on; that our ancient English was beginning to be oppressed and half suffocated by additions from foreign sources brought in upon it faster than it could absorb and assimilate them. Wilson, indeed, proceeds to complain that this was the case. While some "powdered their talk with over-sea language," others, whom he designates as "the unlearned or foolish fantastical, that smell but of learning," were wont, he says, "so to Latin their tongues," that simple persons could not but wonder at their talk, and think they surely spake by some revelation from heaven. It may be suspected, however, that this affectation of unnecessary terms, formed from the ancient languages, was not confined to mere pretenders to learning. Another well-known critical writer of this period, Webster Puttenham, in his *Art of English Poesy*, published in 1582, but believed to have been written a good many years earlier, in like manner advises the avoidance in writing of such words and modes of expression as are used "in the marches and frontiers, or in port towns where strangers haunt for traffic sake, or yet in universities, where scholars use much peevish affectation of words out of the primitive languages;" and he warns his readers that in some books were already to be found "many inkhorn terms so ill affected, brought in by men of learning, as preachers and schoolmasters, and many strange terms of other languages by secretaries, and merchants, and travellers, and many dark words, and not usual nor well-sounding, though they be daily spoken at court." On the whole, however, Puttenham considers the best standard both for speaking and writing to be "the usual speech of the court, and that of Loudon and the shires lying about London within sixty miles, and not much above." This judgment is probably correct, although the writer was a gentleman pensioner, and perhaps also a cockney by birth.

SCOTTISH PROSE WRITERS.

BEFORE the middle of the sixteenth century a few prose writers had also appeared in the Scottish dialect. A digest of practical theology, composed for the use of King James IV. in his native tongue, by a priest called John de Irlandia, in the year 1490, still exists in MS. (apparently an autograph of the author), in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh. "This work," says Leyden, who has given an account of it, with some extracts, in the Preliminary Dissertation prefixed to his edition of *The Complaint of Scotland*, "exhibits a curious specimen of the Scottish language at that period; and the style as well as the orthography are more uniform, and approach nearer the modern standard, than those of some writers who lived almost a century later." A moral treatise entitled *The Porteous* [that is, the *vade mecum* or manual] of Nobleness, translated from the French by Andrew Cadiou was printed at Edinburgh in 1508. The conclusion of it, the only portion that is known to have been preserved, is reprinted by Leyden in his Dissertation (pp. 203-208); and also by Mr. David Laing, in his collection entitled *The Knightly Tale of Golagrus and Gawane, &c.*, Edin. 1827. The Scottish History of Hector Boethius, or Boecius (Boece or Boyce), translated from the Latin by John Bellenden, was printed at Edinburgh in 1537; and a translation by the same person of the first Five Books of Livy remained in MS. till it was published at Edinburgh, in 4to. in 1829; a second edition of the translation of Boecius having also been brought out there, in 2 vols. 4to., the same year. But the most remarkable composition in Scottish prose of this era is *The Complaynt of Scotland*, printed at St. Andrews in 1548, which has been variously assigned to Sir James Inglis, knight, a country gentleman of Fife, who died in 1554; to Wedderburn, the supposed author of the *Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Sangs and Ballats* (reprinted from the edition of 1621 by Sir John Grahame Dalzell, 8vo. Edinburgh, 1801); and by its modern editor, the late John Leyden, in the elaborate and ingenious Dissertation prefixed to his reprint of the work, 8vo. Edinburgh, 1801, to the famous poet, Sir David Lyndsay. This is a very extraordinary piece of writing, as a short extract or two will show. For the better comparison of the language in all respects with that

spoken and written in England at the same date, we shall, in our first specimen, preserve the original spelling. The following is from a long episode which occurs in the middle of the work, entitled *Ane Monolog of the Actor*:—¹

There eftir i herd the rumour of rammache² foulis ande of beystis that maid grite beir,³ quhilk past besyde burnis⁴ and boggis on grene bankis to seik ther sustentatione. There brutal sound did redond to the hie skyis, quhil the depe hou⁵ cauernis of cleuchis, and rotehe⁶ craggis ansuert vitht⁷ ane hie not, of that samyn sound as thay⁸ beystis hed blauen. it aperit be presumyng and presuposing that blaberand eecho had beene hid in ane hon hole, eryand hyr half ansueir, quhen narcissus ryecht sorye socht for his sarnandis,⁹ quhen he vas in ane forrest, far fra ony folkis, and there eftir for loue of eecho he drouit in ane drau vel. nou to tel treuth of the beystis that maid sie beir, and of the dyn that the foulis did, ther syndry soundis hed nothir temperance nor tune. for fyrst furtht on the fresche feildis, the nolt¹⁰ maid noyis vitht mony loud lou. baytht horse and meyris did fast nee, and the folis nechyr.¹¹ the bullis began to buller,¹² quhen the scheip began to blait, because the calfs began tyl mo.¹³ quhen the doggis berkit. than the suyne began to quhyrne¹⁴ quhen thai herd the asse tair,¹⁵ quhilk gart¹⁶ the hennis kekkul¹⁷ quhen the cokis cren, the chekyns began to peu¹⁸ quhen the gled¹⁹ quhissillit. the fox follouit the fed geise, and gart them cry claik. the gayslingis²⁰ cryit quhilk quhilk, and the dukis cryit quaik. the ropeen²¹ of the raunyes gart the cras crope, the huddit cranis cryit varrok varrok, quhen the suannis murnit, be cause the gray goul²² man pronosticat ane storm. the turtill began for to greit, quhen the cuschet²³ zoulit,²⁴ the titlene²⁵ follouit the goilk,²⁶ ande gart hyr sing guk guk. the dou²⁷ croutit²⁸ hyr sad sang that soundit lyk sorrou. robeen and the lital vran var hamely in vyntir. the iargolyne²⁹

¹ But this appears to be a misprint (either of the original or of the modern edition, or of both) for *Auctor* or *Author*. It is not noticed in the list of Errata; but the editor in his Preliminary Dissertation, p. 101, quotes the title as *Monologue of the Author*.

² Collected.

³ Noise (*birr*).

⁴ Rivulets.

⁵ Hollow.

⁶ Rock; or, perhaps, rocky?

⁷ With.

⁸ Those.

⁹ Servants.

¹⁰ Neat.

¹¹ An imitative word expressing the cry of a foal.

¹² Roar.

¹³ Imitative word for cry of a calf.

¹⁴ Imitative word for cry of swine

¹⁵ Imitative word for cry of ass.

¹⁷ Caused.

¹⁷ Cackle.

¹⁸ Imitative word for cry of young birds.

¹⁹ Glede, hawk.

²⁰ Goslings.

²¹ Hoarse cry.

²² Gull.

²³ Cusbat-dove.

²⁴ Rather *youlit*, that is howled.

²⁵ The hedge-sparrow.

²⁵ The cuckoo.

²⁷ Dove.

²⁸ Imitative word for cry of the dove

²⁹ Jargonizing.

of the suallou gart the iay iangil.¹ than the maueis² maid myht, for to mok the merle.³ the lauerok⁴ maid melody vp in the skyis. the nycht-ingal al the nycht sang sneit notis. the tuechitis⁵ cryit cheuis nek⁶ quhen the piettis⁷ clattrit.⁸ the garruling⁹ of the stirlene¹⁰ gart the sparrou cheip.¹¹ the lyntquhit¹² sang cuntirpoint quhen the oszil¹³ zelpt. the grene serene¹⁴ sang sueit quhen the gold spynk¹⁵ chantit. the rede schank¹⁶ cryit my fut my fut, and oxee¹⁷ cryit tneit. the herrons gaif ane vyild skrech as the kyl hed bene in fier, quhilk gart the quhapis¹⁸ for fleiytnes¹⁹ fle far fra hame.

A still more ostentatious display of the wealth of the writer's native dialogue follows, in a description of a sea-scene, ending in a fight. Into this he has poured a complete dictionary of naval terms, some of which set translation or explanation at defiance, but many of which are still in familiar use among the fishing population of the sea-coast of Fife, from whom either Lyndsay or Inglis would be likely enough to learn them. Leyden describes them generally as in part of Norman, in part of Flemish origin. We will pass on, and select for our next extract a portion of the author's natural philosophy; and here we shall strip his clear and expressive style of the cumbrous and capricious old spelling, which makes it look as if it were all over bespattered with mud to the eye of a modern reader:—

Now, to speak of the generation of the dew, it is ane humid vapour, generit in the second region of the air in ane fair calm night, and sine²⁰ descends in ane temperate caldness on the green erbs in small drops. The hair²¹ rime is ane cald dew, the whilk falls in misty vapours, and sine it freezes on the eird.²² The mist, it is the excrement or the superfluity of the cluds, the whilk falls fra the air in ane sweet rain, whilk rain can nought be persavit be the sight of men. Hail stones is ane congealit rain whilk falls on the eird be grit vehemence, and it falls rather on the day light nor²³ on the night. The snaw is ane congealit rain, frozen and congealit in the second region of the air, and congeals in divers massive cluds.

¹ Imitative word for cry of the jay.

² Thrush.

³ Blackbird.

⁴ Lark.

⁵ Lapwings

⁶ Imitative word for cry of lapwings.

⁷ Magpies.

⁸ Chattered.

⁹ Garrulous noise.

¹⁰ Starling.

¹¹ Make a feeble noise.

¹² Linnet.

¹³ The ouzle, which means sometimes the thrush, sometimes the blackbird, some times, as here, apparently a different bird from either.

¹⁴ Green Siren, or Green-finch.

¹⁵ Goldfinch.

¹⁶ Fieldfare.

¹⁷ Small hedge-sparrow.

¹⁸ Curlews.

¹⁹ Fear.

²⁰ Then.

²¹ Hoar.

²² Earth.

²³ Than.

whilk stops and empeshes¹ the operation of the planets to exerce their natural course : than² the vehemence of the planets braks thay³ cluds, fra the force of the whilk there comes fire, and ane grit sound, whilk is terrible to be hard, and that terrible sound is the thing that we call the thunder ; but or⁴ we hear the thunder, we see first the fire, howbeit⁵ that they proceed at ane instant time. The cause that we see the fire or we hear the thunder is be reason that the sight and clearness of ony thing is mair swift towart us nor is the sound. The evil that the thunder does on the eird, it is done or we hear the crack of it. Oft times we will see fire slaught,⁶ how be it there be na thunder hard. The thunder slays mony beasts on the fields ; and when it slays ane man that is sleepand, he sall be funden dead and his een⁷ apen.⁸ The thunder is maist dangerous for man and beast when there comes na rain with it. The fire-slaught will consume the wine within ane pipe in ane deep cave, and the pipe will resave na skaith. The fire-slaught slew ane man on the fields, and it meltit the gold that was in his bag, and it meltit nought the wax of ane seal that was in that samen bag. In Rome there was ane noble princess callit Martia grit with child : she was on the fields for her recreation, where that the fire-slaught straik her, and slew her nought, but yet it slew the child in her woime. There is three things that are never in danger of thunder nor fire-slaught : that is to say, the laury tree : the second is the selch,⁹ whilk some men calls the sea wolf : the third thing is the eyrn,¹⁰ that flees sa high. The historiographers rehearses that Tiberius Caesar, empiror of Rome, had ever ane hat of laure tree on his head, and als he gart mak his pailyons,¹¹ and tents on the fields of selch skins, to that effect that he might be furth of the danger of the thunder and fire-slaught. The best remede contrar thunder and fire-slaught is to men and women to pass in hou¹² caverns under the eird, or in deep caves, be cause the thunder does maist damage till high places.

It is worthy of remark, that, although we have here unquestionably the Scottish dialect, distinctly marked by various peculiarities (indeed the author, in his prologue or preface expressly and repeatedly states that he has written in Scotch, "in our Scottis langage," as he calls it), yet one chief characteristic of the modern Scotch is still wanting—the suppression of the final *l* after a vowel or diphthong—just as it is in Barbour and Blind Harry. This change, as we before remarked, is probably very modern. It has taken place in all likelihood since Scotch ceased to be generally used in writing ; the principle of growth, which, after a language

¹ Hinders.² Then.³ Those.⁴ Ere.⁵ Although.⁶ Lightning.⁷ Eyes.⁸ Open.⁹ Seal.¹⁰ Eagle.¹¹ Pavilions ?¹² Hollow.

passes under the government of the pen, is to a great extent suspended, having recovered its activity on the dialect being abandoned again to the comparatively lawless liberty, or at least looser guardianship, of the lips.

ENGLISH POETS:—HAWES; BARKLAY.

THE English poetical literature of the first half of the sixteenth century may be fairly described as the dawn of a new day. Two poetic names of some note belong to the reign of Henry VII.—Stephen Hawes and Alexander Barklay. Hawes is the author of many pieces, but is chiefly remembered for his *Pastime of Pleasure*, or *History of Grand Amour and La Belle Pucelle*, first printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1517, but written about two years earlier. Warton holds this performance to be almost the only effort of imagination and invention which had appeared in our poetry since Chaucer, and enlogizes it as containing no common touches of romantic and allegoric fiction. Hawes was both a scholar and a traveller, and was perfectly familiar with the French and Italian poetry as well as with that of his own country. It speaks very little, however, for his taste, that, among the preceding English poets, he has evidently made Lydgate his model, even if it should be admitted that, as Warton affirms, he has added some new graces to the manner of that cold and wordy versifier. Lydgate and Hawes may stand together as perhaps the two writers who, in the century and a half that followed the death of Chaucer, contributed most to carry forward the regulation and modernization of the language which he began. Barklay, who did not die till 1552, when he had attained a great age, employed his pen principally in translations, in which line his most celebrated performance is his *Ship of Fools*, from the German of Sebastian Brandt, which was printed in 1508. Barklay, however, besides consulting both a French and a Latin version of Brandt's poem, has enlarged his original with the enumeration and description of a considerable variety of follies which he found flourishing among his own countrymen. This gives the work some value as a record of the English manners of the time; but both its poetical and its satirical pretensions are of the very humblest order. At this date most of our writers of what

was called poetry seem to have been occupied with the words in which they were to clothe their ideas almost to the exclusion of all the higher objects of the poetic art. And that, perhaps, is what of necessity happens at a particular stage in the progress of a nation's literature — at the stage corresponding to the transition state in the growth of the human being between the termination of free rejoicing boyhood and the full assurance of manhood begun; which is peculiarly the season not of achievement but of preparation, not of accomplishing ends, but of acquiring the use of means and instruments, and also, it may be added, of the aptitude to mistake the one of these things for the other.

SKELTON.

BUT the poetry with the truest life in it produced in the reign of Henry the Seventh and the earlier part of that of his son is undoubtedly that of Skelton. John Skelton may have been born about or soon after 1460; he studied at Cambridge, if not at both universities; began to write and publish compositions in verse between 1480 and 1490; was graduated as poet-laureate (a degree in grammar, including versification and rhetoric) at Oxford before 1490; was admitted *ad eundem* at Cambridge in 1493; in 1498 took holy orders; was probably about the same time appointed tutor to the young prince Henry, afterwards Henry the Eighth; was eventually promoted to be rector of Diss in Norfolk; and died in 1529 in the sanctuary at Westminster Abbey, where he had taken refuge to escape the vengeance of Cardinal Wolsey, originally his patron, but latterly the chief butt at which he had been wont to shoot his satiric shafts. As a scholar Skelton had a European reputation in his own day; and the great Erasmus has styled him *Britannicarum literarum decus et lumen* (the light and ornament of English letters). His Latin verses are distinguished by their purity and classical spirit. As for his English poetry, it is generally more of a mingled yarn, and of a much coarser fabric. In many of his effusions indeed, poured forth in sympathy with or in aid of some popular cry of the day, he is little better than a rhyming buffoon; much of his ribaldry is now nearly unintelligible; and it may be doubted if a considerable portion of his gro-

tesque and apparently incoherent jingle ever had much more than the sort of half-meaning with which a half-tipsy writer may satisfy readers as far gone as himself. Even in the most reckless of these compositions, however, he rattles along, through sense and nonsense, with a vivacity that had been a stranger to our poetry for many a weary day; and his freedom and spirit, even where most unrefined, must have been exhilarating after the long fit of somnolency in which the English muse had dozed away the last hundred years. But much even of Skelton's satiric verse is instinct with genuine poetical vigor, and a fancy alert, sparkling, and various, to a wonderful degree. It is impossible, where the style and manner are, if not so discursive, at least so rushing and river-like, to give any complete idea of the effect by extracts; but we will transcribe a small portion of the bitterest of his attacks upon Wolsey, his satire, or "little book," as he designates it, entitled *Why come ye not to court?* extending in all to nearly 1300 lines:—

Our barons be so bold
 Into a mouse-hole they wold
 Rin away and creep,
 Like a meiny of sheep;
 Dare not look out at dur
 For dread of the mastiff cur,
 For dread of the butcher's dog
 Wold wirry them like an hog.

For an this cur do gnar
 They must stand all afar,
 To hold up their hand at the bar.
 For all their noble blood,
 He plucks them by the hood,
 And shakes them by the ear,
 And brings them in such fear;
 He baiteth them like a bear,
 Like an ox or a bull:
 Their wits he saith are dull;
 He saith they have no brain
 Their estate to maintain,
 And maketh them to bow their knees
 Before his majesty.

In the chancery where he sits,
 But such as he admits

None so hardy as to speak :
 He saith, Thou huddypeke,
 Thy learning is too lewd,
 Thy tongue is not well thewd,¹
 To seek ² before our grace ;
 And openly in that place
 He rages and he raves,
 And calls them cankered knaves.
 Thus royally doth he deal
 Under the king's broad seal ;
 And in the Checker he them checks ;
 In the Star Chamber he nods and becks,
 And beareth him there so stout
 That no man dare rowt.³
 Duke, earl, baron, nor lord,⁴
 But to his sentence must accord ;
 Whether he be knight or squire,
 All men must follow his desire.

.

But this mad Amalek
 Like to a Mamelek,⁵
 He regardeth lords
 No more than potshords ;
 He is in such elation
 Of his exaltation,
 And the supportation
 Of our sovereign lord,
 That, God to record,⁶
 He ruleth all at will,
 Without reason or skill ;⁷
 Howbeit the primordial
 Of his wretched original,
 And his base progeny,⁸
 And his greasy genealogy,
 He came of the sank royal⁹
 That was cast out of a butcher's stall.

.

He would dry up the streams
 Of nine kings' reams,¹⁰

¹ Well-mannered.

² In original spelling *seke*. Qy. : A typographical error for *speke* (or *speak*) ?

³ Snort.

⁴ That is, no duke, &c.

⁵ Mameluke

⁶ Witness.

⁷ Regard to propriety.

⁸ Progenitorship ?

⁹ Sanguine royal, blood royal.

¹⁰ Realms.

All rivers and wells,
 All water that swells ;
 For with us he so mells
 That within England dwells,
 I wold he were somewhere else
 For else by and by
 He will drink us so dry,
 And suck us so nigh,
 That men shall scantly
 Have penny or halfpenny.
 God save his noble grace,
 And grant him a place
 Endless to dwell
 With the devil of hell!
 For, an he were there,
 We need never fear
 Of the feindes blake ;
 For I undertake
 He wold so brag and crake,
 That he wold than make
 The devils to quake,
 To shudder and to shake,
 Like a fire-drake,²
 And with a coal rake
 Bruise them on a brake,³
 And bind them to a stake,
 And set hell on fire
 At his own desire.
 He is such a grim sire,
 And such a potestolate,⁴
 And such a potestate,
 That he wold brake the brains
 Of Lucifer in his chains,
 And rule them each one
 In Lucifer's trone.⁵
 I wold he were gone,
 For among us is none
 That ruleth but he alone,
 Without all good reason,
 And all out of season, &c.

¹ Meddles.² Fiery dragon.³ Engine of torture⁴ "Equivalent, I suppose, to legate." — *Dyce*.⁵ Throne.

Another of Skelton's satirical invectives, his *Bouge of Court* (that is, *Bouche à Court*, diet allowed at court), which is written in the common stanza of seven decasyllabic lines, and altogether with much more sobriety, has some strong allegorical painting, but in a hard and heavy style; and the force is also more conspicuous than the invention. Another of his productions is a drama, entitled *Magnificence*, a *Goodly Interlude* and a *Merry*, in rhyme, and running to nearly 2600 long lines, the characters being *Felicity*, *Liberty*, *Measure*, *Counterfeit Countenance*, *Crafty Conveyance*, *Cloaked Collusion*, *Courtly Abusion*, and other such shadowy personages. But Skelton's brightest and in all respects happiest poetry is surely what of it is neither allegorical nor satirical. The charm of his writing lies in its natural ease and freedom, its inexhaustible and untiring vivacity; and these qualities are found both in their greatest abundance and their greatest purity where his subject is suggestive of the simplest emotions and has most of a universal interest. His *Book of Philip Sparrow*, for instance, an elegy on the sparrow of fair Jane Scroop, slain by a cat in the nunnery of Carow, near Norwich, extending (with the "commendation" of the "goodly maid") to nearly 1400 lines, is unrivalled in the language for elegant and elastic playfulness, and a spirit of whim that only kindles into the higher blaze the longer it is kept up. The second part, or "Commendation," in particular, is throughout animated and hilarious to a wonderful degree:—
the *refrain*,—

For this most goodly flower,
This blossom of fresh colour,
So Jupiter me succour,
She flourisheth new and new
In beauty and virtue;
Hac claritate gemina,
O Gloriosa femina, &c.,—

recurring often so suddenly and unexpectedly, yet always so naturally, has an effect like that of the harmonious evolutions of some lively and graceful dance. Have we not in this poem, by the by, the true origin of Skelton's peculiar dancing verse? Is it not Anacreontic, as the spirit also of the best of his poetry undoubtedly is?¹

¹ A most valuable and acceptable present has been made to the lovers of our old poetry in a collected edition of Skelton's Poetical Works, 2 vols. 8vo. Lond. Rodd, 1843, by the Rev. Alexander Dyce, who has performed his difficult task in a manner to leave little or nothing further to be desired.

ROY; JOHN HEYWOOD.

ALONG with Skelton, viewed as he commonly has been only as a satirist, is usually classed William Roy, a writer who assisted Tyndal in his translation of the New Testament, and who is asserted by Bale to be the author of a singular work entitled, *Read me and be not wroth, For I say nothing but troth*, which is supposed to have been first printed abroad about 1525.¹ This is also a satire upon Wolsey and the clergy in general, and is as bitter as might be expected from the supposed author, who, having begun his life as a friar, spent the best part of it in the service of the Reformation, and finished it at the stake. Among the buffoon-poets of this age is also to be reckoned John Heywood, styled the Epigrammatist, from the six centuries of Epigrams, or versified jokes, which form a remarkable portion of his works. Heywood's conversational jocularities has the equivocal credit of having been exceedingly consoling both to the old age of Henry VIII. and to his daughter Queen Mary: it must have been strong jesting that could stir the sense of the ludicrous in either of these terrible personages. Besides a number of plays, which are the most important of his productions, Heywood also wrote a long burlesque allegory, which fills a thick quarto volume, on the dispute between the old and the new religions, under the title of *A Parable of the Spider and the Fly*; where it appears that by the spider is intended the Protestant party, by the fly the Catholic, but in which, according to the judgment of old Harrison, "he dealeth so profoundly, and beyond all measure of skill, that neither he himself that made it, neither any one that readeth it, can reach unto the meaning thereof."²

SCOTTISH POETS:—GAWIN DOUGLAS; DUNBAR; LYNSAY.

BUT, while in England the new life to which poetry had awakened had thus as yet produced so little except ribaldry and buffoonery, it is remarkable that in Scotland, where general social civilization was much less advanced, the art had continued to be

¹ Ritson's *Bibliog. Poet.*, p. 318.

² *Description of England.*

cultivated in its highest departments with great success, and the language had already been enriched with some compositions worthy of any age. Perhaps the Scottish poetry of the earlier part of the sixteenth century may be regarded as the same spring which had visited England in the latter part of the fourteenth, — the impulse originally given by the poetry of Chaucer only now come to its height in that northern clime. Gawin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, who flourished in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and who is famous for his translation of the *Æneid*, the first metrical version of any ancient classic that had yet appeared in the dialect of either kingdom, affects great anxiety to eschew “Southron,” or English, and to write his native tongue in all its breadth and plainness; but it does not follow, from his avoidance of English words, that he may not have formed himself to a great extent on the study of English models. At the same time it may be admitted that neither in his translation nor in his original works of *King Hart*, and the *Palace of Honour*, — which are two long allegories, full, the latter especially, of passages of great descriptive beauty, — does Douglas convict himself of belonging to the school of Chaucer. He is rather, if not the founder, at least the chief representative, of a style of poetry which was attempted to be formed in Scotland by enriching and elevating the simplicity of Barbour and his immediate followers with an infusion of something of what was deemed a classic manner, drawn in part directly from the Latin writers, but more from those of the worst than those of the best age, in part from the French poetry, which now began in like manner to aspire towards a classic tone. This preference, by the Scottish poets, of Latin and French to “Southron,” as a source from which to supply the deficiencies of their native dialect, had probably no more reasonable origin than the political circumstances and feelings of the nation: the spirit of the national genius was antagonistic to it, and it therefore never could become more than a temporary fashion.¹ Yet it infected more or less all the writers of this age; and amongst the rest, to a considerable extent, by far the greatest of them all, William Dunbar. This admirable master, alike of serious and of comic song, may justly be styled the Chaucer of Scotland, whether we look to the wide range of

¹ Douglas's *Palace of Honour* was reprinted for the Bannatyne Club, 4to. Edin. 1827; and two vols. of a new edition of his translation of the *Æneid* have also been produced by the same association, 4to. Edin. 1839.

his genius, or to his eminence in every style over all the poets of his country who preceded and all who for ages came after him. That of Burns is certainly the only name among the Scottish poets that can yet be placed on the same line with that of Dunbar; and even the inspired ploughman, though the equal of Dunbar in comic power, and his superior in depth of passion, is not to be compared with the elder poet either in strength or in general fertility of imagination.¹ Finally, to close the list, comes another eminent name, that of Sir David Lyndsay, whose productions are not indeed characterized by any high imaginative power, but yet display infinite wit, spirit, and variety in all the forms of the more familiar poetry. Lyndsay was the favorite, throughout his brief reign and life, of the accomplished and unfortunate James V., and survived to do perhaps as good service as any in the war against the ancient church by the tales, plays, and other products of his abounding satiric vein, with which he fed and excited and lashed up the popular contempt for the now crazy and tumbling fabric once so imposing and so venerated. Perhaps he also did no harm by thus taking off a little of the acrid edge of mere resentment and indignation with the infusion of a dash of merriment, and keeping alive a genial sense of the ludicrous in the midst of such serious work. If Dunbar is to be compared to Burns, Lyndsay may be said to have his best representative among the more recent Scottish poets in Allan Ramsay, who does not, however, come so near to Lyndsay by a long way as Burns does to Dunbar.²

SURREY; WYATT.

LYNDSAY is supposed to have survived till about the year 1567.³ Before that date a revival of the higher poetry had come upon England like the rising of a new day. Two names are commonly

¹ Portions of Dunbar's poetry had been previously published from the MSS. by Ramsay, Hailes, and Pinkerton; but the only complete edition is that entitled *The Poems of William Dunbar*, now first collected, with Notes, and a Memoir of his life, by David Laing: 2 vols. 8vo. Edin. 1834.

² *The Poetical Works of Sir David Lindsay, with a Life, Glossary, and illustrative Dissertations and Notes*, were published by the late George Chalmers, in 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1806.

³ Irving's *Lives of the Scottish Poets*. 2d edit. 1810, ii. 85.

placed together at the head of our new poetical literature, — Lord Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, memorable in our history as the last victim of the capricious and sanguinary tyranny of Henry VIII., had already, in his short life, which was terminated by the axe of the executioner in his twenty-seventh year, carried away from all his countrymen the laurels both of knighthood and of song. The superior polish alone of the best of Surrey's verses would place him at an immeasurable distance in advance of all his immediate predecessors. So remarkable, indeed, is the contrast in this respect which his poetry presents to theirs, that in modern times there has been claimed for Surrey, as we have seen, the honor of having been the first to introduce our existing system of rhythm into the language. The true merit of Surrey is, that, proceeding upon the same system of versification which had been introduced by Chaucer, and which, indeed, had in principle been followed by all the writers after Chaucer, however rudely or imperfectly some of them may have succeeded in the practice of it, he restored to our poetry a correctness, polish, and general spirit of refinement such as it had not known since Chaucer's time, and of which, therefore, in the language as now spoken, there was no previous example whatever. To this it may be added that he appears to have been the first, at least in this age, who sought to modulate his strains after that elder poetry of Italy, which thenceforward became one of the chief fountain-heads of inspiration to that of England throughout the whole space of time over which is shed the golden light of the names of Spenser, of Shakspeare, and of Milton. Surrey's own imagination was neither rich nor soaring; and the highest qualities of his poetry, in addition to the facility and general mechanical perfection of the versification, are delicacy and tenderness. It is altogether a very light and bland Favonian breeze. The poetry of his friend Wyatt is of a different character, neither so flowing in form nor so uniformly gentle in spirit, but perhaps making up for its greater ruggedness by a force and a depth of sentiment occasionally which Surrey does not reach. The poems of Lord Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt were first published together in 1557.

We give one of Surrey's Sonnets in praise of his mistress, the Fair Geraldine, from Dr. Nott's edition of his Poems.¹ The spelling is modernized: —

¹ Works of Henry Howard Earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder 4to. Lond. 1815; vol. i. p. 4.

Give place, ye lovers, here before
 That spent your boasts and brags in vain!
 My lady's beauty passeth more
 The best of yours, I dare well sayn,
 Than doth the sun the candle-light,
 Or brightest day the darkest night.

And thereto hath a troth as just
 As had Penelope the fair;
 For what she saith ye may it trust,
 As it by writing sealed were:
 And virtues hath she many mo
 Than I with pen have skill to show.

I could rehearse, if that I would,
 The whole effect of Nature's plaint,
 When she had lost the perfit mould,
 The like to whom she could not paint:
 With wringing hands how she did cry,
 And what she said, I know it, I.

I know she swore with raging mind,
 Her kingdom only set apart,
 There was no loss by law of kind
 That could have gone so near her heart:
 And this was chiefly all her pain;
 "She could not make the like again."

Sith Nature thus gave her the praise,
 To be the chiefest work she wrought,
 In faith, methink, some better ways
 On your behalf might well be sought,
 Than to compare, as ye have done,
 To match the candle with the sun.

To Surrey we owe the introduction into the language of our present form of blank verse, the suggestion of which he probably took from the earliest Italian example of that form of poetry, a translation of the First and Fourth Books of the *Æneid* by the Cardinal Hippolito de' Medici (or, as some say, by Francesco Maria Molza), which was published at Venice in 1541. A translation of the same two Books into English blank verse appeared in the collection of Surrey's Poems published by Tottel in 1557. Dr. Nott has shown that this translation was founded upon the

metrical Scottish version of Gawin Douglas, which, although not published till 1553, had been finished, as the author himself informs us, in 1513. But it ought not to be forgotten that, as already remarked, we have one example at least of another form of blank verse in the *Ormulum*, centuries before Surrey's day.

The following earnestly passionate lines by Wyatt are supposed to have been addressed to Anne Boleyn : —

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

Forget not yet when first began
The weary life, ye know since whan ;
The suit, the service, none tell can
Forget not yet !

Forget not yet the great assays ;
The cruel wrong, the scornful ways,
The painful patience in delays,
Forget not yet !

Forget not ! oh ! forget not this !
How long ago hath been, and is,
The mind that never meant amiss,
Forget not yet !

Forget not then thine own approved,
The which so long hath thee so loved,
Whose steadfast faith yet never moved ;
Forget not this !

THE ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE.

OF what is commonly called our Elizabethan literature, the greater portion appertains to the reign, not of Elizabeth, but of James — to the seventeenth, not to the sixteenth century. The common name, nevertheless, is the fair and proper one. It sprung up in the age of Elizabeth, and was mainly the product of influences which belonged to that age, although their effect extended into another. It was born of and ripened by that sunny morning of a new day, — “great Eliza’s golden time,” — when a general sense of security had given men ease of mind and disposed them to freedom of thought, while the economical advancement of the country put life and spirit into everything, and its growing power and renown filled and elevated the national heart. But such periods of quiet and prosperity seem only to be intellectually productive when they have been preceded and ushered in by a time of uncertainty and struggle which has tried men’s spirits: the contrast seems to be wanted to make the favorable influences be felt and tell; or the faculty required must come in part out of the strife and contention. The literature of our Elizabethan age, more emphatically, may be said to have had this double parentage: if that brilliant day was its mother, the previous night of storm was its father.

THE MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES.

OUR classical Elizabethan poetry and other literature dates only from about the middle of the reign; most of what was produced in the earlier half of it, constrained, harsh, and immature, still bears upon it the impress of the preceding barbarism. Nearly coincident with its commencement is the first appearance of a singular work, *The Mirror for Magistrates*. It is a collection of narratives of the lives of various remarkable English historical per-

sonages, taken, in general, with little more embellishment than their reduction to a metrical form, from the common popular chronicles; and the idea of it appears to have been borrowed from a Latin work of Boccaccio's, which had been translated and versified many years before by Lydgate, under the title of *The Fall of Princes*. It was planned and begun (it is supposed about the year 1557) by Thomas Sackville, afterwards distinguished as a statesman, and ennobled by the titles of Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset. But Sackville soon found himself obliged to relinquish the execution of his extensive design, which contemplated a survey of the whole range of English history from William the Conqueror to the end of the wars of the Roses, to other hands. The two writers to whom he recommended the carrying on of the work were Richard Baldwynne, who was in orders, and had already published a metrical version of the *Song of Solomon*, and George Ferrers, who was a person of some rank, having sat in Parliament in the time of Henry VIII., but who had latterly been chiefly known as a composer of occasional interludes for the diversion of the Court. It is a trait of the times that, although a member of Lincoln's Inn, and known both as a legal and an historical author, Ferrers was in 1552-3 appointed by Edward VI. to preside over the Christmas revels at the royal palace of Greenwich in the office of Lord of Misrule: Stow tells us that upon this occasion he "so pleasantly and wisely behaved himself, that the king had great delight in his pastimes."¹ Baldwynne and Ferrers called other writers to their assistance, among whom were Thomas Churchyard, Phaer, the translator of Virgil, &c.; and the book, in its first form and extent, was published in a quarto volume in 1559. "The work," says Baldwynne, in his Dedication "To the Nobility" of

¹ "On Monday the 4th of January," the Chronicler adds, "the said Lord of Merry Disports came by water to London, and landed at the Tower-wharf, entered the Tower, and then rode through Tower-street, where he was received by Sergeant Vawce, Lord of Misrule to John Mainard, one of the sheriffs of London, and so conducted through the city, with a great company of young lords and gentlemen, to the house of Sir George Barne, Lord Mayor, where he, with the chief of his company, dined, and after had a great banquet, and at his departure the Lord Mayor gave him a standing cup with a cover of silver and gilt, of the value of ten pound, for a reward, and also set a hogshead of wine and a barrel of beer at his gate for his train that followed him. The residue of his gentlemen and servants dined at other aldermen's houses and with the sheriffs, and so departed to the Tower-wharf again, and to the Court by water, to the great commendation of the mayor and aldermen, and highly accepted of the king and council."

a subsequent and enlarged edition of it in 1563, "was begun and part of it printed in Queen Mary's time, but hindered by the Lord Chancellor that then was;¹ nevertheless, through the means of my Lord Stafford,² the first part was licensed, and imprinted the first year of the reign of this our most noble and virtuons Queen, and dedicated then to your honours with this preface. Since which time, although I have been called to another trade of life, yet my good Lord Stafford hath not ceased to call upon me to publish so much as I had gotten at other men's hands; so that, through his lordship's earnest means, I have now set furth another part, containing as little of mine own as the first part doth of other men's." The Mirror for Magistrates immediately acquired and for a considerable time retained great popularity: a third edition of it was published in 1571; a fourth, with the addition of a series of new lives from the fabulous history of the early Britons, by John Higgins, in 1574; a fifth, in 1587; a sixth, with further additions, in 1610, by Richard Nichols, assisted by Thomas Blenerhasset (whose contributions, however, had been separately printed in 1578).³ The copiousness of the plan, into which any narrative might be inserted belonging to either the historical or legendary part of the national annals, and that without any trouble in the way of connection or adaptation, had made the work a receptacle for the contributions of all the ready versifiers of the day, — a common, or parish green, as it were, on which a fair was held to which any one who chose might bring his wares, — or rather a sort of continually growing monument, or *cairn*, to which every man added his stone, or little separate specimen of brick and mortar, who conceived himself to have any skill in building the lofty rhyme. There were scarcely any limits to the size to which the book might have grown, except the mutability of the public taste, which will permit no one thing, good or bad, to go on forever. The Mirror for Magistrates, however, for all its many authors, is of note in the history of our poetry for nothing else which it contains, except the portions contributed by its contriver Sackville, consisting only of one legend, that of Henry, Duke of Buckingham (Richard the Third's famous

¹ He is supposed to mean Dr. Heath, Archbishop of York.

² Henry Lord Stafford, son and heir of Edward, last (Stafford) Duke of Buckingham. He had been allowed, notwithstanding his father's forfeiture, to sit in Parliament as Lord Stafford; and lived till 1562.

³ A reprint of the Mirror for Magistrates, in 2 (sometimes divided into 3) vols 4to., was brought out by the late Mr. Hazlewood in 1815.

accomplice and victim, and grandfather of Lord Stafford, the great patron of the work), and the introduction, or Induction, as it is called, prefixed to that narrative, which however is said to have been originally intended to stand at the head of the whole work. The Induction begins with a picture of winter, which is drawn with vivid colors and a powerful pencil; then follow some brief reflections, suggested by the faded fields and scattered summer flowers, on the instability of all things here below; but suddenly the poet perceives that the night is drawing on faster, and thereupon redoubles his pace; when, he continues,

In black all clad there fell before my face
 A piteous wight, whom woe had all forwast;
 Furth from her eyen the crystal tears outbrast,
 And, sighing sore, her hands she wrong and fold,
 Tearing her hair that ruth was to behold.

Her body small, forwithered and forspent,
 As is the stalk with summer's drought opprest;
 Her weaked face with woful tears besprent,
 Her colour pale, and, as it seemd her best,
 In woe and plaint reposed was her rest;
 And, as the stone that drops of water wears,
 So dented were her cheeks with fall of tears.

I stood aghast, beholding all her plight,
 Tween dread and dolour so distrained in heart,
 That, while my knees upstart with the sight,
 The tears outstreamed for sorrow of her smart.
 But, when I saw no end that could apart
 The deadly dole which she so sore did make,
 With doleful voice then thus to her I spake:

Unwrap thy woes, whatever wight thou be!
 And stint betime to spill thyself with plaint:
 Tell what thou art, and whence; for well I see
 Thou can'st not dure, with sorrow thus attain.
 And with that word, of sorrow, all forfaint,
 She looked up, and, prostrate as she lay,
 With piteous sound, lo! thus she gan to say:

Alas, I wretch, whom thus thou see'st distrained,
 With wasting woes that never shall aslake,
 Sorrow I am; in endless torments pained

Among the Furies in the infernal lake ;
 Where Pluto, God of Hell, so grisly blake,
 Doth hold his throne, and Lethe's deadly taste
 Doth reave remembrance of each thing forepast.

Whence come I am, the dreary destiny
 And luckless lot for to bemoan of those
 Whom fortune in this maze of misery
 Of wretched chance most woeful mirrors chose ;
 That when thou seest how lightly they did lose
 Their pomp, their power, and that they thought most sure,
 Thou may'st soon deem no earthly joy may dure.

Sorrow conducts the poet to the region of departed spirits ; and then follows a long succession of allegoric pictures — including Remorse, Dread (or Fear), Revenge, Misery (that is, Avarice), Care, Sleep, Old Age, Malady, Famine, Death, War, Debate (or Strife), &c. ; all drawn with extraordinary strength of imagination, and with a command of expressive, picturesque, and melodious language, nothing equal or approaching to which had till now been seen in our poetry, except only in Chaucer, — and he can scarcely be said to have written in the same English the capabilities of which were thus brought out by Sackville. Both for his poetical genius, and in the history of the language, Sackville and his two poems in the *Mirror for Magistrates* — more especially this Induction — must be considered as forming the connecting link or bridge between Chaucer and Spenser, between the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Fairy Queen*.

For the sake of affording a means of comparison with the style and manner of the extracts we shall presently have to give from the latter work, we will add here another of Sackville's delineations: —

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 forwast;¹
 Recounting which how would he sob and shriek,
 And to be young again of Jove beseek!

But, an² the cruel fates so fixed be
 That time forepast cannot return again,
 This one request of Jove yet prayed he —
 That, in such withered plight and wretched pain
 As eld, accompanied with her loathsome train,
 Had brought on him, all were it woe and grief,
 He might awhile yet linger forth his lief,

And not so soon descend into the pit,
 Where Death, when he the mortal corpse hath slain,
 With reckless hand in grave doth cover it,
 Thereafter never to enjoy again
 The gladsome light, but, in the ground ylain,
 In depth of darkness waste and wear to nought,
 As he had ne'er into the world been brought.

But who had seen him sobbing how he stood
 Unto himself, and how he would bemoan
 His youth forepast, — as though it wrought him good
 To talk of youth, all were his youth foregone —
 He would have mused, and marvelled much, whereon
 This wretched Age should life desire so fain,
 And knows full well life doth but length his pain.

Crook-backed he was, tooth-shaken, and blear-eyed,
 Went on three feet, and sometime crept on four;
 With old lame bones, that rattled by his side;
 His scalp all piled,³ 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.

Nothing is wanting to Sackville that belongs to force either of conception or of expression. In his own world of the sombre and sad, also, he is almost as great an inventor as he is a colorist; and Spenser has been indebted to him for many hints, as well as for example and inspiration in a general sense: what most marks the immaturity of his style is a certain operose and constrained air, a

¹ Utterly wasted and gone

² If.

³ Peeled, bare, bald.

stiffness and hardness of manner, like what we find in the works of the earliest school of the Italian painters, before Raphael and Michael Angelo arose to convert the art from a painful repetition or mimicry of reality into a process of creation — from the timid slave of nature into her glorified rival. Of the flow and variety the genuine spirit of light and life, that we have in Spenser and Shakspeare, there is little in Sackville; his poetry — ponderous, gloomy, and monotonous — is still oppressed by the shadows of night; and we see that, although the darkness is retiring, the sun has not yet risen.



ORIGIN OF THE REGULAR DRAMA.

FROM the first introduction of dramatic representations in England, probably as early, at least, as the beginning of the twelfth century, down to the beginning of the fifteenth, or perhaps somewhat later, the only species of drama known was that styled the Miracle, or Miracle-play. The subjects of the miracle-plays were all taken from the histories of the Old and New Testament, or from the legends of saints and martyrs; and, indeed, it is probable that their original design was chiefly to instruct the people in religious knowledge. They were often acted as well as written by clergymen, and were exhibited in abbeys, in churches, and in churchyards, on Sundays or other holidays. It appears to have been not till some time after their first introduction that miracle-plays came to be annually represented under the direction and at the expense of the guilds or trading companies of towns, as at Chester and elsewhere. The characters, or *dramatis personæ*, of the miracle-plays, though sometimes supernatural or legendary, were always actual personages, historical or imaginary; and in that respect these primitive plays approached nearer to the regular drama than those by which they were succeeded, — the Morals, or Moral-plays, in which, not a history, but an apologue was represented, and in which the characters were all allegorical. The moral-plays are traced back to the early part of the reign of Henry VI., and they appear to have gradually arisen out of the miracle-plays, in which, of course, characters very nearly approaching in their nature to the impersonated vices and virtues of the new

species of drama must have occasionally appeared. The Devil of the Miracles, for example, would very naturally suggest the Vice of the Morals; which latter, however, it is to be observed, also retained the Devil of their predecessors, who was too amusing and popular a character to be discarded. Nor did the moral-plays altogether put down the miracle-plays: in many of the provincial towns, at least, the latter continued to be represented almost to as late a date as the former. Finally, by a process of natural transition very similar to that by which the sacred and supernatural characters of the religious drama had been converted into the allegorical personifications of the moral-plays, these last, gradually becoming less and less vague and shadowy, at length, about the middle of the sixteenth century, boldly assumed life and reality, giving birth to the first examples of regular tragedy and comedy.

Both moral-plays, however, and even the more ancient miracle plays, continued to be occasionally performed down to the very end of the sixteenth century. One of the last dramatic representations at which Elizabeth was present was a moral-play, entitled *The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality*, which was performed before her majesty in 1600, or 1601. This production was printed in 1602, and was probably written not long before that time: it has been said to have been the joint production of Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene,¹ the last of whom died in 1592. The only three manuscripts of the Chester miracle-plays now extant were written in 1600, 1604, and 1607, most probably while the plays still continued to be acted. There is evidence that the ancient annual miracle-plays were acted at Tewkesbury at least till 1585, at Coventry till 1591, at Newcastle till 1598, and at Kendal down even to the year 1603.²

¹ By Edward Phillips, in his *Theatrum Poetarum*, 1675.

² The *Towneley Mysteries* (so called after the MS. containing them, formerly belonging to Mr. P. Towneley), which are supposed to have been acted at Widkirk Abbey in Yorkshire, have been printed for the Surtees Society, under the care of the Rev. Joseph Hunter and J. Stevenson, Esq., 8vo. Newcastle, 1831; the *Coventry Mysteries*, under the care of J. O. Halliwell, Esq., for the Shakespeare Society, 8vo. Lond. 1841; and the *Chester Mysteries*, for the same society, under the care of Thomas Wright, Esq., vol. i. 8vo. Lond. 1843, and vol. ii. 1847. See also Mr. Wright's *Early Mysteries, and other Latin Poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries*, 8vo. Lond. 1838. Mr. Collier, in a note to his *Hist. of Eng. Dram. Poetry*, ii. 123, 124, observes, that, although miracle-plays were at a very early date called *Mysteries* in France, and the term has been adopted by Warton, Percy, Hawkins, Malone, and other modern writers among ourselves, it was, he appre-

As has been observed, however, by Mr. Collier, the latest and best historian of the English drama, the moral-plays were enabled to keep possession of the stage so long as they did, partly by means of the approaches they had for some time been making to a more improved species of composition, "and partly because, under the form of allegorical fiction and abstract character, the writers introduced matter which covertly touched upon public events, popular prejudices, and temporary opinions."¹ He mentions, in particular the moral entitled *The Three Ladies of London*, printed in 1584, and its continuation, *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, which appeared in 1590 (both by R. W.), as belonging to this class.



INTERLUDES OF JOHN HEYWOOD.

MEANWHILE, long before the earliest of these dates, the ancient drama had, in other hands, assumed wholly a new form. Mr. Collier appears to consider the Interludes of John Heywood, the earliest of which must have been written before 1521, as first exhibiting the moral-play in a state of transition to the regular tragedy and comedy. "John Heywood's dramatic productions," he says, "almost form a class by themselves: they are neither miracle-plays nor moral-plays, but what may be properly and strictly called interludes, a species of writing of which he has a claim to be considered the inventor, although the term interlude was applied generally to theatrical productions in the reign of

hends, unknown in England in that or any similar sense till comparatively a recent period. According to Mr. Wright (*Chester Plays*, Introduction, pp. vii. viii.), while dramatic performances representing the legendary miracles attributed to the saints were properly called *Miracula*, *Miracles*, or *Miracle-plays*, those which were founded on Scripture subjects, and which were intended to set forth the mysteries of revelation, were distinguished by the title of *Mysteria*, or *Mysteries*. "In France," he adds, "the distinction between *Miracles* and *Mysteries* was carefully preserved to the latest times. In England, as early as the fourteenth century, there appears to have been some confusion in the application of these terms, and the name of *Miracles* was given frequently to all kinds of Scripture plays as well as to plays of saints' miracles." This account would seem to refute the conjecture which has been hazarded, that *Mysteries* meant properly dramatic representations by the *trades* of a town, and that the word was not *mysterium*, but *ministerium*, the original of the Italian *mestiere* and the French *métier*, anciently *mestier*.

¹ *Hist. of Dramatic Poetry*, ii. 413.

Edward IV." A notion of the nature of these compositions may be collected from the plot of one of them, *A Merry Play betwene the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and neighbour Pratte*, printed in 1533, of which Mr. Collier gives the following account: "A pardoner and a friar have each obtained leave of the curate to use his church, — the one for the exhibition of his relics, and the other for the delivery of a sermon, — the object of both being the same, that of procuring money. The friar arrives first, and is about to commence his discourse, when the pardoner enters and disturbs him; each is desirous of being heard, and, after many vain attempts by force of lungs, they proceed to force of arms, kicking and cuffing each other unmercifully. The curate, called by the disturbance in his church, endeavors, without avail, to part the combatants; he therefore calls in neighbor Pratte to his assistance, and, while the curate seizes the friar, Pratte undertakes to deal with the pardoner, in order that they may set them in the stocks. It turns out that both the friar and the pardoner are too much for their assailants; and the latter, after a sound drubbing, are glad to come to a composition, by which the former are allowed quietly to depart."¹ Here, then, we have a dramatic fable, or incident at least, conducted not by allegorical personifications, but by characters of real life, which is the essential difference that distinguishes the true tragedy or comedy from the mere moral. Heywood's interludes, however, of which there are two or three more of the same description with this (besides others partaking more of the allegorical character), are all only single acts, or, more properly, scenes, and exhibit, therefore, nothing more than the mere rudiments or embryo of the regular comedy.

UDALL'S RALPH ROISTER DOISTER.

THE earliest English comedy, properly so called, that has yet been discovered, is commonly considered to be that of *Ralph Roister Doister*, the production of Nicholas Udall, an eminent classical scholar in the earlier part of the sixteenth century, and one of the masters, first at Eton, and afterwards at Westminster. Its existence

¹ *Hist. of Dramatic Poetry*, ii. 386.

was unknown till a copy was discovered in 1818, which perhaps (for the title-page is gone) was not printed earlier than 1566, in which year Thomas Hackett is recorded in the register of the Stationers' Company to have had a license for printing a play entitled *Rauf Ruyster Duster*; but the play is quoted in Thomas Wilson's *Rule of Reason*, first printed in 1551, so that it must have been written at least fifteen or sixteen years before.¹ This hypothesis would carry it back to about the same date with the earliest of Heywood's interludes; and it certainly was produced while that writer was still alive and in the height of his popularity. It may be observed that Wilson calls Udall's play an interlude, which would therefore seem to have been at this time the common name for any dramatic composition, as, indeed, it appears to have been for nearly a century preceding. The author himself, however, in his prologue, announces it as a Comedy, or Interlude, and as an imitation of the classical models of Plautus and Terence.

And, in truth, both in character and in plot, *Ralph Roister Doister* has every right to be regarded as a true comedy, showing indeed, in its execution, the rudeness of the age, but in its plan, and in reference to the principle upon which it is constructed, as regular and as complete as any comedy in the language. It is divided into acts and scenes, which very few of the moral-plays are; and, according to Mr. Collier's estimate, the performance could not have been concluded in less time than about two hours and a half, while few of the morals would require more than about an hour for their representation.² The *dramatis personæ* are thirteen in all, nine male and four female; and the two principal ones at least — Ralph himself, a vain, thoughtless, blustering fellow, whose ultimately baffled pursuit of the gay and rich widow Custance forms the action of the piece; and his servant, Matthew Merrygreek, a kind of flesh-and-blood representative of the Vice of the old moral-plays — are strongly discriminated, and drawn altogether with much force and spirit. The story is not very ingeniously involved, but it moves forward through its gradual development, and onwards to the catastrophe, in a sufficiently bustling, lively manner; and some of the situations, though the humor is rather farcical than comic, are very cleverly conceived and managed. The language also may be said to be on the whole racy and characteristic, if not very polished. A few lines from a speech

¹ See Collier, ii. 446.

² *Ibid.* 45.

of one of the widow's handmaidens, Tibet Talkapace, in a conversation with her fellow-servants on the approaching marriage of their masters, may be quoted as a specimen:—

And I heard our Nourse speake of an husbände to-day
 Ready for our mistresse ; a rich man and a gay :
 And we shall go in our French hoodes every day ;
 In our silke cassocks (I warrant you) freshe and gay ;
 In our tricke ferdigews, and billiments of golde,
 Brave in our sutes of chaunge, seven double folde.
 Then shall ye see Tibet, sires, treade the mosse so trimme ;
 Nay, why said I treade ? ye shall see hir glide and swimme,
 Not lumperde, clumperdee, like our spaniell Rig.¹

¹ Udall (the name is otherwise written Uvedale, Owdall, Dowdall, Woodall, and Woddell) died in 1566. He was a zealous Lutheran, and one of the most active writers for the press in his day. We have already had occasion to notice the translation brought out in 1548 under his care of Erasmus's Paraphrase of the New Testament. As an Eton master he appears to have been noted for his severity ; but the most remarkable fact belonging to this part of his history is, that in 1542 he was dismissed on the charge of having been concerned in a robbery, and that in a letter in his own handwriting still preserved among the Cotton MSS. he seems, to a considerable extent at least, to admit his guilt. At this time, too, there is reason to believe that he held a living in the church. The probability is that the robbery, described as being of certain images of silver and other plate belonging to the college, may have been prompted by some impulse of anti-Romanist zeal. On the establishment, at any rate, of the reformed system under Edward, Udall was made first a prebend of Windsor and soon after was presented to the rectory of Calborne in the Isle of Wight ; and at last he was appointed to the head-mastership of Westminster School, from which, however, and probably also from his ecclesiastical preferments, he was again ejected under Mary, soon after the middle of whose reign he died. Upon the discovery of the printed copy of Ralph Roister Doister in 1818 by the Rev. Mr. Briggs, that gentleman had a limited reprint made of it, and then presented the original copy to the library of Eton College, where he had been educated. He did not then know that the author had been one of the masters there, nor who the author was ; nor did Dr. Bliss, when he soon after inserted in his new edition of Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses* the quotation from the play given by Wilson, know that it was from Ralph Roister Doister. Another edition, with notes, was produced in 1821 by Mr. F. Marshall ; and a third reprint by Mr. Thomas White, in his *Old English Drama*, in 1830. But the standard copy is now that edited for the Shakespeare Society in 1847 by Mr. William Durrant Cooper, with an elaborate Life of Udall prefixed, and occasional notes, in which Mr. Cooper states that he has largely availed himself of those accompanying the reprint of 1821. According to Mr. Cooper, the authorship of Ralph Roister Doister was first established by Mr. Cooper, in his *History of English Dramatic Poetry* (1831), vol. ii

GAMMER GURTON'S NEEDLE.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER is in every way a very superior production to Gammer Gurton's Needle, which, before the discovery of Udall's piece, had the credit of being the first regular English comedy. At the same time, it must be admitted that the superior antiquity assigned to Ralph Roister Doister is not very conclusively made out. All that we know with certainty with regard to the date of the play is, that it was in existence in 1551. The oldest edition of Gammer Gurton's Needle is dated 1575; but how long the play may have been composed before that year is uncertain. The title-page of the 1575 edition describes it as "played on the stage not long ago in Christ's College, in Cambridge;" and Warton, on the authority of a manuscript memorandum by Oldys, the eminent antiquary of the early part of the last century, says that it was written and first printed in 1551.¹ Wright also, in his *Historia Histrionica*, first printed in 1669, states it as his opinion that it was written in the reign of Edward VI. In refutation of all this it is alleged that "it could not have been produced so early, because John Still (afterwards bishop of Bath and Wells), the author of it, was not born until 1543; and, consequently, in 1552, taking Warton's latest date, would only have been nine years old."² But the evidence that bishop Still was the author of Gammer Gurton's Needle is exceedingly slight. The play is merely stated on the title-page to have been "made by Mr. S., Master of Arts;" and even if there was, as is asserted, no other Master of Arts of Christ's College whose name began with S at the time when this title-page was printed, the author of the play is not stated to have been of that college, nor, if he were, is it necessary to assume that he was living in 1575. On the whole, therefore, while there is no proof that Ralph Roister Doister is older than the year 1551, it is

¹ *History of English Poetry*, iv. 32. He adds, that it was "soon afterwards acted at Christ's College in Cambridge." And elsewhere (iii. 205) he says, that it was acted in that society about the year 1552. We do not understand how Mr. Collier (ii. 444) collects from a comparison of these two passages that "Warton states in one place that Gammer Gurton's Needle was printed in 1551, and in another that it was not written till 1552." Mr. Collier, it may be perceived, is also mistaken in adding, that Warton seems to have had no other evidence for these assertions than the opinion of Wright, the author of the *Historia Histrionica*.

² Collier, ii. 444.

by no means certain that Gammer Gurton's Needle was not written in that same year.

This "right pithy, pleasant, and merie comedie," as it is designated on the title-page, is, like Udall's play, regularly divided into acts and scenes, and, like it too, is written in rhyme, — the language and versification being, on the whole, perhaps rather more easy than flowing, — a circumstance which, more than any external evidence that has been produced, would incline us to assign it to a somewhat later date. But it is in all respects a very tame and poor performance, — the plot, if so it can be called, meagre to insipidity and silliness, the characters only a few slightly distinguished varieties of the lowest life, and the dialogue in general as feeble and undramatic as the merest monotony can make it: Its merriment is of the coarsest and most boisterous description, even where it is not otherwise offensive; but the principal ornament wherewith the author endeavors to enliven his style is a brutal filth and grossness of expression, which is the more astounding when we consider that the piece was the production, in all probability, of a clergyman at least, if not of one who afterwards became a bishop, and that it was certainly represented before a learned and grave university. There is nothing of the same high seasoning in Ralph Roister Doister, though that play seems to have been intended only for the amusement of a common London audience. The Second Act of Gammer Gurton's Needle is introduced by a song,

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good, &c.

which is the best thing in the whole play, and which is well known from having been quoted by Warton, who describes it as the earliest *chanson à boire*, or drinking-ballad, of any merit in the language; and observes that "it has a vein of ease and humor which we should not expect to have been inspired by the simple beverage of those times." But this song is most probably not by the author of the play: it appears to be merely a portion of a popular song of the time, which is found elsewhere complete, and has recently been so printed, from a MS. of the sixteenth century, by Dr. Dyce, in his edition of Skelton.¹ We will give, as a specimen of the language

¹ See Account of Skelton and his Writings, vol. i. pp. 7-9. Mr. Dyce states that the MS. from which he has printed the song is certainly of an earlier date than the oldest known edition of the play (1575).

of Gammer Gurton's Needle, the introductory speech to the first Act, which is put into the mouth of a character called Diccon the Bedlam, that is, one of those mendicants who affected a sort of half-madness, and were known by the name of Bedlam Beggars: ¹ —

Many a myle have I walked, divers and sundry waies,
 And many a good man's house have I bin at in my dais :
 Many a gossip's cup in my tyme have I tasted,
 And many a broche and spyt have I both turned and basted .
 Many a peece of bacon have I had out of thir balkes,
 In ronnyng over the countrey with long and were walkes ;
 Yet came my foote never within those doore cheekes,
 To seek flesh or fysh, garlyke, onyons, or leekes,
 That ever I saw a sorte in such a plyght,
 As here within this house appeareth to my syght.
 There is howlyng and schowlyng, all cast in a dumpe,
 With whewling and pewling, as though they had lost a trump :
 Syghing and sobbing, they weepe and they wayle ;
 I marvel in my mynd what the devil they ayle.
 The olde trot syts groning, with alas and alas,
 And Tib wringes her hands, and takes on in worse case ;
 With poore Cocke, theyr boye, they be dryven in such fyts
 I fear mee the folkes be not well in theyr wyts.
 Aske them what they ayle, or who brought them in this staye ?
 They aunswer not at all, but alacke and welaway !
 When I saw it booted not, out at doores I hyed mee,
 And caught a slyp of bacon, when I saw none spyed mee,
 Which I intend not far hence, unles my purpose fayle,
 Shall serve for a shoing horne to draw on two pots of ale

MISOGONUS.

PROBABLY of earlier date than Gammer Gurton's Needle is another example of the regular drama, which, like Ralph Roister

¹ Diccon is the ancient abbreviation of Richard. It may be noticed that there is an entry in the Stationers' Books of a play entitled Diccon of Bedlam, under the year 1563 (see Extracts from the Registers of the Stationers' Company, edited by Mr. Collier for the Shakespeare Society, 1848, vol. i. p. 69), which is in all probability the same piece we are now considering. If so, this fact affords an additional presumption that Gammer Gurton's Needle was printed, or at least written, some years before the date of the earliest edition of it now extant.

Doister, has been but lately recovered, a play entitled *Misogonus*, the only copy of which is in manuscript, and is dated 1577. An allusion, however, in the course of the dialogue, would seem to prove that the play must have been composed about the year 1560. To the prologue is appended the name of Thomas Rychardes, who has therefore been assumed to be the author. The play, as contained in the manuscript, consists only of the unusual number of four acts, but the story, nevertheless, appears to be completed. For a further account of *Misogonus* we must refer the reader to Mr. Collier's very elaborate analysis ;¹ only remarking that the piece is written throughout in rhyming quatrains, not couplets, and that the language would indicate it to be of about the same date with *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. It contains a song, which for fluency and spirit may very well bear to be compared with the drinking-song in that drama. Neither in the contrivance and conduct of the plot, however, nor in the force with which the characters are exhibited, does it evince the same free and skilful hand with *Ralph Roister Doister*, although it is interesting for some of the illustrations which it affords of the manners of the time. One of the *dramatis personæ*, in particular, who is seldom absent from the stage, *Cacurgus*, the buffoon or fool kept by the family whose fortunes form the subject of the piece, must, as Mr. Collier remarks, "have been a very amusing character in his double capacity of rustic simpleton and artful mischief-maker." "There are few pieces," Mr. Collier adds, "in the whole range of our ancient drama which display the important character of the domestic fool in anything like so full and clear a light."



CHRONICLE HISTORIES. — BALE'S KYNGE JOHAN, ETC.

IF the regular drama thus made its first appearance among us in the form of comedy, the tragic muse was at least not far behind. There is some ground for supposing, indeed, that one species of the graver drama of real life may have begun to emerge rather sooner than comedy out of the shadowy world of the old allegorical representations ; that, namely, which was long distinguished from both

¹ *Hist. Dram. Poet.*, ii. 463-481.

comedy and tragedy by the name of History, or Chronicle History, consisting, to adopt Mr. Collier's definition, "of certain passages or events detailed by annalists put into a dramatic form, often without regard to the course in which they happened; the author sacrificing chronology, situation, and circumstance, to the superior object of producing an attractive play."¹ Of what may be called at least the transition from the moral-play to the history, we have an example in Bale's lately recovered drama of *Kynge Johan*,² written in all probability some years before the middle of the sixteenth century, in which, while many of the characters are still allegorical abstractions, others are real personages; King John himself, Pope Innocent, Cardinal Pandulphus, Stephen Langton, and other historical figures, moving about in odd intermixture with such mere notional spectres as the Widowed Britannia, Imperial Majesty, Nobility, Clergy, Civil Order, Treason, Verity, and Sedition. The play is accordingly described by Mr. Collier, the editor, as occupying an intermediate place between moralities and historical plays; and "it is," he adds, "the only known existing specimen of that species of composition of so early a date." The other productions that are extant of the same mixed character are all of the latter half of the century; such as that entitled *Tom Tiler and his Wife*, supposed to have been first printed about 1578, although the oldest known edition is a reprint dated 1661; *The Conflict of Conscience* (called a comedy), by Nathaniel Woods, minister of Norwich, 1581; &c.³

TRAGEDY OF GORBODUC.—BLANK VERSE.

BUT the era of genuine tragedies and historical plays had already commenced some years before these last-mentioned pieces saw the

¹ Hist. Dram. Poet., ii. p. 414.

² Published by the Camden Society, 4to. 1838, under the care of Mr. Collier.

³ See an account of these and other pieces of the same kind in Collier, Hist. Dram. Poet., ii. 353, &c. In assigning the first publication of *Tom Tiler and his Wife* to the year 1578, Mr. Collier professes to follow Ritson (*Ancient Songs*, ii. 31, edit. 1829), who, he observes, was no doubt as correct as usual. But, whatever may have been Ritson's correctness in matters of mere transcription, it is proper to note that in the present case he merely offers a conjecture; so that we are left to depend, not upon his correctness, but upon his sagacity. The dependence to be placed upon that is certainly not great.

light. On the 18th of January, 1562, was "shown before the Queen's most excellent Majesty," as the old title-pages of the printed play inform us, "in her Highness' Court of Whitehall, by the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple," the Tragedy of Gorboduc, otherwise entitled the Tragedy of Ferrex and Porrex, the production of the same Thomas Sackville who has already engaged our attention as by far the most remarkable writer in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, and of Thomas Norton, who is said to have been a puritan clergyman, and who had already acquired a poetic reputation, though in a different province of the land of song, as one of the coadjutors of Sternhold and Hopkins in their metrical version of the Psalms. On the title-page of the first edition, printed in 1565, which, however, was surreptitious, it is stated that the three first acts were written by Norton, and the two last by Sackville; and, although this announcement was afterwards withdrawn, it was never expressly contradicted, and it is not improbable that it may have a general foundation of truth. It must be confessed, however, that no change of style gives any indication which it is easy to detect of a succession of hands; and that, judging by this criterion, we should rather be led to infer that, in whatever way the two writers contrived to combine their labors, whether by the one retouching and improving what the other had rough-sketches, or by the one taking the quieter and humbler, the other the more impassioned, scenes or portions of the dialogue, they pursued the same method throughout the piece. Charles Lamb expresses himself "willing to believe that Lord Buckhurst supplied the more vital parts."¹ At the same time he observes that "the style of this old play is stiff and cumbersome, like the dresses of its times;" and that, though there may be flesh and blood underneath, we cannot get at it. In truth, *Gorboduc* is a drama only in form. In spirit and manner it is wholly undramatic. The story has no dramatic capabilities, no evolution either of action or of character, although it affords some opportunities for description and eloquent declamation; neither was there anything of specially dramatic aptitude in the genius of Sackville (to whom we may safely attribute whatever is most meritorious in the composition), any more than there would appear to have been in Spenser or in Milton, illustrious as they both stand in the front line of the poets of their country and of the world. *Gorboduc*, accordingly, is a most unaf-

¹ *Specimens of Eng. Dram. Poets*, i. 6 (edit. of 1835).

fecting and uninteresting tragedy; as would also be the noblest book of the Fairy Queen or of Paradise Lost — the portion of either poem that soars the highest — if it were to be attempted to be transformed into a drama by merely being divided into acts and scenes, and cut up into the outward semblance of dialogue. In whatever abundance all else of poetry might be outpoured, the spirit of dialogue and of dramatic action would not be there. Gorboduc, however, though a dull play, is in some other respects a remarkable production for the time. The language is not dramatic, but it is throughout singularly correct, easy, and perspicuous; in many parts it is even elevated and poetical; and there are some passages of strong painting not unworthy of the hand to which we owe the Induction to the Legend of the Duke of Buckingham in the Mirror for Magistrates. The piece has accordingly won much applause in quarters where there was little feeling of the true spirit of dramatic writing as the exposition of passion in action, and where the chief thing demanded in a tragedy was a certain orderly pomp of expression, and monotonous respectability of sentiment, to fill the ear, and tranquillize rather than excite and disturb the mind. Sir Philip Sidney, while he finds fault with Gorboduc for its violation of the unities of time and place, declares it to be “full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca in his style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of poesy.” It grieves him, he adds, that it is so “very defectuous in the circumstances,” — that is, the unities, — because that must prevent it from remaining forever “as an exact model of all tragedies.”¹ Rymer terms it “a fable better turned for tragedy than any on this side the Alps;” and affirms that “it might have been a better direction to Shakspeare and Ben Jonson than any guide they have had the luck to follow.”² Pope has delivered his opinion to the like effect, telling us that “the writers of the succeeding age might have improved by copying from this drama a propriety in the sentiments and dignity in the sentences, and an unaffected perspicuity of style, which are essential to tragedy.” One peculiarity of the more ancient national drama retained in Gorboduc is the introduction, before every act, of a piece of machinery called the Dumb Show, in which was shadowed forth, by a sort of allegorical exhibition, the part of the story that was imme-

¹ Defence of Poesy, p. 84 (edit. of 1810).

² Short View of Tragedy, p. 84.

diately to follow. This custom survived on the English stage down to a considerably later date : the reader may remember that Shakspeare, though he rejected it in his own dramas, has introduced the play acted before the King and Queen in Hamlet by such a prefigurative dumb show.¹

Another expedient, which Shakspeare has also on two occasions made use of, namely, the assistance of a chorus, is also adopted in Gorboduc : but rather by way of mere decoration, and to keep the stage from being at any time empty, as in the old Greek drama, than to carry forward or even to explain the action, as in Henry the Fifth and Pericles. It consists, to quote the description given by Warton, "of Four Ancient and Sage Men of Britain, who regularly close every act, the last excepted, with an ode in long-lined stanzas, drawing back the attention of the audience to the substance of what has just passed, and illustrating it by recapitulatory moral reflections and poetical or historical allusions."² These effusions of the chorus are all in rhyme, as being intended to be of the same lyrical character with those in the Greek plays ; but the dialogue in the rest of the piece is in blank verse, of the employment of which in dramatic composition it affords the earliest known instance in the language. The first modern experiment in this "strange metre," as it was then called, had, as has already been noticed, been made only a few years before by Lord Surrey, in his translation of the Second and Fourth Books of the *Æneid*, which was published in 1557, but must have been written more than ten years before, Surrey having been put to death in January 1547. In the mean time the new species of verse had been cultivated in several original compositions by Nicholas Grimoald, from whom, in the opinion of Warton, the rude model exhibited by Surrey received "new strength, elegance, and modulation."³ Grimoald's pieces in blank verse were first printed in 1557, along with Surrey's translation, in Tottel's collection entitled *Songs and*

¹ Besides the original 1565 edition of *Gorboduc*, there was another in 1569 or 1570, and a third in 1590. It was again reprinted in 1736 ; and it has also appeared in all the editions of Dodsley's *Old Plays*, 1744, 1780, and 1825. It has now been edited for the Shakspearian Society by Mr. W. D. Cooper, in the same volume with *Ralph Roister Doister*. Mr. Cooper has shown that the edition of 1590 was not, as has been supposed, an exact reprint of that of 1565. He has also given us elaborate biographies both of Norton and of Sackville, in the latter of which he has shown that Sackville, who died suddenly at the Council-table in 1608, was born in 1536, and not in 1527, as commonly supposed.

² *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, iv. 181.

³ *Ibid.* iii. 346.

Sonnets of Uncertain Authors; and we are not aware that there was any more English blank verse written or given to the world till the production of *Gorboduc*. In that case, Sackville would stand as our third writer in this species of verse; in the use of which also he may be admitted to have surpassed Grimoald fully as much as the latter improved upon Surrey. Indeed, it may be said to have been *Gorboduc* that really established blank verse in the language; for its employment from the time of the appearance of that tragedy became common in dramatic composition, while in other kinds of poetry, notwithstanding two or three early attempts, such as Gascoigne's *Steel Glass*, in 1576, Aske's *Elizabetha Triumphans*, in 1588, and Vallans's *Tale of Two Swans*, in 1590, it never made head against rhyme, nor acquired any popularity, till it was brought into repute by the *Paradise Lost*, published a full century after Sackville's play. It is remarkable that blank verse is never mentioned or alluded to by Sir Philip Sidney in *His Defence of Poesy*, which could not have been written more than a few years before 1586, the date of Sidney's death, at the age of thirty-two. Yet he was acquainted with *Gorboduc*, as it appears; and in one part of his tract he treats expressly on the subject of versification, of which, he says, "there are two sorts — the one ancient, the other modern: the ancient marked the quantity of each syllable, and, according to that, framed his verse; the modern observing only number, with some regard to the accent, the chief life of it standeth in that like sounding of the words which we call rhyme."¹ Even in dramatic composition the use of blank verse appears to have been for some time confined to pieces not intended for popular representation. *Gorboduc*, as we have seen, was brought out before the Queen at Whitehall; and although, after that example, Mr. Collier observes, "blank verse was not unfrequently employed in performances written expressly for the court and for representation before select audiences, many years elapsed before this heroic measure without rhyme was adopted on the public stages of London."²

¹ *Defence of Poesy*, p. 98.

² *Hist. Dram. Poet.*, ii. 48b.

OTHER EARLY DRAMAS.

WITHIN a fortnight after the first performance of *Gorboduc*, it is recorded that another historical play, entitled *Julius Cæsar*, was acted at court; but of this piece — affording “the earliest instance on record,” Mr. Collier apprehends, “in which events from the Roman history were dramatized in English”¹ — nothing is known beyond the name. To about the same time, or it may be even a year or two earlier, is probably to be assigned another early drama, founded on the story of *Romeo and Juliet*; as is inferred from the assertion of Arthur Brooke, in an advertisement prefixed to his poem upon that subject printed in 1562, that he had seen “the same argument lately set forth on the stage.” But whether this was a regular tragedy, or only a moral-play, we have no data for conjecturing. “From about this date,” says Mr. Collier, “until shortly after the year 1570, the field, as far as we have the means of judging, seems to have been pretty equally divided between the later morals, and the earlier attempts in tragedy, comedy, and history. In some pieces of this date (as well as subsequently) we see endeavors made to reconcile or combine the two different modes of writing; but morals afterwards generally gave way, and yielded the victory to a more popular and more intelligible species of performance. The license to James Burbage and others in 1574 mentions comedies, tragedies, interludes, and stage-plays; and in the act of common council against their performance in the city, in the following year, theatrical performances are designated as interludes, tragedies, comedies, and shows; including much more than the old miracle-plays, or more recent moral-plays, which would be embraced by the words interludes, shows, and even stage-plays, but to which the terms tragedies, and comedies, found in both instruments, could not be so properly applicable.”² We may add,

¹ Hist. Dram. Poet., ii. 415.

² Hist. ii. 417. Mr. Collier adds in a note, as an instance of how the names designating the different kinds of plays were still misapplied, or what vague notions were as yet attached to them, that, so late as in 1578, Thomas Lupton called his moral of *All for Money* both a tragedy and a comedy. He calls it in the title “a moral and pitiful comedy”; and in the prologue, “a pleasant tragedy” — but he seems, nevertheless, to use the words in their common acceptance, — meaning by these quaint phrases that the piece is a mixture of tragedy and comedy. The catastrophe is sufficiently tragical: Judas, in the last scene, coming in, says the stage direction, “like a damned soul in black, painted with flames of fire and

in order to finish the subject here, that in the license granted by James I., in 1603, to Burbage, Shakspeare, and their associates, they are authorized to play "comedies, tragedies, histories, interludes, morals, pastorals, stage-plays, and such other like;" and that exactly the same enumeration is found in the patent granted to the Prince Palatine's players in 1612; in a new patent granted to Burbage's Company in 1620;¹ and also in Charles I.'s patent to Hemings and Condell in 1625. Morals, properly so called, however, had disappeared from the stage long before this last date, though something of their peculiar character still survived in the pageant or masque. It may be observed that there is no mention of morals, any more than of miracle-plays, in the catalogue of the several species of dramatic entertainments which Shakspeare has put into the mouth of Polonius in Hamlet, and in which he seems to glance slyly at the almost equally extended string of distinctions in the royal patents.

Of the greater number of the plays that are recorded to have been produced in the first twenty years after the appearance of Gorboduc, only the names have been preserved, from which it cannot in all cases be certainly determined to what class the piece belonged. From the lists, extracted from the accounts of the Master of the Revels, of those represented before the court between 1568 and 1580, and which no doubt were mostly the same that were exhibited in the common playhouses, it appears probable that, out of fifty-two, about eighteen were founded upon subjects of ancient history or fable; twenty-one upon modern history, romances,

with a fearful vizard," followed by Dives, "with such like apparel as Judas hath", while Damnation (another of the *dramatis personæ*), pursuing them, drives them before him, and they pass away, "making a pitiful noise," into perdition. A few years before, in like manner, Thomas Preston had called his play of Cambyses, King of Persia, which is a mixture of moral and history, "a lamentable tragedy full of pleasant mirth" on the title-page, and in the running title A Comedie of King Cambises. Another play of about the same date, and of similar character, that of Appius and Virginia, by R. B., is styled "a tragical comedy." At a still earlier period, both in our own and in other languages, the terms tragedy and comedy were applied to other narrative compositions as well as to those in a dramatic form. The most illustrious instance of such a use of the term comedy is its employment by Dante for the title of his great poem, because—as he has himself expressly told us in his dedication of the Paradise to Cane della Scala, Prince of Verona—the story, although it began sadly, ended prosperously. Even the narratives in the Mirror for Magistrates, published, as we have seen, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, were still called tragedies.

¹ See it, printed for the first time, in Collier, i. 416.

and stories of a more general kind; and that, of the remainder, seven were comedies, and six morals.¹ "Of these fifty-two dramatic productions," Mr. Collier observes, "not one can be said to have survived, although there may be reason to believe that some of them formed the foundation of plays acted at a later period." Among the very few original plays of this period that have come down to us is one entitled *Damon and Pytheas*, which was acted before the Queen at Christ Church, Oxford, in September, 1566, and was the production of Richard Edwards, who, in the general estimation of his contemporaries, seems to have been accounted the greatest dramatic genius of his day, at least in the comic style. His *Damon and Pytheas* does not justify their laudation to a modern taste; it is a mixture of comedy and tragedy, between which it would be hard to decide whether the grave writing or the gay is the rudest and dullest. The play is in rhyme, but some variety is produced by the measure or length of the line being occasionally changed. Mr. Collier thinks that the notoriety Edwards attained may probably have been in great part owing to the novelty of his subjects; *Damon and Pytheas* being one of the earliest attempts to bring stories from profane history upon the English stage. Edwards, however, besides his plays, wrote many other things in verse, some of which have an ease, and even an elegance, that neither Surrey himself nor any other writer of that age has excelled. Most of these shorter compositions are contained in the miscellany called the *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, which, indeed, is stated on the title-page to have been "devised and written for the most part" by Edwards, who had, however, been dead ten years when the first edition appeared in 1576. Among them are the very beautiful and tender lines, which have been often reprinted, in illustration of Terence's apophthegm, —

"Amantium iræ amoris redintegratio est ;"

or, as it is here rendered in the burden of each stanza, —

"The falling out of faithful friends renewing is of love."

¹ See the lists in Collier, iii. 24, 25. But compare the list given by Mr. P. Cunningham at the end of his *Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court in the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I.*, printed for the Shakespeare Society, 8vo. Lond. 1842. Some items in Mr. Collier's classification may be questioned. For example, the story of Titus and Gisippus is not a "classical subject drawn from ancient history or fable."

Edwards, who, towards the end of his life, was appointed one of the gentlemen of the Chapel Royal and master of the queen's singing-boys, "united," says Warton, "all those arts and accomplishments which minister to popular pleasantry: he was the first fiddle, the most fashionable sonneteer, the readiest rhymer, and the most facetious mimic, of the court."¹ Another surviving play produced during this interval is the Tragedy of Tancred and Gismund, founded upon Boccaccio's well-known story, which was presented before Elizabeth at the Inner Temple in 1568, the five acts of which it consists being severally written by five gentlemen of the society, of whom one, the author of the third act, was Christopher Hatton, afterwards the celebrated dancing lord chancellor. The play, however, was not printed till 1592, when Robert Wilmot, the writer of the fifth act, gave it to the world, as the title-page declares, "newly revived, and polished according to the decorum of these days." The meaning of this announcement, Mr. Collier conceives to be, that the piece was in the first instance composed in rhyme; but, rhymed plays having by the year 1592 gone out of fashion even on the public stage, Wilmot's reviving and polishing consisted chiefly in cutting off many of the "tags to the lines," or turning them differently. The tragedy of Tancred and Gismund, which, like Gorboduc, has a dumb show at the commencement and a chorus at the close of every act, is, he observes, "the earliest English play extant the plot of which is known to be derived from an Italian novel."² To this earliest stage in the history of the regular drama belong, finally, some plays translated or adapted from the ancient and from foreign languages, which doubtless also contributed to excite and give an impulse to the national taste and genius in this department. There is extant an old English printed version, in rhyme, of the *Andria* of Terence, which, although without date, is believed to have been published before 1530; and the moral, or interlude, called *Jack Juggler*, which is founded upon the *Amphitruo* of Plautus, appears from internal evidence to have been written in the reign of Edward VI. or Mary, though not printed till after the accession of Elizabeth. These early and very rude attempts were followed by a series of translations of the tragedies of Seneca, all likewise in rhyme, the first of which, the *Troas*, by Jasper Heywood, son of the celebrated John Heywood, was published in 1559; the second, the *Thyestes*,

¹ Hist. of Eng. Poet., iv. 110.

² Hist. Dram. Poet., iii. 13.

also by Heywood, in 1560; the third, the *Hercules Furens*, by the same hand, in 1561; the fourth, the *Œdipus*, by Alexander Nevyle, in 1563; the fifth and sixth, the *Medea* and the *Agamemnon*, by John Studley, in 1566. The *Octavia*, by Thomas Nuce, was entered on the Stationers' Books in the same year, but no copy of that date is now known to exist. Versions of the *Hyppolytus* and the *Hercules Oetaeus* by Studley, and of the *Thebais* by Thomas Newton, were added when the whole were republished together, in 1581, under the title of "Seneca his Ten Tragedies translated into English." Of the authors of these translations, Heywood and Studley in particular "have some claim," as Mr. Collier remarks, "to be viewed in the light of original dramatic poets; they added whole scenes and choruses wherever they thought them necessary." But Heywood and his coadjutors in this undertaking do not appear to have had any view of bringing Seneca upon the English stage; nor is it probable that any of their translated dramas were ever acted. In 1566, however, *The Supposes*, a prose translation by George Gascoigne from *Gli Suppositi* of Ariosto, and another play, in blank verse, entitled *Jocasta*, taken from the *Phænissæ* of Euripides, by Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmarsh, were both represented at Gray's Inn. The *Jocasta* was, therefore, the second English play written in blank verse. "It is," says Warton, "partly a paraphrase and partly an abridgment of the Greek tragedy. There are many omissions, retrenchments, and transpositions. The chorus, the characters, and the substance of the story are entirely retained, and the tenor of the dialogue is often preserved through whole scenes. Some of the beautiful odes of the Greek chorus are neglected, and others substituted in their places, newly written by the translators."¹ These substitutions, however, sometimes display considerable poetic talent; and the versification throughout the piece, both in the old metre (in which the choral passages are written) and in the new, flows with a facility and smoothness which, as contrasted with any English verse written twenty years before, indicates a rate of progress during that space, in the subsidence of the language into comparative regularity of grammatical and syntactical forms, which is very surprising. Warton remarks, as a proof of the rapidity with which the work of refinement or change went on in the language at this time, that "in the second edition of this play, printed again with

¹ *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, iv. 197.

Gascoigne's poems in 1587, it was thought necessary to affix marginal explanations of many words, not long before in common use, but now become obsolete and unintelligible." In the present instance this was done, as the author tells us, at the request of a lady, who did not understand "poetical words or terms." But it was a practice occasionally followed down to a much later date. To all the quarto editions, for example, of Joshua Sylvester's metrical translation of Du Bartas (1605, 1608, 1613) there is appended "A brief Index, explaining most of the hardest words scattered through this whole work, for ease of such as are least exercised in those kind of readings." It consists of thirty double-columned pages, and may contain about six hundred words.¹



SECOND STAGE OF THE REGULAR DRAMA.—PEELE, GREENE.

It thus appears that numerous pieces entitled by their form to be accounted as belonging to the regular drama had been produced before the year 1580; but nevertheless no dramatic work had yet

¹ Most of these are proper names: many others are scientific terms. Among the explanations are the following:—*Annals*, Histories from year to year.—*Anchises' pheeere*, Venus (*pheeere* itself is not explained, and may therefore be supposed to have been still in common use).—*Bacchanalian frows*, Women-priests of Bacchus, the God of Cups.—*Barr-geese* and *Barnacles*, a kind of fowls that grow of rotten trees and broken ships.—*Demain*, possessions of inheritance, time out of mind continued in the possession of the lord.—*Duel*, single combat.—*Metaphysical*, supernatural.—*Poetasters*, base, counterfeit, unlearned, witless, and wanton poets, that pester the world either with idle vanities or odious villainies.—*Patagons*, Indian cannibals, such as eat man's flesh.—*Scaliger, Josephus*, now living, a Frenchman admirable in all languages for all manner of learning (so in edition of 1613, though Jos. Scaliger died in 1609). These explanatory vocabularies are sometimes, also, found appended to prose works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Mr. Hallam, in a note to his Introduction to the Literature of Europe, vol. iii. p. 370, has observed that, in Pratt's edition of Bishop Hall's works, we have a glossary of obsolete or unusual words, employed by him, which amount to more than 1100, some of them Gallicisms, but the greater part of Latin or Greek origin. This book was published after the Restoration. By that time we see the difficulty ordinary readers had was, to understand the old words that were going out of fashion; whereas, that of their ancestors, in the days of Elizabeth and James, was to understand the new words that were flowing so fast into their mother-tongue. This little circumstance is very curiously significant, not only of the opposite directions in which the language was moving at the two periods, but of the difference, also, in other respects, between an age of advancement and hope, and one of weariness, retrogression, and decrepitude.

been written which can be said to have taken its place in our literature, or to have almost any interest for succeeding generations on account of its intrinsic merits and apart from its mere antiquity. The next ten years disclose a new scene. Within that space a crowd of dramatists arose whose writings still form a portion of our living poetry, and present the regular drama, no longer only painfully struggling into the outward shape proper to that species of composition, but having the breath of life breathed into it, and beginning to throb and stir with the pulsations of genuine passion. We can only here shortly notice some of the chief names in this numerous company of our early dramatists, properly so called. One to whom much attention has been recently directed is George Peele, the first of whose dramatic productions, *The Arraignment of Paris*, a sort of masque or pageant which had been represented before the queen, was printed anonymously in 1584. But Peele's most celebrated drama is his *Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe*, first published in 1599, two or three years after the author's death. This play Mr. Campbell has called "the earliest fountain of pathos and harmony that can be traced in our dramatic poetry;" and he adds, "there is no such sweetness of versification and imagery to be found in our blank verse anterior to Shakspeare."¹ *David and Bethsabe* was, in all probability, written not anterior to Shakspeare, but after he had been at least six or seven years a writer for the stage, and had produced perhaps ten or twelve of his plays, including some of those in which, to pass over all other and higher things, the music of the verse has ever been accounted the most perfect and delicious. We know at least that *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II.*, *King John*, and *Richard III.*, were all written and acted, if not all printed, before Peele's play was given to the world.² But, independently of this consideration, it must be admitted that the best of Peele's blank verse, though smooth and flowing, and sometimes tastefully decorated with the embellishments of a learned and imitative fancy, is both deficient in richness or even variety of modulation, and without any pretensions to the force and fire of original poetic genius. It may be true, nevertheless, as is conceded by Mr. Collier, one of the modern critics with whom Peele has not found so much favor as with Mr. Camp-

¹ *Spec. of Eng. Poet.*, i. 140.

² This is established by the often quoted passage in *Meres's Wit's Treasury*, published in 1598, in which these and others of Shakspeare's plays are enumerated.

bell and with Mr. Dyce, to whom we are indebted for the first collected edition of his plays,¹ that "he had an elegance of fancy, a gracefulness of expression, and a melody of versification which, in the earlier part of his career, was scarcely approached."² Another of Peele's pieces, entitled *The Old Wives' Tale*, a Pleasant conceited Comedy, printed in 1595, has excited some curiosity from a resemblance it bears in the story, though in little or nothing else, to Milton's *Masque of Comus*.³ Contemporary with Peele was Robert Greene, the author of five plays, besides one written in conjunction with a friend. Greene died in 1592, and he appears only to have begun to write for the stage about 1587. Mr. Collier thinks that, in facility of expression, and in the flow of his blank verse, he is not to be placed below Peele. But Greene's most characteristic attribute is his turn for merriment, of which Peele in his dramatic productions shows little or nothing. His comedy, or farce rather, is no doubt usually coarse enough, but the turbid stream flows at least freely and abundantly. Among his plays is a curious one on the subject of the *History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, which is supposed to have been written in 1588 or 1589, though first published in 1594. This, however, is not so much a story of diablerie as of mere legerdemain, mixed, like all the rest of Greene's pieces, with a good deal of farcical incident and dialogue; even the catastrophe, in which one of the characters is carried off to hell, being so managed as to impart no supernatural interest to the drama.⁴

¹ *Dramatic Works of George Peele (with his Poems)*, by the Rev. Alexander Dyce, 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1829.

² Mr. Hallam's estimate is, perhaps, not quite so high: "Peele has some command of imagery, but in every other quality it seems to me that he has scarce any claim to honor; and I doubt if there are three lines together in any of his plays that could be mistaken for Shakspeare's. . . . The versification of Peele is much inferior to that of Marlow; and, though sometimes poetical, he seems rarely dramatic." — *Lit. of Eur.* ii. 273.

³ This was first pointed out by Isaac Reed in the appendix to his edition of *Baker's Biographia Dramatica*, 1782, vol. ii. p. 441. The subject has been examined at length by Warton in his *Minor Poems of Milton*, pp. 135, 136; and again, pp. 575–577 (2d edit. Lond. 1791). He observes, "That Milton had an eye on this ancient drama, which might have been the favorite of his early youth, perhaps may be at least affirmed with as much credibility as that he conceived the *Paradise Lost* from seeing a mystery at Florence, written by Andreini, a Florentine, in 1617, entitled *Adamo*."

⁴ Greene's plays are collected under the title of *The Dramatic Works of Robert Greene*, to which are added his *Poems*; with some *Account of the Author, and Notes*; by the Rev. Alexander Dyce; 2 vols. 8vo. 1831.

MARLOW.

OF a different and far higher order of poetical and dramatic character is another play of this date upon a similar subject, the *Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, by Christopher Marlow. Marlow died at an early age in 1593, the year after Greene, and three or four years before Peele. He had been a writer for the stage at least since 1586, in which year, or before, was brought out the play of *Tamburlaine the Great*, his claim to the authorship of which has been conclusively established by Mr. Collier, who has further shown that this was the first play written in blank verse that was exhibited on the public stage.¹ "Marlow's mighty line" has been celebrated by Ben Jonson in his famous verses on Shakspeare; but Drayton, the author of the *Polyolbion*, has extolled him in the most glowing description,—in words the most worthy of the theme:—

Next Marlow, bathed in the Thespian springs,
Had in him those brave translunary things
That the first poets had: his raptures were
All air and fire, which made his verses clear:
For that fine madness still he did retain,
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.²

Marlow is, by nearly universal admission, our greatest dramatic writer before Shakspeare. He is frequently, indeed, turgid and bombastic, especially in his earliest play, *Tamburlaine the Great*, which has just been mentioned, where his fire, it must be confessed, sometimes blazes out of all bounds and becomes a mere wasting conflagration—sometimes only raves in a furious storm of sound, filling the ear without any other effect. But in his fits of truer inspiration, all the magic of terror, pathos, and beauty flashes from him in streams. The gradual accumulation of the agonies of Faustus, in the concluding scene of that play, as the moment of his awful fate comes nearer and nearer, powerfully drawn as it is, is far from being one of those coarse pictures of wretchedness that merely oppress us with horror: the most admirable skill is applied throughout in balancing that emotion by sympathy and even respect for the sufferer,—

¹ *Hist. Dram. Poet.*, iii. pp. 107–126.

² *Elegy*, "To my dearly beloved friend Henry Reynolds, Of Poets and Poesy."

——— for he was a scholar once admired
For wondrous knowledge in our German schools, —

and yet without disturbing our acquiescence in the justice of his doom; till we close the book, saddened, indeed, but not dissatisfied, with the pitying but still tributary and almost consoling words of the Chorus on our hearts, —

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel-bough
That sometime grew within this learned man.

Still finer, perhaps, is the conclusion of another of Marlow's dramas—his tragedy of Edward the Second. "The reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward," says Charles Lamb, "furnished hints which Shakspeare scarce improved in his Richard the Second; and the death-scene of Marlow's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted."¹ Much splendor of poetry, also, is expended upon the delineation of Barabas, in *The Rich Jew of Malta*; but Marlow's Jew, as Lamb has observed, "does not approach so near to Shakspeare's [in the *Merchant of Venice*] as his Edward the Second." We are more reminded of some of Barabas's speeches by the magnificent declamation of Mammon in Jonson's *Alchymist*.²

LYLY; KYD; LODGE.

MARLOW, GREENE, and PEELE are the most noted names among those of our dramatists who belong exclusively to the age of Elizabeth; but some others that have less modern celebrity may perhaps be placed at least on the same line with the two latter. John Lyly, the Euphuist, as he is called, from one of his prose works, which will be noticed presently, is, as a poet, in his happiest efforts, elegant and fanciful; but his genius was better suited for the lighter kinds of lyric poetry than for the drama. He is the author of nine dramatic pieces, but of these seven are in prose, and only one in

¹ Spec. of Eng. Dram. Poets, i. 31.

² The works of Christopher Marlow, with Notes and a Life, have been edited by Mr. Dyce, in 3 vols. 8vo. Lond. 1850.

rhyme and one in blank verse. All of them, according to Mr. Collier, "seem to have been written for court entertainments, although they were also performed at theatres, most usually by the children of St. Paul's and the Revels." They were fitter, it might be added, for beguiling the listlessness of courts than for the entertainment of a popular audience, athirst for action and passion, and very indifferent to mere ingenuities of style. All poetical readers, however, remember some songs and other short pieces of verse with which some of them are interspersed, particularly a delicate little anacreontic in that entitled *Alexander and Campaspe*, beginning—

Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses, &c.

Mr. Collier observes that Malone must have spoken from a very superficial acquaintance with Lyly's works when he contends that his plays are comparatively free from those affected conceits and remote allusions that characterize most of his other productions. Thomas Kyd, the author of the two plays of *Jeronimo* and the *Spanish Tragedy* (which is a continuation of the former), besides a translation of another piece from the French, appears to be called *Sporting Kyd* by Jonson, in his verses on Shakspeare, in allusion merely to his name. There is, at least, nothing particularly sportive in the little that has come down to us from his pen. Kyd was a considerable master of language; but his rank as a dramatist is not very easily settled, seeing that there is much doubt as to his claims to the authorship of by far the most striking passages in the *Spanish Tragedy*, the best of his two plays. Lamb, quoting the scenes in question, describes them as "the very salt of the old play," which, without them, he adds, "is but a *caput mortuum*." It has been generally assumed that they were added by Ben Jonson, who certainly was employed to make some additions to this play; and Mr. Collier attributes them to him as if the point did not admit of a doubt—acknowledging, however, that they represent Jonson in a new light, and that "certainly there is nothing in his own entire plays equalling in pathetic beauty some of his contributions to the *Spanish Tragedy*." Nevertheless, it does not seem to be perfectly clear that the supposed contributions by another hand might not have been the work of Kyd himself. Lamb says, "There is nothing in the undoubted plays of Jonson which would authorize us to suppose that he could have supplied the scenes in

question. I should suspect the agency of some 'more potent spirit.' Webster might have furnished them. They are full of that wild, solemn, preternatural cast of grief which bewilders us in the *Duchess of Malfy*." The last of these early dramatists we shall notice, Thomas Lodge, who was born about 1556, and began to write for the stage about 1580, is placed by Mr. Collier "in a rank superior to Greene, but in some respects inferior to Kyd." His principal dramatic work is entitled *The Wounds of Civil War*, lively set forth in the true Tragedies of *Marius* and *Sylla*; and is written in blank verse with a mixture of rhyme. It shows him, Mr. Collier thinks, to have unquestionably the advantage over Kyd as a drawer of character, though not equalling that writer in general vigor and boldness of poetic conception. His blank verse is also much more monotonous than that of Kyd. Another strange drama in rhyme, written by Lodge in conjunction with Greene, is entitled *A Looking-glass for London and England*, and has for its object to put down the puritanical outcry against the immorality of the stage, which it attempts to accomplish by a grotesque application to the city of London of the Scriptural story of *Nineveh*. The whole performance, in Mr. Collier's opinion, "is wearisomely dull, although the authors have endeavored to lighten the weight by the introduction of scenes of drunken buffoonery between 'a clown and his crew of ruffians,' and between the same clown and a person disguised as the devil, in order to frighten him, but who is detected and well beaten." Mr. Hallan, however, pronounces that there is great talent shown in this play, "though upon a very strange canvass."¹ Lodge, who was an eminent physician, has left a considerable quantity of other poetry besides his plays, partly in the form of novels or tales, partly in shorter pieces, many of which may be found in the miscellany called *England's Helicon*, from which a few of them have been extracted by Mr. Ellis, in his *Specimens*. They are, perhaps, on the whole, more creditable to his poetical powers than his dramatic performances. He is also the author of several short works in prose, sometimes interspersed with verse. One of his prose tales, first printed in 1590, under the title of *Rosalynde: Euphues' Golden Legacie*, found in his cell at *Silextra* (for Lodge was one of Lyly's imitators), is famous as the source from which Shakspeare appears to have taken the story of his *As You Like It*. "Of this production it may be said,"

¹ Literature of Eur. ii. 274.

observes Mr. Collier, "that our admiration of many portions of it will not be diminished by a comparison with the work of our great dramatist."¹

It is worthy of remark, that all these founders and first builders-up of the regular drama in England were, nearly if not absolutely without an exception, classical scholars and men who had received a university education. Nicholas Udall was of Corpus Christi College, Oxford; John Still (if he is to be considered the author of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*) was of Christ's College, Cambridge; Sackville was educated at both universities; so was Gascoigne; Richard Edwards was of Corpus Christi, Oxford; Marlow was of Benet College, Cambridge; Greene, of St. John's, Cambridge; Peele, of Christ's Church, Oxford; Lyly, of Magdalen College, and Lodge of Trinity College, in the same university. Kyd was also probably a university man, though we know nothing of his private history. To the training received by these writers the drama that arose among us after the middle of the sixteenth century may be considered to owe not only its form, but in part also its spirit, which had a learned and classical tinge from the first, that never entirely wore out. The diction of the works of all these dramatists betrays their scholarship; and they have left upon the language of our higher drama, and indeed of our blank verse in general, of which they were the main creators, an impress of Latinity, which, it can scarcely be doubted, our vigorous but still homely and unsonorous Gothic speech needed to fit it for the requirements of that species of composition. Fortunately, however, the greatest and most influential of them were not mere men of books and readers of Greek and Latin. Greene and Peele and Marlow all spent the noon of their days (none of them saw any afternoon) in the busiest haunts of social life, sounding in their reckless course all the depths of human experience, and drinking the cup of passion, and also of suffering, to the dregs. And of their great successors, those who carried the drama to its height among us in the next age, while some were also accomplished scholars, all were men of the world — men who knew their brother-men by an actual and intimate intercourse with them in their most natural and open-hearted moods, and over a remarkably extended range of conditions. We know, from even the

² Hist. of Dram. Poet. iii. 213. — See, upon this subject, the Introductory Notice to *As You Like It* in Knight's *Shakspeare*, vol. iii. 247-265.

scanty fragments of their history that have come down to us, that Shakspeare and Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher all lived much in the open air of society, and mingled with all ranks from the highest to the lowest; some of them, indeed, having known what it was actually to belong to classes very far removed from each other at different periods of their lives. But we should have gathered, though no other record or tradition had told us, that they must have been men of this genuine and manifold experience from the drama alone which they have bequeathed to us, — various, rich, and glowing as that is, even as life itself.



EARLIER ELIZABETHAN PROSE.—LYLY; SIDNEY; SPENSER;
NASH, ETC.

BEFORE leaving the earlier part of the reign of Elizabeth, a few of the more remarkable writers in prose who had risen into notice before the year 1590 may be mentioned. The singular affectation known by the name of *Euphuism* was, like some other celebrated absurdities, the invention of a man of true genius, — John Lyly, noticed above as a dramatist and poet, — the first part of whose prose romance of *Euphuus* appeared in 1578 or 1579. “Our nation,” says Sir Henry Blount, in the preface to a collection of some of Lyly’s dramatic pieces which he published in 1632, “are in his debt for a new English which he taught them. *Euphuus* and his England¹ began first that language; all our ladies were then his scholars; and that beauty in court which could not parley *Euphuism* — that is to say, who was unable to converse in that pure and reformed English, which he had formed his work to be the standard of — was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French.” Some notion of this “pure and reformed English” has been made familiar to the reader of our day by the great modern pen that has called back to life so much of the long-vanished past, though the discourse of Sir Piercie Shafton, in the *Monastery*, is rather a caricature than a fair sample of *Euphuism*. Doubtless, it often became a purely silly and pitiable affair in the

¹ This is the title of the second part of the *Euphuus*, published in 1581. The first part is entitled *Euphuus, the Anatomy of Wit*.

mouths of the courtiers, male and female ; but in Lyly's own writings, and in those of his lettered imitators, of whom he had several, and some of no common talent, it was only fantastic and extravagant, and opposed to truth, nature, good sense, and manliness. Pedantic and far-fetched allusion, elaborate indirectness, a cloying smoothness and drowsy monotony of diction, alliteration, punning, and other such puerilities, — these are the main ingredients of Euphuism ; which do not, however, exclude a good deal of wit, fancy, and prettiness, occasionally, both in the expression and the thought. Although Lyly, in his verse as well as in his prose, is always artificial to excess, his ingenuity and finished elegance are frequently very captivating. Perhaps, indeed, our language is, after all, indebted to this writer and his Euphuism for not a little of its present euphony. From the strictures Shakspeare, in *Love's Labours Lost*, makes Holofernes pass on the mode of speaking of his Euphuist, Don Adriano de Armado, — “ a man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight — that hath a mint of phrases in his brain — one whom the music of his own vain tongue doth ravish like enchanting harmony,” — it should almost seem that the now universally adopted pronunciation of many of our words was first introduced by such persons at this refining “ child of fancy ” : — “ I abhor such fanatical fantasm, such insociable and point-device companions ; such rackers of orthography as to speak *dout*, fine, when he should say *doubt* ; *det*, when he should pronounce *debt*, *d*, *e*, *b*, *t* ; not *d*, *e*, *t* : he clepeth a *calf*, *cauf* ; *half*, *hauf* ; *neighbour* vocatur *nebour* ; *neigh*, abbreviated *ne* ; this is abominable (which he would call *abominable*) : it insinuateth me of insanie.” Here, however, the all-seeing poet laughs rather at the pedantic schoolmaster than at the fantastic knight ; and the euphuistic pronunciation which he makes Holofernes so indignantly criticise was most probably his own and that of the generality of his educated contemporaries.

A renowned English prose classic of this age, who made Lyly's affectations the subject of his ridicule some years before Shakspeare, but who also perhaps was not blind to his better qualities, and did not disdain to adopt some of his reforms in the language, if not to imitate even some of the peculiarities of his style, was Sir Philip Sidney, the illustrious author of the *Arcadia*. Sidney, who was born in 1554, does not appear to have sent anything to the press during his short and brilliant life, which was terminated by

the wound he received at the battle of Zutphen, in 1586; but he was probably well known, nevertheless, at least as a writer of poetry, some years before his lamented death. Puttenham, whose *Art of English Poesy*, at whatever time it may have been written, was published before any work of Sidney's had been printed, so far as can now be discovered, mentions him as one of the best and most famous writers of the age "for eclogue and pastoral poesy." The Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*, as Sidney's principal work had been affectionately designated by himself, in compliment to his sister, to whom it was inscribed, — the "fair, and good, and learned" lady, afterwards celebrated by Ben Jonson as "the subject of all verse," — was not given to the world even in part till 1590, nor completely till 1593. His collection of sonnets and songs entitled *Astrophel and Stella*, first appeared in 1591, and his other most celebrated piece in prose, *The Defence of Poesy*, in 1595. The production in which he satirizes the affectation and pedantry of the modern corrupters of the vernacular tongue is a sort of masque, supposed to pass before Queen Elizabeth in Wanstead garden, in which, among other characters, a village schoolmaster, called *Rombus*, appears, and declaims in a jargon not unlike that of Shakspeare's *Holofernes*. Sidney's own prose is the most flowing and poetical that had yet been written in English; but its graces are rather those of artful elaboration than of a vivid natural expressiveness. The thought, in fact, is generally more poetical than the language; it is a spirit of poetry encased in a rhetorical form. Yet, notwithstanding the conceits into which it frequently runs, — and which, after all, are mostly rather the frolics of a nimble wit, somewhat too solicitous of display, than the sickly perversities of a coxcombical or effeminate taste, — and, notwithstanding also some want of animation and variety, Sidney's is a wonderful style, always flexible, harmonious, and luminous, and on fit occasions rising to great stateliness and splendor; while a breath of beauty and noble feeling lives in and exhales from the whole of his great work, like the fragrance from a garden of flowers.

Among the most active occasional writers in prose, also, about this time were others of the poets and dramatists of the day, besides Lodge, who has been already mentioned as one of Lyly's imitators. Another of his productions, besides his tale of *Rosalynd*, which has lately attracted much attention, is a *Defence of Stage Plays*, which

he published, probably in 1579, in answer to Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse*, and of which only two copies are known to exist, both wanting the title-page.¹ Greene was an incessant pamphleteer upon all sorts of subjects; the list of his prose publications, so far as they are known, given by Mr. Dyce extends to between thirty and forty articles, the earliest being dated 1584, or eight years before his death. Morality, fiction, satire, blackguardism, are all mingled together in the stream that thus appears to have flowed without pause from his ready pen. "In a night and a day," says his friend Nash, "would he have yarked up a pamphlet as well as in seven years; and glad was that printer that might be so blest to pay him dear for the very dregs of his wit."² His wit, indeed, often enough appears to have run to the dregs, nor is it very sparkling at the best; but Greene's prose, though not in general very animated, is more concise and perspicuous than his habits of composition might lead us to expect. He has generally written from a well-informed or full mind, and the matter is interesting even when there is no particular attraction in the manner. Among his most curious pamphlets are his several tracts on the rogueries of London, which he describes under the name of *Coney-catching*, — a favorite subject also with other popular writers of that day. But the most remarkable of all Greene's contributions to our literature are his various publications which either directly relate or are understood to shadow forth the history of his own wild and unhappy life — his tale entitled *Never too Late*; or, *A Powder of Experience*, 1590; the second part entitled *Francesco's Fortunes*, the same year; his *Groatworth of Wit, bought with a Million of Repentance*, and *The Repentance of Robert Greene, Master of Arts*, which both appeared, after his death, in 1592. Greene, as well as Lodge, we may remark, is to be reckoned among the *Euphuists*; a tale which he published in 1587, and which was no less than five times reprinted in the course of the next half century, is entitled *Menaphon*;

¹ See Mr. Collier's Introduction to the Shakespeare Society's editions of Gosson's *School of Abuse*, 1841; and of Northbrooke's *Treatise against Diceing, Dancing, Plays, and Interludes*, 1843. See also his *History of Dramatic Poetry*, ii. 277, &c. By far the amplest and most satisfactory account that has been given of Lodge and his productions (nearly twenty of which are enumerated and described) will be found prefixed to a reprint of his *Answer to Gosson*, and other two of his very rare publications, edited for the Shakespeare Society by Mr. David Laing, 8vo. Lond. 1853. His *Rosalind* is included in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, 2 vols. 8vo. 1843.

² *Strange News*, in answer to Gabriel Harvey's *Four Letters*.

Canilla's Alarum to slumbering Euphues, in his melancholy cell at Silixedra, &c. ; and the same year he produced Euphues his Censure to Philantus ; wherein is presented a philosophical combat between Hector and Achilles, &c. But he does not appear to have persisted in this fashion of style. It may be noticed as curiously illustrating the spirit and manner of our fictitious literature at this time, that in his Pandosto, or, History of Dorastus and Fawnia, Greene, a scholar, and a Master of Arts of Cambridge, does not hesitate to make Bohemia an island, just as is done by Shakspeare in treating the same story in his Winter's Tale. The critics have been accustomed to instance this as one of the evidences of Shakspeare's ignorance, and Ben Jonson is recorded to have, in his conversation with Drummond of Hawthornden, quoted it as a proof that his great brother-dramatist "wanted art,¹ and sometimes sense." The truth is, as has been observed,² such deviations from fact, and other incongruities of the same character, were not minded, or attempted to be avoided, either in the romantic drama, or in the legends out of which it was formed. They are not blunders, but part and parcel of the fiction. The making Bohemia an island is not nearly so great a violation of geographical truth as other things in the same play are of all the proprieties and possibilities of chronology and history, — for instance, the coëxistence of a kingdom of Bohemia at all, or of that modern barbaric name, with anything so entirely belonging to the old classic world as the Oracle of Delphi. The story (though no earlier record of it has yet been discovered) is not improbably much older than either Shakspeare or Greene : the latter no doubt expanded and adorned it, and mainly gave it its present shape ; but it is most likely that he had for his groundwork some rude popular legend or tradition, the characteristic middle age geography and chronology of which he most properly did not disturb.

But the most brilliant pamphleteer of this age was Thomas Nash. Nash is the author of one slight dramatic piece, mostly in blank verse, but partly in prose, and having also some lyrical poetry interspersed, called Summer's Last Will and Testament, which was exhibited before Queen Elizabeth at Nonsuch in 1592 ; and he also assisted Marlow in his Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage,

¹ Yet Jonson has elsewhere expressly commended Shakspeare for his art. See his well known verses prefixed to the first folio edition of the Plays.

² See Notice on the Costume of the Winter's Tale in Knight's Shakspeare, vol. iv

which, although not printed till 1594, is supposed to have been written before 1590. But his satiric was of a much higher order than his dramatic talent. There never perhaps was poured forth such a rushing and roaring torrent of wit, ridicule, and invective, as in the rapid succession of pamphlets which he published in the course of the year 1589 against the Puritans and their famous champion (or rather knot of champions) taking the name of Martin Mar-Prelate; unless in those in which he began two years after to assail poor Gabriel Harvey, his persecution of and controversy with whom lasted a much longer time — till indeed the Archbishop of Canterbury (Whitgift) interfered in 1597 to restore the peace of the realm by an order that all Harvey's and Nash's books should be taken wherever they might be found, "and that none of the said books be ever printed hereafter." Mr. D'Israeli has made both these controversies familiar to modern readers by his lively accounts of the one in his *Quarrels*, of the other in his *Calamities, of Authors*; and ample specimens of the criminations and recriminations hurled at one another by Nash and Harvey have also been given by Mr. Dyce in the *Life of Greene* prefixed to his edition of that writer's dramatic and poetical works. Harvey too was a man of eminent talent; but it was of a kind very different from that of Nash. Nash's style is remarkable for its airiness and facility; clear of its old spelling, and, unless it be for a few words and idioms which have now dropt out of the popular speech, it has quite a modern air. This may show, by the by, that the language has not altered so much since the latter part of the sixteenth century as the ordinary prose of that day would lead us to suppose; the difference is rather that the generality of writers were more pedantic than now, and sought, in a way that is no longer the fashion, to brocade their composition with what were called ink-horn terms, and outlandish phrases never used except in books. If they had been satisfied to write as they spoke, the style of that day (as we may perceive from the example of Nash) would have in its general character considerably more resembled that of the present. Gabriel Harvey's mode of writing exhibits all the peculiarities of his age in their most exaggerated form. He was a great scholar — and his composition is inspired by the very genius of pedantry; full of matter, full often of good sense, not unfrequently rising to a tone of dignity, and even eloquence, but always stiff, artificial, and elaborately unnatural to a degree which was

even then unusual. We may conceive what sort of chance such a heavy-armed combatant, encumbered and oppressed by the very weapons he carried, would have in a war of wit with the quick, elastic, inexhaustible Nash, and the showering jokes and sarcasms that flashed from his easy, natural pen. Harvey, too, with all his merits, was both vain and envious; and he had some absurdities which afforded tempting game for satire. In particular he plumed himself on having reformed the barbarism of English verse by setting the example of modelling it after the Latin hexameter "If I never deserve any better remembrance," he exclaims in one of his pamphlets, "let me be epitaphed the inventor of the English hexameter!" Nash, again, profanely characterizes the said hexameter as "that drunken, staggering kind of verse, which is all up-hill and down-hill, like the way betwixt Stamford and Beechfield, and goes like a horse plunging through the mire in the deep of winter — now soused up to the saddle, and straight aloft on his tiptoes" (in these last words, we suppose, exemplifying the thing he describes and derides).



ENGLISH HEXAMETER VERSE.

HARVEY, however, did not want imitators in his crotchet; and among them were some of high name. He boasts, in the same place where he claims the credit of the invention, of being able to reckon among his disciples, not only "learned Mr. Stanyhurst," — that is Richard Stanyhurst, who in 1583 produced a most extraordinary performance, which he called a translation of the First Four Books of the *Æneid*, in this reformed verse,¹ but "excellent Sir Philip Sidney," who, he observes, had not disdained to follow him in his *Arcadia* and elsewhere. This is stated in his *Four Letters* and certain *Sonnets*, especially touching Robert Greene, 1582.² But from a preceding publication, entitled *Three Proper and Witty Familiar Letters* lately passed between two University Men, touching the Earthquake in April last, and our English Reformed Ver-

¹ This very scarce volume was reprinted, under the care of Mr. Mailment, in 4to., at Edinburgh in 1836.

² Reprinted by Sir E. Brydges in the second volume of the *Archaica*, 1813.

sifying, which were given to the world in 1580,¹ we learn that Edmund Spenser too seemed, or professed himself, for a short time half inclined to enlist himself among the practitioners of the new method. The two University men between whom the Letters had passed are Spenser (who is designated *Immerito*) and Harvey, with whom he had become intimate at Cambridge (they were both of Pembroke Hall), and by whom he is supposed to have been introduced to Sidney a short time before this correspondence began. The Letters are in fact five in number; the original three, before the pamphlet was published, having had two others added to them, "of the same men's writing, both touching the foresaid artificial versifying and certain other particulars, more lately delivered unto the printer." The publication is introduced by a Preface from "a Well-willer" to both writers, who professes to have come by the letters at fourth or fifth hand, through a friend, "who with much entreaty had procured the copying of them out at Immerito's hands." He had not, he declares, made the writers privy to the publication. The merits of Harvey's letters in particular — which form indeed the principal part of the pamphlet, and to which the only one by Spenser originally designed to be given is merely introductory — are trumpeted forth in this Preface in a very confident style: — "But show me or Immerito," exclaims the Well-willer, "two English letters in print in all points equal to the other two, both for the matter itself and also for the manner of handling, and say we never saw good English letters in our lives." "And yet," he adds, "I am credibly informed by the foresaid faithful and honest friend, that himself [the writer of the said two letters] hath written many of the same stamp both to courtiers and others, and some of them discoursing upon matters of great weight and importance, wherein he is said to be fully as sufficient and habile as in those scholarly points of learning." Nevertheless, this well-wisher, or his faithful and honest friend, was strongly suspected at the time to be no other than Harvey himself. Nash declares in one of his pamphlets that the compositor by whom the Well-willer's epistle, or Preface, was set up, swore to him that it came under Harvey's own hand to be printed. And in another place, addressing Harvey, he says, "You were young in years when you privately wrote the letters that afterward were publicly

¹ Reprinted in the second volume of *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesy*, edited by Joseph Haslewood, 2 vols. 4to. Lond. 1811-15.

divulged by no other but yourself. Signior Immerito was counterfeitedly brought in to play a part in that his interlude of epistles. I durst on my credit undertake Spenser was in no way privy to the committing of them to print. Committing I will call it, for in my opinion G. H. should not have reaped so much discredit by oeing committed to Newgate, as by committing that misbelieving prose to the press." Nash's authority, however, is none of the best; and it is fair to add that Harvey himself, in one of his Four Letters published in 1592, speaks of the present letters as having been sent to the press either by some malicious enemy or some indiscreet friend. It can hardly be supposed that he designed to conceal himself under the latter description.

But to return to what Spenser tells us of his studies and experiments in English hexameters and pentameters. In one letter, written from Leicester House, Westminster, in October 1579, he says: "As for the two worthy gentlemen, Mr. Sidney and Mr. Dyer [afterwards Sir Edward Dyer, and greatly esteemed as a writer of verse in his day], they have me, I thank them, in some use and familiarity, of whom and to whom what speech passeth to your credit and estimation I leave yourself to conceive; having always so well conceived of my unfeigned affection and zeal towards you. And now they have proclaimed in their *αρειωπάγῳ* a general surceasing and silence of bald rhymers, and also of the very best too; instead whereof they have, by authority of their whole senate, prescribed certain rules and laws of quantities of English syllables for English verse; having had thereof already great practice, *and almost drawn me into their faction*" Afterwards he goes farther: "I am more in love," he says, "with English versifying [that was the name by which Harvey and his friends distinguished the new invention] than with rhyming; which I should have done [with?] long since if I would then have followed your counsel." And he concludes, "I received your letter sent me the last week, whereby I perceive you continue your old exercise of versifying in English; which glory I had now thought should have been ours at London and the court." "Trust me," he adds, "your verses I like passingly well, and envy your hidden pains in this kind, or rather malign and grudge at yourself that would not once impart so much to me." He remarks, however, that Harvey has once or twice made a breach in the rules laid down for this new mode of versifying by Master Drant, that is,

Thomas Drant, chiefly known as the author of two collections of Latin poetry, entitled *Sylva* and *Poemata Varia*, but also the author of some verse translations from the Latin and Greek. "You shall see," says Spenser in conclusion, "when we meet in London (and when it shall be, certify us), how fast I have followed after you in that course: beware lest in time I overtake you." And, as a sample of what he had been doing, he subjoins a few English Iambics.

Six months later we find him still occupied with the new method. Writing to Harvey again in the beginning of April 1580, he says: "I like your late English hexameters so exceedingly well that I also enure my pen sometimes in that kind; which I find, indeed, as I have often heard you defend in word, neither so hard nor so harsh [but] that it will easily and fairly yield itself to our mother-tongue." Yet from what follows it almost looks as if he were all the while making sport of his solemn friend and his preposterous invention. "The only or chiefest hardness which seemeth," he goes on, "is in the accent; which sometime gapeth, and, as it were, yawneeth, ill-favouredly, coming short of that it should, and sometime exceeding the measure of the number; as in *Carpenter*, the middle syllable being used short in speech, when it shall be read long in verse seemeth like a lame gosling, that draweth one leg after her; and *Heaven*, being used short as one syllable, when it is in verse stretched out with a diastole is like a lame dog that holds up one leg." Nash's ridicule is hardly so unmerciful as this. Spenser, however, adds, by way of consolation, "But it is to be won with custom, and rough words must be subdued with use." Afterwards he sets down four lines of English Elegiac verse — asking, "Seem they comparable to those two which I translated you extempore in bed the last time we lay together in Westminster? —

That which I eat did I joy, and that which I greedily gorged;
As for those many goodly matters left I for others."

This can hardly have been written, or even, one would think, have been intended to be taken, seriously. "I would heartily wish," he concludes, "you would either send me the rules and precepts of art which you observe in quantities, or else follow mine, that M. Philip Sidney gave me, being the very same which M. Drant devised, but enlarged with M. Sidney's own judgment, and aug-

mented with my observations; that we might both agree and accord in one, lest we overthrow one another, and be overthrown of the rest."

From this it would appear that, after all, Drant (whose era was between 1560 and 1570) was, in this matter of English hexameters, before Harvey. But, indeed, long before this Sir Thomas More had amused himself with the same fancy. And the attempt to mould English verse into the form of Latin (which long afterwards exercised the ingenuity of Milton, and which has been revived in our own day) continued to engage some attention down to the close of the sixteenth century. In 1602 was published a small pamphlet entitled *Observations on the Art of English Poesy*, by Thomas Campion: wherein it is demonstratively proved, and by example confirmed, that the English toong will receive eight several kinds of numbers, proper to itself, which are all in this book set forth, and were never before this time by any man attempted. Thomas Campion, or Champion, was a poet of some celebrity in his day; his name occurs, along with those of Spenser and Shakspeare (the others are Sidney, John Owen, Daniel, Hugh Holland, Ben Jonson, Drayton, Chapman, and Marston), in Camden's enumeration in his *Remains concerning Britain* (first published in 1604) of the most pregnant poetical wits then flourishing. His tract was answered the next year by his brother-poet, Samuel Daniel, in *A Defence of Ryme against a pamphlet entitled Observations in the Art of English Poesy*: wherein is demonstratively proved that Ryme is the fittest harmony of words that comports with our language.¹ This reply appears to have terminated the controversy for the present; and, indeed, although Milton in a later day, in addition to imitating, or attempting to imitate, the metres of Horace, also, like Campion, denounced the Gothic barbarism and bondage of rhyme, it never was again seriously proposed, we believe, to reform our poetry by the entire abolition of the natural prosody of the language, and the substitution of the Greek or Latin.

¹ Both Campion's *Observations* and Daniel's *Defence* are reprinted in the second volume of the *Ancient Critical Essays*, edited by Haslewood.

EDMUND SPENSER.

IF Harvey had seriously infected Spenser with the madness of his hexameters and pentameters, the reformed versifying might have been brought for a short time into more credit, although Spenser's actual performances in it, as has been remarked, are bad enough to countenance even those of his friend the inventor. But, besides that to change, as this system appears to have required, the entire pronunciation and musical character of a language is as much beyond the power of any writer, or host of writers, as to change the direction of the winds (the two cases being alike governed by laws of nature above human control), Spenser was of all writers the one least likely to be permanently enthralled by the pursuit of such an absurdity. Of all our great poets he is the one whose natural tastes were most opposed to such outlandish innovations upon and harsh perversions of his native tongue — whose genius was essentially the most musical, the most English, and the most reverential of antiquity.

Edmund Spenser has been supposed to have come before the world as a poet so early as the year 1569, when some sonnets translated from Petrarch, which long afterwards were reprinted with his name, appeared in Vander Noodt's *Theatre of Worldlings*: on the 20th of May in that year he was entered a sizer of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge; and in that same year, also, an entry in the Books of the Treasurer of the Queen's Chamber records that there was "paid upon a bill signed by Mr. Secretary, dated at Windsor 18^o Octobris, to Edmund Spenser, that brought letters to the Queen's Majesty from Sir Henry Norris, Knight, her Majesty's ambassador in France, being at Thouars in the said realm, for his charges the sum of 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, over and besides 9*l.* prested to him by Sir Henry Norris."¹ It has been supposed that this entry refers to the poet. The date 1510, given as that of the year of his birth upon his monument in Westminster Abbey, erected long after his death, is out of the question; but the above-mentioned facts make it probable that he was born some years before 1553, the date commonly assigned.

He has himself commemorated the place of his birth: "At

¹ First published in Mr. Cunningham's Introduction (p. xxx.) to his *Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court*, printed for the Shakespeare Society, 8vo. Lond. 1842.

length," he says in his *Prothalamion*, or poem on the marriages of the two daughters of the Earl of Worcester, —

At length they all to merry London came,
To merry London, my most kindly nurse,
That to me gave this life's first native source,
Though from another place I take my name,
An house of ancient fame.

It is commonly said, on the authority of Oldys, that he was born in East Smithfield by the Tower. It appears from the register of the University that he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1572, and that of Master of Arts in 1576. On leaving Cambridge he retired for some time to the north of England. Here he appears to have written the greater part of his *Shepherd's Calendar*, which, having previously come up to London, he published in 1579. And he had already, as we learn from his correspondence with Harvey, finished two works entitled his *Dreams* and *Dying Pelican*, of which nothing is now known, unless the former (as has been conjectured) be the same afterwards published under the titles of *The Visions of Petrarch*, *The Visions of Bellay*, and *Visions of the World's Vanity*; and he had begun his *Fairy Queen*, as well as at least designed, and perhaps made some progress in, a poem in Harvey's new mode of versifying, to be entitled *Epithalamion Thamesis*; "which book," he says, "I dare undertake will be profitable for the knowledge, and new for the invention and manner of handling." The subject was to be treated in the same manner as it is in the Fourth Book of the *Fairy Queen*. He also speaks of another work which he calls his *Stemmata Dudleiana*, probably a poem in honor of the family of his patron, the Earl of Leicester, uncle of Sir Philip Sidney, of which he says that it must not lightly be sent abroad without more advisement, — adding, however, "But trust me, though I never do well, yet in my own fancy I never did better." And Harvey congratulates him on nine Comedies, which he had either written, or was engaged with: — "I am void of all judgment if your Nine Comedies, whereunto, in imitation of Herodotus, you give the names of the Nine Muses, come not as near Ariosto's Comedies, either for the fineness of plausible elocution or the rareness of poetical, as the *Fairy Queen* doth to his *Orlando*." But he published nothing more for some years.

In his Letter to Harvey written from Leicester House in October, 1579, and more especially in a long Latin valedictory poem included in it, he speaks of being immediately about to proceed across the seas in the service of Leicester, to France, as it would appear, if not farther. "I go thither," he writes, "as sent by him, and maintained (most-what) of him; and there am to employ my time, my body, my mind, in his honour's service." But whether he actually went upon this mission is unknown. In the beginning of August, 1580, on the appointment of Arthur Lord Grey of Wilton as Lord Deputy of Ireland, Spenser accompanied his lordship to that country as his secretary; in March, the year following, he was appointed to the office of Clerk in the Irish Court of Chancery; but on Lord Grey being recalled in 1582, Spenser probably returned with him to England. It has been conjectured that he may have been the person mentioned in a letter to Queen Elizabeth from James VI. of Scotland, dated at St. Andrews, the 2d of July, 1583 (the original of which is preserved among the Cotton MSS.), where James says in the postscript, "Madam, I have stayed Maister Spenser upon the letter quilk is written with my awin hand, quilk sall be ready within twa days."¹

Of how he was employed for the next three or four years nothing is known; but in 1586 he obtained from the crown a grant of above 3000 acres of forfeited lands in Ireland: the grant is dated the 27th of July, and, if it was procured, as is not improbable, through Sir Philip Sidney, it was the last kindness of that friend and patron, whose death took place in October of this year. Spenser proceeded to Ireland to take possession of his estate, which was a portion of the former domain of the Earl of Desmond in the county of Cork; and here he remained, residing in what had been the earl's castle of Kilcolman, till he returned to England in 1590, and published at London, in 4to., the first three Books of his *Fairy Queen*. If he had published anything else since the *Shepherd's Calendar* appeared eleven years before, it could only have been a poem of between four and five hundred lines, entitled *Muiopotmos*, or the *Fate of the Butterfly*, which he dedicated to the Lady Carey. He has himself related, in his *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, how he had been visited in his exile by the *Shepherd of*

¹ See Note by Mr. David Laing on p. 12 of his edition of Ben Jonson's *Conversations with William Drummond*, printed for the Shakespeare Society. 8vo. Lond. 1842.

the Ocean, by which designation he means Sir Walter Raleigh, and persuaded by him to make this visit to England for the purpose of having his poem printed. Raleigh introduced him to Elizabeth, to whom the Fairy Queen was dedicated, and who in February, 1591, bestowed on the author a pension of 50*l.* This great work immediately raised Spenser to such celebrity, that the publisher hastened to collect whatever of his other poems he could find, and, under the general title of *Complaints; Containing sundry small poems of the World's Vanity*; printed together, in a 4to. volume, *The Ruins of Time, The Tears of the Muses, Virgil's Gnat, Mother Hubbard's Tale, The Ruins of Rome* (from the French of Bellay), *Muiopotmos* (which is stated to be the only one of the pieces that had previously appeared), and *The Visions of Petrarch, &c.*, already mentioned. Many more, it is declared, which the author had written in former years were not to be found.

Spenser appears to have remained in England till the beginning of the year 1592: his *Daphnida*, an elegy on the death of Douglas Howard, daughter of Lord Howard, and wife of Arthur Gorges, Esq., is dedicated to the Marchioness of Northampton in an address dated the 1st of January in that year, and it was published soon after. He then returned to Ireland, and, probably in the course of 1592 and 1593, there composed the series of eighty-eight sonnets, in which he relates his courtship of the lady whom he at last married,¹ celebrating the event by a splendid Epithalamion. But it appears from the eightieth sonnet that he had already finished six Books of his *Fairy Queen*. His next publication was another 4to. volume which appeared in 1595, containing his *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, the dedication of which to Raleigh is dated "From my house at Kilcolman, December the 27th, 1591," no doubt a misprint for 1594; and also his *Astrophel*, an elegy upon Sir Philip Sidney, dedicated to his widow, now the Countess of Essex; together with *The Mourning Muse of Thestylis*, another poem on the same subject. The same year appeared, in 8vo., his sonnets, under the title of *Amoretti*, accompanied by the Epithalamion. In 1596 he paid another visit to England, bringing with him the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Books of his *Fairy Queen*, which were published, along with a new edition of the preceding three

¹ She was not, as has been commonly assumed, a peasant girl, but evidently a gentlewoman, a person of the same social position with Spenser himself. I have shown this, for the first time, in *Spenser and his Poetry*, vol. iii. pp. 223, &c.

books, in 4to., at London in that year. In the latter part of the same year appeared, in a volume of the same form, a reprint of his *Daphnaida*, together with his *Prothalamion*, or spousal verse on the marriages of the Ladies Elizabeth and Catharine Somerset, and his Four Hymns in honour of Love, of Beauty, of Heavenly Love, and of Heavenly Beauty, dedicated to the Countesses of Cumberland and Warwick, in an address dated Greenwich, the 1st of September, 1596. The first two of these Hymns he states had been composed in the greener times of his youth; and, although he had been moved by one of the two ladies to call in the same, as "having too much pleased those of like age and disposition, which, being too vehemently carried with that kind of affection, do rather suck out poison to their strong passion than honey to their honest delight," he "had been unable so to do, by reason that many copies thereof were formerly scattered abroad." At this time it was still common for literary compositions of all kinds to be extensively circulated in manuscript, as used to be the mode of publication before the invention of printing. These Hymns were the last of his productions that he sent to the press. It was during this visit to England that he presented to Elizabeth, and probably wrote, his prose treatise entitled *A View of the State of Ireland*, written dialogue-wise between Eudoxus and Irenaens; but that work remained unprinted, till it was published at Dublin by Sir James Ware in 1633.

Spenser returned to Ireland probably early in 1597; and was the next year recommended by the Queen to be sheriff of Cork; but, soon after the breaking out of Tyrone's rebellion in October, 1598, his house of Kilcolman was attacked and burned by the rebels, and, one child having perished in the flames, it was with difficulty that he made his escape with his wife and two sons. He arrived in England in a state of destitution; but it seems unlikely that, with his talents and great reputation, his powerful friends, his pension, and the rights he still retained, although deprived of the enjoyment of his Irish property for the moment, he could have been left to perish, as has been commonly said, of want: the breaking up of his constitution was a natural consequence of the sufferings he had lately gone through. All that we know, however, is that, after having been ill for some time, he died at an inn in King Street, Westminster, on the 16th of January, 1599. Two Cantos, undoubtedly genuine, of a subsequent *Book of the Fairy Queen*.

and two stanzas of a third Canto, entitled *Of Mutability*, and forming part of the *Legend of Constancy*, were published in an edition of his collected works, in a folio volume, in 1609; and it may be doubted if much more of the poem was ever written. As for the poem called *Britain's Ida*, in six short Cantos, which also appeared in this volume, it is certainly not by Spenser. Besides the works that have been enumerated, however, the following compositions by Spenser, now all lost, are mentioned by himself or his friends:—His *Pageants*, *The Canticles Paraphrased*, a poetical version of *Ecclesiastes*, another of the *Seven Penitential Psalms*, *The Hours of our Lord*, *The Sacrifice of a Sinner*, *Purgatory*, *A Se'ennight's Slumber*, *The Court of Cupid*, and *The Hell of Lovers*. He is also said to have written a treatise in prose called *The English Poet*.

The most remarkable of Spenser's poems written before his great work, *The Fairy Queen*, are his *Shepherd's Calendar* and his *Mother Hubbard's Tale*. Both of these pieces are full of the spirit of poetry, and his genius displays itself in each in a variety of styles.

The *Shepherd's Calendar*, though consisting of twelve distinct poems denominated *Æclogues*, is less of a pastoral, in the ordinary acceptation, than it is of a piece of polemical or party divinity. Spenser's shepherds are, for the most part, pastors of the church, or clergymen, with only pious parishioners for sheep. One is a good shepherd, such as *Algrind*, that is, the puritanical archbishop of *Canterbury*, *Grindall*. Another, represented in a much less favorable light, is *Morell*, that is, his famous antagonist *Elmore*, or *Aylmer*, bishop of *London*. Spenser's religious character and opinions make a curious subject, which has not received much attention from his biographers. His connection with *Sidney* and *Leicester*, and afterwards with *Essex*, made him, no doubt, be regarded throughout his life as belonging to the puritanical party, but only to the more moderate section of it, which, although not unwilling to encourage a little grumbling at some things in the conduct of the dominant section of the hierarchy, and even professing to see much reason in the objections made to certain outworks or appendages of the established system, stood still or drew back as soon as the opposition to the church became really a war of principles. Spenser's puritanism seems almost as unnatural as his hexameters and pentameters. It was probably, for the greater part, the

product of circumstances, rather than of conviction or any strong feeling, even while it lasted; and it never appears afterwards in such prominence as in his *Shepherd's Calendar*, the first work that he published. It has even been asserted that his *Blatant Beast*, in the Sixth Book of the *Fairy Queen*, is meant for a personification of Puritanism. At any rate, it is evident that, in his later years, his Christianity had taken the form rather of Platonism than of Puritanism. The puritanical spirit of some parts of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, however, probably contributed to the popularity which the poem long retained. It was reprinted four times during the author's lifetime, in 1581, 1586, 1591, and 1597. Yet it is not only a very unequal composition, but is, in its best executed or most striking parts, far below the height to which Spenser afterwards learned to rise. We may gather from it that one thing which had helped to give him his church-reforming notions had been his study and admiration of the old poetry of Chaucer and the *Visions of Piers Ploughman*. One of his personages, who, in one of the *Æclogues*, discourses much in the style of the principal figure in Langland's poem, is called Piers; and Chaucer is not only in various passages affectionately commemorated under the name of Tityrus, but several of the *Æclogues* are written in a peculiar versification which appears to be intended as an imitation of that of Chaucer's poetry. So far as Spenser, at this time of his life, can be accounted any authority in such a matter, it may be admitted that he seems to have regarded the verse of his great predecessor as only accentually, not syllabically, regular; but it is still more evident, at the same time, that these intended imitations of Chaucer in the *Shepherd's Calendar* do not really give a true representation of his prosody, according to any theory of it that may be adopted. The flow of the verse is rather that of the *Visions of Piers Ploughman*, only without the regular alliteration and with the addition of rhyme. As a specimen of the *Shepherd's Calendar*, we will give, from the second *Æclogue*, which is one of those composed in this peculiar measure, the Tale of the Oak and the Briar, as told by the old shepherd Thenot, who says he conned it of Tityrus in his youth:—

There grew an aged tree on the green,
 A goodly Oak sometime had it been,
 With arms full strong and lergely displayed,
 But of their leaves they were disarrayed;

The body big and mightily pight,¹
 Throughly rooted, and of wondrous height :
 Whilom he had been the king of the field,
 And mochel² mast to the husband³ did yield,
 And with his nuts larded many swine ;
 But now the grey moss marred his rine ;⁴
 His bared boughs were beaten with storms,
 His top was bald and wasted with worms,
 His honour decayed, his branches sere.

Hard by his side grew a bragging Brere,
 Which proudly thrust into th' element,
 And seemed to threat the firmament ;
 It was embellished with blossoms fair,
 And thereto aye wanted to repair
 The shepherds' daughters to gather flowers,
 To paint their garlands with his colours :
 And in his small bushes used to shrowd
 The sweet nightingale, singing so loud ;
 Which made this foolish Brere wex so bold,
 That on a time he cast him to scold
 And sneb the good Oak, for he was old.

Why stand'st there, quoth he, thou brutish block ?
 Nor for fruit nor for shadow serves thy stock.
 Seest how fresh my flowers been spread,
 Dyed in lilly white and crimson red,
 With leaves engrained in lusty green,
 Colours meet to clothe a maiden queen ?
 Thy waste bigness but cumpers the ground,
 And dirks⁵ the beauty of my blossoms round ;
 The mouldy moss which thee accloyeth⁶
 My cinnamon smell too much annoyeth :
 Wherefore soon, I rede⁷ thee, hence remove,
 Lest thou the price of my displeasure prove.
 So spake this bold Brere with great disdain ;
 Little him answered the Oak again ;
 But yielded, with shame and grief adawed⁸
 That of a weed he was over-crawed.

It chaneed after upon a day
 The husbandman's self to come that way
 Of custom to surviue his ground,

¹ Strongly fixed.

² Much.

³ Husbandmar

⁴ Rind.

⁵ Darkens.

⁶ Coils around

⁷ Advise.

⁸ Daunted.

And his trees of state in compass round:¹
 Him when the spiteful Brere had espied,
 He causeless complained, and loudly cried
 Unto his lord, stirring up stern strife:—

O my liege lord! the God of my life,
 Please of you pond² your suppliant's plaint.
 Caused of wrong and cruel constraint,
 Which I your poor vassal daily endure:
 And, but your goodness the same secure,
 Am like for desperate dole to die,
 Through felonous force of mine enemy.

Greatly aghast with this piteous plea,
 Him rested the goodman on the lea.
 And bade the Brere in his plaint proceed.
 With painted words tho³ gan this proud weed
 (As most usen ambitious folk)

His coloured crime with craft to cloak:—

Ah, my Sovereign! lord of creatures all,
 Thou placer of plants both humble and tall,
 Was not I planted of thine own hand,
 To be the primrose of all thy land,
 With flowering blossoms to furnish the prime,⁴
 And scarlet berries in summer time?

How falls it then that this faded Oak,
 Whose body is sere, whose branches broke,
 Whose naked arms stretch unto the fire,⁵
 Unto such tyranny doth aspire.

Hindering with his shade my lovely light,
 And robbing me of the sweet sun's sight?
 So beat his old boughs my tender side,
 That oft the blood springeth from woundes wide
 Untimely my flowers forced to fall,
 That been the honour of your coronal;
 And oft he lets his canker-worms light
 Upon my branches, to work me more spite;
 And oft his hoary locks down doth cast,
 Wherewith my fresh flowrets been defast.
 For this, and many more such outrage,
 Crave I⁶ your goodlyhead to assuage

¹ Perhaps the true reading is "encompass round," that is, circumambulate.

² Ponder, consider.

³ Then.

⁴ Spring

⁵ The meaning seems to be, are ready for firewood

⁶ The common reading is "craving."

The rancorous rigour of his might :
 Nought ask I but only to hold my right,
 Submitting me to your good sufferance,
 And praying to be guarded from grievance.

To this the Oak cast him to reply
 Well as he couth;¹ but his enemy
 Had kindled such coals of displeasure,
 That the goodman² nould³ stay his leisure,
 But home him hasted with furious heat,
 Increasing his wrath with many a threat :
 His harmful hatchet he hent⁴ in hand
 (Alas ! that it so ready should stand !)
 And to the field alone he speedeth
 (Aye little help to harm there needeth),
 Anger nould let him speak to the tree,
 Enaunter⁵ his rage mought cooled be,
 But to the root bent his sturdy stroke,
 And made many wounds in the wasted Oak :
 The axe's edge did oft turn again,
 As half unwilling to cut the grain ;
 Seemed the senseless iron did fear,
 Or to wrong holy eld did forbear ;
 For it had been an ancient tree,
 Sacred with many a mystery,
 And often crossed with the priests' crew,
 And often hallowed with holy water due ;
 But like fancies weren foolery,
 And broughten this Oak to this misery ;
 For nought mought they quitten him from decay ;
 For fiercely the goodman at him did lay.
 The block oft groaned under his blow,
 And sighed to see his near overthrow.
 In fine⁶ the steel had pierced his pith ;
 Tho down to the ground he fell therewith.
 His wondrous weight made the ground to quake ;
 The earth shrunk under him, and seemed to shake :
 There lieth the Oak, pitied of none.

Now stands the Bere like a lord alone,
 Puffed up with pride and vain pleasance :
 But all this glee had no continuance ;
 For eftsoons winter gan to approach,

¹ As well as he could.

² Farmer.

³ Would not.

⁴ Took.

⁵ Lest that.

⁶ At last.

The blustering Boreas did enroach
And beat upon the solitary Brere,
For now no succour was seen him near.
Now gan he repent his pride too late ;
For, naked left and discourolate,
The biting frost nipt his stalk dead,
The watery wet weighed down his head,
And heaped snow burthened him so sore
That now upright he can stand no more ;
And, being down, is trod in the dirt
Of cattle, and brouzed,¹ and sorely hurt.
Such was the end of this ambitious Brere,
For scorning eld.

The story is admirably told, certainly ; with wonderful facility of expression, as well as with a fancy and invention at once the most just and spirited, and the most easy and copious — altogether so as to betoken a poet such as had not yet arisen in the language since it had settled down into its existing form. This earliest work of Spenser's, however, betrays his study of our elder poetry as much by its diction as by the other indications already mentioned : he has thickly sprinkled it with words and phrases which had generally ceased to be used at the time when it was written. This he seems to have done, not so much that the antiquated style might give the dialogue an air of rusticity proper to the speech of shepherds, but rather in the same spirit and design (though he has carried the practice much farther) in which Virgil has done the same thing in his heroic poetry, that his verse might thereby be the more distinguished from common discourse, that it might fall upon the ears of men with something of the impressiveness and authority of a voice from other times, and that it might seem to echo, and, as it were, continue and prolong, the strain of the old national minstrelsy ; thus at once expressing his love and admiration of the preceding poets who had been his examples, and, in part, his instructors and inspirers, and making their compositions reflect additional light and beauty upon his own. This is almost the only advantage which the later poets in any language have over the earlier ; and Spenser has availed himself of it more or less in most of his writings, though not in any later work to the same extent as in this first publication. Perhaps also there may be dis-

¹ Bruised.

covered in the Shepherd's Calendar some other traces of his studies in experimental versification at this time (to which his attention may have been awakened by his friend Harvey's lucubrations), besides his attempts to imitate the metre of Chaucer or Piers Ploughman. The work is, at least, remarkable for the variety of measures in which it is composed. The most spirited of its lyric passages is a panegyric upon Elizabeth in the Fourth *Æclogue*, of which, as the work is not much read, we may transcribe a few verses. It is recited by Hobbinol (Gabriel Harvey), who, on the request of Thenot that he would repeat to him one of his friend Colin's songs, framed before his love for Rosalind had made him break his pipe, replies : —

“ Contented I; then will I sing his lay
Of fair Eliza, queen of shepherds all,
Which once he made as by a spring he lay,
And tuned it unto the water's fall : ” —

.
See where she sits upon the grassy green,
(O seemly sight !)
Yclad in scarlet, like a maiden queen,
And ermines white ;
Upon her head a crimson coronet,
With damask roses and daffadillies set :
Bay leaves between,
And primroses green,
Embellish the sweet violet.

.
I see Calliope speed to the place
Where my goddess shines,
And after her the other Muses trace ¹
With their violines.
Been they not bay branches which they do bear
All for Eliza in her hand to wear ?
So sweetly they play,
And sing all the way,
That it a heaven is to hear.

Lo, how finely the Graces can it foot
To the instrument !
They dancen defly, and singen soot ²

¹ Walk.

² Sweet.

In their merriment.
 Wants not a fourth Grace to make the dance even?
 Let that room to my Lady be even.¹
 She shall be a Grace
 To fill the fourth place,
 And reign with the rest in heaven.

And whither rens this bevy of ladies bright,
 Ranged in a row?
 They been all Ladies of the Lake behight²
 That unto her go.
 Chloris, that is the chiefest nymph of all,
 Of olive branches bears a coronal:
 Olives been for peace,
 When wars do surcease;
 Such for a princess been principal.

Ye shepherds' daughters that dwell on the green,
 Hie you there apace:
 Let none come there but that virgins been,
 To adorn her grace;
 And, when you come whereas³ she is in place,
 See that your rudeness do not you disgrace.
 Bind your fillets fast,
 And gird in your waste,
 For more fineness, with a tawdry lace.

Bring hither the pink and purple cullumbine,
 With gillyflowers;
 Bring coronations, and sops in wine,
 Worn of paramours:
 Strow me the ground with daffadowndillies,
 And cowslips, and kingcups, and loved lillies:
 The pretty pancee
 And the chevisance
 Shall match with the fair flower-delice.

Now rise up, Eliza, decked as thou art
 In royal ray;⁴
 And now ye dainty damsels may depart,
 Each one her way.
 I fear I have troubled your troops too long;

¹ Given.² Called, named.³ Where.⁴ Array

Let Dame Eliza thank you for her song ;
 And, if you come heather ¹
 When damsons I gather,
 I will part them all you among.

Executed in a firmer and more matured style, and, though with more regularity of manner, yet also with more true boldness and freedom, is the admirable *Prosopopoia*, as it is designated, of the adventures of the Fox and the Ape, or *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, notwithstanding that this, too, is stated to have been an early production — “long sithens composed,” says the author in his dedication of it to the Lady Compton and Monteagle, “in the raw conceit of my youth.” Perhaps, however, this was partly said to avert the offence that might be taken at the audacity of the satire. It has not much the appearance, either in manner or in matter, of the production of a very young writer, although it may have been written before any part of the *Fairy Queen*, at least in the matured form of that poem ; for we can hardly believe that the work spoken of under that name as in hand in 1579 was the same the first part of which was not published till eleven years afterwards. We should say that *Mother Hubbard's Tale* represents the middle age of Spenser's genius, if not of his life — the stage in his mental and poetical progress when his relish and power of the energetic had attained perfection, but the higher sense of the beautiful had not yet been fully developed. Such appears to be the natural progress of every mind that is capable of the highest things in both these directions : the feeling of force is first awakened, or at least is first matured ; the feeling of beauty is of later growth. With even poetical minds of a subordinate class, indeed, it may sometimes happen that a perception of the beautiful, and a faculty of embodying it in words, acquire a considerable development without the love and capacity of the energetic having ever shown themselves in any unusual degree : such may be said to have been the case with Petrarch, to quote a remarkable example. But the greatest poets have all been complete men, with the sense of beauty, indeed, strong and exquisite, and crowning all their other endowments, which is what makes them the greatest ; but also with all other passions and powers correspondingly vigorous and active. Homer, Dante, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, Gœthe, were all of them manifestly capable of achieving any degree of

¹ Hither.

success in any other field as well as in poetry. They were not only poetically, but in all other respects, the most gifted intelligences of their times: men of the largest sense, of the most penetrating insight, of the most general research and information; nay, even in the most worldly arts and dexterities, able to cope with the ablest, whenever they chose to throw themselves into that game. They may not any of them have attained the highest degree of what is called worldly success; some of them may have even been crushed by the force of circumstances or evil days; Milton may have died in obscurity, Dante in exile; "the vision and the faculty divine" may have been all the light that cheered, all the estate that sustained, the old age of Homer; but no one can suppose that in any of these cases it was want of the requisite skill or talent that denied a different fortune. As for Spenser, we shall certainly much mistake his character if we suppose, from the romantic and unworldly strain of much—and that, doubtless, the best and highest—of his poetry, that he was anything resembling a mere dreamer. In the first place, the vast extent of his knowledge, comprehending all the learning of his age; and his voluminous writings, sufficiently prove that his days were not spent in idleness. Then, even in the matter of securing a livelihood and a position in the world, want of activity or eagerness is a fault of which he can hardly be accused. Bred, for whatever reason, to no profession, it may be doubted if he had any other course to take, in that age, upon the whole so little objectionable as the one he adopted. The scheme of life with which he set out seems to have been to endeavor, first of all, to procure for himself, by any honorable means, the leisure necessary to enable him to cultivate and employ his poetical powers. With this view he addressed himself to Sidney, the chief professed patron of letters in that day (when, as yet, letters really depended to a great extent for encouragement and support upon the patronage of the great), hoping, through his interest, to obtain such a provision as he required from the bounty of the crown. In thus seeking to be supported at the public expense, and to withdraw a small portion of a fund, pretty sure to be otherwise wasted upon worse objects, for the modest maintenance of one poet, can we say that Spenser, being what he was, was much, or at all, to blame? Would it have been wiser, or more highminded, or in any sense better, for him to have thrown himself, like Greene and Nash, and the rest of that crew, upon the

town, and, like them, wasted his fine genius in pamphleteering and blackguardism? He knew that he would not eat that public bread without returning to his country what she gave him a hundred and a thousand fold; he who must have felt and known well that no man had yet uttered himself in the English tongue so endowed for conferring upon the land, the language, and the people what all future generations would prize as their best inheritance, and what would contribute more than laws or victories, or any other glory, to maintain the name of England in honor and renown so long as it should be heard of among men.

But he did not immediately succeed in his object. It is probably true, as has been commonly stated, that Burghley looked with but small regard upon the poet and his claims. However, he at last contrived to overcome this obstacle; and eventually, as we have seen, he obtained from the crown both lands, offices, and a considerable pension. It is not at all likely that, circumstanced as he was at the commencement of his career, Spenser could in any other way have attained so soon to the same comparative affluence that he thus acquired. Probably the only respect in which he felt much dissatisfied or disappointed was in being obliged to take up his residence in Ireland, without which, it may have been, he would have derived little or no benefit from his grant of land. *Mother Hubberd's Tale* must be supposed to have been written before he obtained that grant. It is a sharp and shrewd satire upon the common modes of rising in the church and state; not at all passionate or declamatory, — on the contrary, pervaded by a spirit of quiet humor, which only occasionally gives place to a tone of greater elevation and solemnity, but, assuredly, with all its high-minded and even severe morality, evincing in the author anything rather than either ignorance of the world or indifference to the ordinary objects of human ambition. No one will rise from its perusal with the notion that Spenser was a mere rhyming visionary, or singing somnambulist. No; like every other greatest poet, he was an eminently wise man, exercised in every field of thought, and rich in all knowledge — above all, in knowledge of mankind, the proper study of man. In this poem of *Mother Hubberd's Tale* we still find also both his puritanism and his imitation of Chaucer, two things which disappear altogether from his later poetry. Indeed, he has written nothing else so much in Chaucer's manner and spirit; nor have we nearly so true a reflection, or rather revival,

of the Chaucerian narrative style — at once easy and natural, clear and direct, firm and economical, various and always spirited — in any other modern verse. We will pass over the description of the brave and honorable courtier (intended for Sidney), which is probably known to most of our readers, and the still more famous passage in which the miserable state of a suitor for court-favor (supposed to be the author's own case at the time) is depicted with such indignant force and bitterness of expression. What a fulness of matter and driving sleet of words there is in the following description of the moral anarchy wrought by the Ape and the Fox after the former had stolen the lion's hide and other royal emblems, and seated himself on the throne, with his companion and instigator for his chief counsellor and minister! —

First, to his gate he 'pointed a strong guard,
 That none might enter but with issue hard;
 Then, for the safeguard of his personage,
 He did appoint a warlike equipage
 Of foreign beasts, not in the forest bred,
 But part by land and part by water fed;
 For tyranny is with strange aid supported:
 Then unto him all monstrous beasts resorted,
 Bred of two kinds, as griffons, minotaurs,
 Crocodiles, dragons, beavers, and centaurs;
 With those himself he strengthened mightily,
 That fear he need no force of enemy.
 Then gan he rule and tyrannize at will,
 Like as the Fox did guide his graceless skill,
 And all wild beasts made vassals of his pleasures,
 And with their spoils enlarged his private treasures.
 No care of justice, nor no rule of reason,
 No temperance, nor no regard of season,
 Did thenceforth ever enter in his mind:
 But cruelty, the sign of eurrish kind,
 And 'sdainful pride, and wilful arrogance;
 Such fellows those whom Fortune doth advance.

But the false Fox most kindly¹ played his part;
 For whatsoever mother wit or art
 Could work he put in proof; no practice sly,
 No counterpoint of cunning policy,
 No reach, no breach, that might him profit bring,
 But he the same did to his purpose wring.

¹ According to his nature.

Nought suffered he the Ape to give or grant,
 But through his hand alone must pass the fiaut.¹
 All offices, all leases by him leapt,
 And of them all whatso he liked he kept.
 Justice he sold, injustice for to buy,
 And for to purchase for his progeny.
 Ill might it prosper that ill gotten was ;
 But, so he got it, little did he pass.
 He fed his cubs with fat of all the soil,
 And with the sweet of others' sweating toil ;
 He crammed them with crumbs of benefices,
 And filled their mouths with meeds of malefices.
 He clothed them with all colours save white,
 And loaded them with lordships and with might,
 So much as they were able well to bear,
 That with the weight their backs nigh broken were.
 He chaffered chairs in which charchmen were set,
 And breach of laws to privy farm did let.
 No statute so established might be,
 Nor ordinance so needful, but that he
 Would violate, though not with violence,
 Yet under colour of the confidence
 The which the Ape reposed in him alone,
 And reckoned him the kingdom's corner-stone ;
 And ever, when he aught would bring to pass,
 His long experience the platform was ;
 And, when he aught not pleasing would put by,
 The cloak was care of thrift and husbandry,
 For to increase the common treasure's store ;
 But his own treasure he increased more,
 And lifted up his lofty towers thereby,
 That they began to threat the neighbour sky ;
 The whiles the prince's palaces fell fast
 To ruin ; for what thing can ever last ?
 And whilst the other peers for poverty
 Were forced their ancient houses to let lie,
 And their old castles to the ground to fall,
 Which their forefathers, famous over all,
 Had founded for the kingdom's ornament,
 And for their memories' long monument.
 But he no count made of nobility,
 Nor the wild beasts whom arms did glorify,

¹ Warrant.

The realm's chief strength, and girland of the crown
 All these, through feigned crimes, he thrust adown,
 Or made them dwell in darkness of disgrace;
 For none but whom he list might come in place.
 Of men of arms he had but small regard,
 But kept them low, and straitened very hard.
 For men of learning little he esteemed;
 His wisdom he above their learning deemed.
 As for the rascal commons, least he cared,
 For not so common was his bounty shared;
 Let God, said he, if please, care for the many;
 I for myself must care before else any.
 So did he good to none, to many ill;
 So did he all the kingdom rob and pill;
 Yet none durst speak, nor none durst of him plain,
 So great he was in grace, and rich through gain;
 Ne would he any let to have access
 Unto the prince but by his own address;
 For all that else did come were sure to fail;
 Yet would he further none but for avail.¹
 For on a time the Sheep, to whom of yore
 The Fox had promised of friendship store,
 What time the Ape the kingdom first did gain,
 Came to the court her case there to complain,
 How that the Wolf, her mortal enemy,
 Had sithence² slain her lamb most cruelly,
 And therefore craved to come unto the king
 To let him know the order of the thing.
 Soft, Goody Sheep, then said the Fox, not so;
 Unto the king so rash ye may not go;
 He is with greater matter busied
 Than a lamb, or the lamb's own mother's head;
 Ne certes may I take it well in part
 That ye my cousin Wolf so foully thwart,
 And seek with slander his good name to blot;
 For there was cause, else do it he would not.
 Therefore srecease, good dame, and hence depart:
 So went the Sheep away with heavy heart:
 So many mo,³ so every one was used,
 That to give largely to the box refused.

We must add the winding up of the story, as a sample of the

¹ Bribe.

² Since.

³ More.

more descriptive portions of the poem. What is going on at last attracts the notice of the powers above : —

Now, when high Jove, in whose almighty hand
 The care of kings and power of empires stand,
 Sitting one day within his turret high,
 From whence he views with his black-lidded eye
 Whatso the heaven in his wide vault contains,
 And all that in the deepest earth remains,
 The troubled kingdom of wild beasts beheld,
 Whom not their kindly ¹ sovereign did weld,²
 But an usurping Ape, with guile suborned,
 Had all subversed, he 'sdainfully it scorned
 In his great heart, and hardly did refrain
 But that with thunderbolts he had him slain.

Jove forthwith calls Mercury to him, and despatches him to the earth : —

The son of Maia, soon as he received
 That word, straight with his azure wings he cleaved
 The liquid clouds and lucid firmament,
 Ne stayed till that he came with steep descent
 Unto the place where his prescript did show :
 There stooping, like an arrow from a bow,
 He soft arrived on the grassy plain,
 And fairly paced forth with easy pain,
 Till that unto the palace nigh he came ;
 Then gan he to himself new shape to frame,
 And that fair face, and that ambrosial hue,
 Which wents to deck the gods' immortal crew
 And beautify the shiny firmament,
 He doft, unfit for that rude rabblement.

Mercury puts on his hat of invisibility, and, taking his caduceus in his hand, makes a survey of the scene of extortion, oppression, and lawlessness. He sees on all sides more of ill of all kinds than can be told : —

Which when he did with loathful eyes behold
 He would no more endure, but came his way,
 And cast to seek the Lion where he may,
 That he might work the avengement for his shame
 On those two caitives which had bred him blame ;
 And, seeking all the forest busily,

¹ Natural.

² Weld.

At last he found where sleeping he did lie.
The wicked weed, which there the Fox did lay,
From underneath his head he took away,
And then him waking forced up to rise.
The Lion, looking up, gan him avize,
As one late in a trance, what had of long
Become of him, for fantasy is strong.
Arise, said Mercury, thou sluggish beast,
That here lies senseless, like the corpse deceast,
The whilst thy kingdom from thy head is rent,
And thy throne royal with dishonour blent.
Arise, and do thyself redeem from shame,
And be avenged on those that breed thy blame.
Thereat enraged, soon he gan upstart,
Grinding his teeth, and grating his great heart ;
And, rousing up himself, for his rough hide
He gan to reach, but nowhere it espied.
Therewith he gan full terrible to roar,
And chaufed at that indignity right sore ;
But, when his crown and sceptre both he wanted,
Lord, how he fumed, and swelled, and raged, and panted,
And threatened death, and thousand deadly dolours,
To them that had purloined his princely honours !
With that, in haste, disrobed as he was,
He towards his own palace forth did pass ;
And all the way he roared as he went,
That all the forest with astonishment
Thereof did tremble, and the beasts therein
Fled fast away from that so dreadful din.
At last he came unto his mansion,
Where all the gates he found fast locked anon,
And many warders round about them stood :
With that he roared aloud as he were wood,
That all the palace quaked at the stound,
As if it quite were riven from the ground ;
And all within were dead and heartless left,
And the Ape himself, as one whose wits were reft,
Fled here and there, and every corner sought,
To hide himself from his own feared thought.
But the false Fox, when he the Lion heard,
Fled closely forth, straightway of death afraid.
And to the Lion came full lowly creeping,
With feigned face, and watery eyne half weeping,

To excuse his former treason and abusion,
 And turning all unto the Ape's confusion ;
 Nathless¹ the royal beast forbore believing,
 But bade him stay at ease till further prieving.²
 Then, when he saw no entrance to him granted,
 Roaring yet louder, that all hearts it daunted,
 Upon those gates with force he fiercely flew,
 And, rending them in pieces, felly slew
 Those warders strange, and all that else he met.
 But the Ape, still flying, he nowhere might get :
 From room to room, from beam to beam he fled,
 All breathless, and for fear now almost dead.
 Yet him at last the Lion spied and caught,
 And forth with shame unto his judgment brought.
 Then all the beasts he caused assembled be,
 To hear their doom, and sad ensample see :
 The Fox, first author of that treachery,
 He did uncase, and then away let fly ;
 But the Ape's long tail (which then he had) he quite
 Cut off, and both ears pared of their height ;
 Since which all apes but half their ears have left,
 And of their tails are utterly bereft.

It would not have been possible to take the apologue of the Ape and the Fox for any covert representation of the state of the English court or government at the time when this poem appeared, or even perhaps to discover the veiled likeness of an existing minister or courtier in any of its delineations ; — but the satire was certainly not without some strokes that were likely enough to be felt by powerful individuals, and the entire exposition was not calculated to be agreeable to those at the head of affairs. It was probably, therefore, just as fortunate for Spenser that, in whatever humor or with whatever view it was written, it did not see the light till after he had obtained both his grant of land and his pension.

The Fairy Queen was designed by its author to be taken as an allegory — “ a continued allegory, or dark conceit,” as he calls it in his preliminary Letter to Raleigh, “ expounding his whole intention in the course of this work.” The allegory was even artificial and involved to an unusual degree ; for not only was the Fairy Queen, by whom the knights are sent forth upon their adventures,

¹ Nevertheless.

² Proving.

to be understood as meaning Glory in the general intention, but in a more particular sense she was to stand for "the most excellent and glorious person" of Queen Elizabeth; and some other eminent individual of the day appears in like manner to have been shadowed forth in each of the other figures. The most interesting allegory that was ever written carries us along chiefly by making us forget that it is an allegory at all. The charm of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is that all the persons and all the places in it seem real — that Christian, and Evangelist, and Mr. Worldly Wiseman, and Mr. Greatheart, and the Giant Despair, and all the rest, are to our apprehension not shadows, but beings of flesh and blood; and the Slough of Despond, Vanity Fair, Doubting Castle, the Valley of Humiliation, and the Enchanted Ground, all so many actual scenes or localities which we have as we read before us or around us. For the moral lessons that are to be got out of the parable, it must no doubt be considered in another manner; but we speak of the delight it yields as a work of imagination. That is not increased, but impaired, or destroyed, by regarding it as an allegory — just as would be the humor of *Don Quixote*, or the marvels of the *Arabian Nights'* Entertainments, by either work being so regarded. In the same manner, whoever would enjoy the *Fairy Queen* as a poem must forget that it is an allegory, either single or double, either compound or simple. Nor in truth is it even much of a story. Neither the personages that move in it, nor the adventures they meet with, interest us much. For that matter, the most ordinary novel, or a police report in a newspaper, may often be much more entertaining. One fortunate consequence of all this is, that the poem scarcely loses anything by the design of the author never having been completed, or its completion at least not having come down to us. What we have of it is not injured in any material respect by the want of the rest. This Spenser himself no doubt felt when he originally gave it to the world in successive portions; — and it would not have mattered much although of the six Books he had published the three last before the three first.

These peculiarities — the absence of an interesting story or concatenation of incidents, and the want of human character and passion in the personages that carry on the story, such as it is — are no defects in the *Fairy Queen*. On the contrary, the poetry is only left thereby so much the purer. Without calling Spenser

the greatest of poets, we may still say that his poetry is the most poetical of all poetry. Other poets are all of them something else as well as poets, and deal in reflection, or reasoning, or humor, or wit, almost as largely as in the proper product of the imaginative faculty; his strains alone, in the *Fairy Queen*, are poetry, all poetry, and nothing but poetry. It is vision unrolled after vision, to the sound of endlessly varying music. The "*shaping* spirit of imagination," considered apart from moral sensibility, — from intensity of passion on the one hand, and grandeur of conception on the other, — certainly never was possessed in the like degree by any other writer; nor has any other evinced a deeper feeling of all forms of the beautiful; nor have words ever been made by any other to embody thought with more wonderful art. On the one hand invention and fancy in the creation or conception of his thoughts; on the other the most exquisite sense of beauty, united with a command over all the resources of language, in their vivid and musical expression, — these are the great distinguishing characteristics of Spenser's poetry. What of passion is in it lies mostly in the melody of the verse; but that is often thrilling and subduing in the highest degree. Its moral tone, also, is very captivating: a soul of nobleness, gentle and tender as the spirit of its own chivalry, modulates every cadence.

Spenser's extraordinary faculty of vision-seeing and picture-drawing can fail to strike none of his readers; but he will not be adequately appreciated or enjoyed by those who regard verse either as a non-essential or as a very subordinate element of poetry. Such minds, however, must miss half the charm of all poetry. Not only all that is purely sensuous in poetry must escape them, but likewise all the pleasurable excitement that lies in the harmonious accordance of the musical expression with the informing idea or feeling, and in the additional force or brilliancy that in such inter-union is communicated by the one to the other. All beauty is dependent upon form; other things may often enter into the beautiful, but this is the one thing that can never be dispensed with; all other ingredients, as they must be contained by, so must be controlled by this; and the only thing that standing alone may constitute the beautiful is form or outline. Accordingly, whatever addresses itself to or is suited to gratify the imagination takes this character: it falls into more or less of regularity and measure. Mere passion is of all things the most unmeas-

ured and irregular, naturally the most opposed of all things to form. But in that state it is also wholly unfitted for the purposes of art; before it can become imaginative in any artistic sense it must have put off its original merely volcanic character, and worn itself into something of measure and music. Thus all impassioned composition is essentially melodious, in a higher or lower degree; measured language is the appropriate and natural expression of passion or deep feeling operating artistically in writing or speech. The highest and most perfect kind of measured language is verse; and passion expressing itself in verse is what is properly called poetry. Take away the verse, and in most cases you take away half the poetry, sometimes much more. The verse, in truth, is only one of several things by the aid of which the passion seeks to give itself effective expression, or by which the thought is endowed with additional animation or beauty; nay, it is only one ingredient of the *musical* expression of the thought or passion. If the verse may be dispensed with, so likewise upon the same principle may every decoration of the sentiment or statement, everything else that would do more than convey the bare fact. Let the experiment be tried, and see how it will answer. Take a single instance. "Immediately through the obscurity a great number of flags were seen to be raised, all richly colored": out of these words, no doubt, the reader or hearer might, after some meditation, extract the conception of a very imposing scene. But, although they intimate with sufficient exactness and distinctness the same literal fact, they are nevertheless the deadest prose compared with Milton's glorious words: —

"All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient colours waving."

And so it would happen in every other case in which true poetry was divested of its musical expression: a part, and it might be the greater part, of its life, beauty, and effect, would always be lost; and it would, in truth, cease to be what is distinctively called poetry or song, of which verse is as much one of the necessary constituents as passion or imagination itself. Those who dispute this will never be able to prove more than that their own enjoyment of the sensuous part of poetry, which is really that in which its peculiar character resides, is limited or feeble; which it may very well be in minds otherwise highly gifted, and even endowed with con-

siderable imaginative power. The feeling of the merely beautiful, however, or of beauty unimpregnated by something of a moral spirit or meaning, is not likely in such minds to be very deep or strong. High art, therefore, is not their proper region, in any of its departments. In poetry they will probably not very greatly admire or enjoy either Spenser or Milton — and perhaps would prefer *Paradise Lost* in the prose version which Osborne the bookseller in the last century got a gentleman of Oxford to execute for the use of readers to whom the sense was rather obscured by the verse.

Passing over several of the great passages towards the commencement of the poem — such as the description of Queen *Lucifera* and her Six Counsellors in the Fourth Canto of the First Book, that of the visit of the Witch *Duessa* to Hell in the Fifth, and that of the Cave of Despair in the Ninth — which are probably more familiarly known to the generality of readers, we will give as our first specimen of the Fairy Queen the escape of the Enchanter *Archimage* from *Bragadoccio* and his man *Trompart*, and the introduction and description of *Belpheobe*, in the Third Canto of Book Second: —

He stayed not for more bidding, but away
 Was sudden vanished out of his sight:
 The northern wind his wings did broad display
 At his command, and reared him up light,
 From off the earth to take his airy flight.
 They looked about, but nowhere could espy
 Tract of his foot; then dead through great affright
 They both nigh were, and each bade other fly;
 Both fled at once, ne ever back returned eye;

Till that they come unto a forest green,
 In which they shrowd themselves from causeless fear;
 Yet fear them follows still, whereso they been;
 Each trembling leaf and whistling wind they hear
 As ghastly bug¹ does greatly them afear;
 Yet both do strive their fearfulness to feign.²
 At last they heard a horn, that shrilled clear
 Throughout the wood, that echoed again,
 And made the forest ring, as it would rive in twain.

¹ Bugbear.

² Conceal.

Eft¹ through the thicket they heard one rudely rush,
 With noise whereof he from his lofty steed
 Down fell to ground, and crept into a bush,
 To hide his coward head from dying dread ;
 But Trompart stoutly stayed, to taken heed
 Of what might hap. Eftsoon there stepped forth
 A goodly lady clad in hunter's weed,
 That seemed to be a woman of great worth,
 And by her stately portance² born of heavenly birth.

Her face so fair as flesh it seemed not,
 But heavenly pourtrait of bright angel's hue,
 Clear as the sky, withouten blame or blot,
 Through goodly mixture of complexions due ;
 And in her cheeks the vermeil red did shew
 Like roses in a bed of lillies shed,
 The which ambrosial odours from them threw,
 And gazers' sense with double pleasure fed,
 Able to heal the sick, and to revive the dead.

In her fair eyes two living lamps did flame,
 Kindled above at the heavenly Maker's light,
 And darted fiery beams out of the same,
 So passing persant and so wondrous bright
 That quite bereaved the rash beholder's sight :
 In them the blinded god his lustful fire
 To kindle oft assayed, but had no might ;
 For with dread majesty and awful ire
 She broke his wanton darts, and quenched base desire.

Her ivory forehead, full of bounty brave,
 Like a broad table did itself dispread
 For Love his lofty triumphs to engrave,
 And write the battles of his great godhead :
 All good and honour might therein be read,
 For there their dwelling was ; and, when she spake,
 Sweet words like dropping honey she did shed,
 And twixt the pearls and rubins³ softly brake
 A silver sound, that heavenly music seemed to make.

Upon her eyelids many graces sate,
 Under the shadow of her even brows,

¹ Soon.² Carriage.³ Rubies.

Working belgardes¹ and amorous retrate;²
 And every one her with a grace endows,
 And every one with meekness to her bows:
 So glorious mirror of celestial grace,
 And sovereign monument of mortal vows,
 How shall frail pen describe³ her heavenly face,
 For fear through want of skill her beauty to disgrace?

So fair, and thousand thousand times more fair,
 She seemed, when she presented was to sight;
 And was yelad, for heat of scorching air,
 All in a silken camus⁴ lilly white,
 Purfl'd⁵ upon with many a folded plight,⁶
 Which all above besprinkled was throughout
 With golden aigulets, that glistened bright,
 Like twinkling stars; and all the skirt about
 Was hemmed with golden fringe.

[Below her ham her weed⁷ did somewhat train;⁸
 And her straight legs most bravely were embailed⁹
 In gilden¹⁰ buskins of costly cordwain,¹¹
 All barred with golden bends, which were entailed¹²
 With curious anticks,¹³ and full fair aumailed;¹⁴
 Before they fastened were under her knee
 In a rich jewel, and therein entrail'd¹⁵
 The ends of all the knots, that none might see
 How they within their foldings close enwrapped be.

Like two fair marble pillars they were seen,
 Which do the temple of the gods support,
 Whom all the people deck with girlonds¹⁶ green,
 And honour in their festival resort;
 Those same with stately grace and princely port
 She taught to tread, when she herself would grace;
 But with the woody nymphs when she did sport,
 Or when the flying libbard¹⁷ she did chase,
 She could them nimbly move, and after fly apace.

And in her hand a sharp boar-spear she held,
 And at her back a bow and quiver gay

¹ Beautiful looks. ² Aspect. ³ Describe. ⁴ Thin gown.
⁵ Gathered. ⁶ Plait. ⁷ Dress. ⁸ Hang.
⁹ Enclosed. ¹⁰ Gilded. ¹¹ Spanish leather. ¹² Engraved, marked
¹³ Figures. ¹⁴ Enamelled. ¹⁵ Interwoven. ¹⁶ Garlands.
¹⁷ Leopard.

Stuffed with steel-headed darts, wherewith she quelled
 The savage beasts in her victorious play,
 Knit with a golden baldric, which forelay
 Athwart her snowy breast, and did divide
 Her dainty paps ; which, like young fruit in May,
 Now little, gan to swell, and, being tied,
 Through her thin weed their places only signified.

Her yellow locks, crisped like golden wire,
 About her shoulders weren loosely shed,
 And, when the wind amongst them did inspire,
 They waved like a penon wide dispread,
 And low behind her back were scattered ;
 And, whether art it were or heedless hap,
 As through the flowering forest rash she fled,
 In her rude hairs sweet flowers themselves did lap,
 And flourishing fresh leaves and blossoms did enwrap.

Such as Diana, by the sandy shore
 Of swift Eurotas, or on Cynthus green,
 Where all the nymphs have her unwares forlore,¹
 Wandereth alone, with bow and arrows keen,
 To seek her game ; or as that famous queen
 Of Amazons, whom Pyrrhus did destroy,
 The day that first of Priam she was seen
 Did show herself in great triumphant joy,
 To succour the weak state of sad afflicted Troy.

Our next extract shall be part of the Masque of Cupid displayed to Britomart the Fair and Bold, the representative of Chastity, in the house of the enchanter Busyrane, from the Twelfth Canto of the Third Book ; being the conclusion of the first-published portion of the poem : —

All suddenly a stormy whirlwind blew
 Throughout the house, that clapped every door,
 With which that iron wicket open flew
 As it with mighty levers had been tore ;
 And forth issued, as on the ready floor
 Of some théâtre, a grave personage
 That in his hand a branch of laurel bore,
 With comely haveour and count'nance sage,
 Yelad in costly garments, fit for tragic stage.

Proceeding to the midst he still did stand,
 As if in mind he somewhat had to say,
 And, to the vulgar beckoning with his hand,
 In sign of silence, as to hear a play,
 By lively actions he gan bewray
 Some argument of matter passioned ;
 Which done, he back retired soft away,
 And, passing by, his name discovered,
 Ease, on his robe in golden letters cyphered.

The noble maid still standing all this viewed,
 And mervelled at his strange intendment :
 With that a joyous fellowship issued
 Of minstrels making goodly merriment,
 With wanton bards and rhymers impudent ;
 All which together sung full cheerfully
 A lay of love's delight with sweet consent ;
 After whom marched a jolly company,
 In manner of a masque, enranged orderly.

The whiles a most delicious harmony
 In full strange notes was sweetly heard to sound,
 That the rare sweetness of the melody
 The feeble senses wholly did confound,
 And the frail soul in deep delight nigh drowned ;
 And, when it ceased, shrill trumpets loud did bray,
 That their report did far away rebound ;
 And, when they ceased, it gan again to play,
 The whiles the masquers marched forth in trim array.

The first was Fancy, like a lovely boy,
 Of rare aspect, and beauty without peer,
 Matchable either to that imp of Troy
 Whom Jove did love, and chose his cup to bear,
 Or that same dainty lad which was so dear
 To great Alcides, that whenas he died
 He wailed womanlike with many a tear,
 And every wood and every valley wide
 He filled with Hylas' name ; the nymphs eke Hylas cried.

His garment neither was of silk nor say,
 But painted plumes in goodly order dight,
 Like as the sunburnt Indians do array

Their tawny bodies in their proudest plight :
 As those same plumes so seemed he vain and light,
 That by his gait might easily appear ;
 For still he fared¹ as dancing in delight,
 And in his hand a windy fan did bear,
 That in the idle air he moved still here and there.

And him beside marched amorous Desire,
 Who seemed of riper years than the other swain,
 Yet was that other swain this elder's sire,
 And gave him being, common to them twain :
 His garment was disguised very vain,
 And his embroidered bonnet sat awry ;
 'Twixt both his hands few sparks he close did strain,
 Which still he blew and kindled busily,
 That soon they life conceived, and forth in flames did fly.

Next after him went Doubt, who was yelad
 In a discoloured coat of strange disguise,
 That at his back a broad capuccio had,
 And sleeves dependent Albanese-wise ;
 He looked askew with his mistrustful eyes,
 And nicely trod, as thorns lay in his way,
 Or that the floor to shrink he did avize ;²
 And on a broken reed he still did stay
 His feeble steps, which shrunk when hard thereon he lay.

With him went Danger, clothed in ragged weed
 Made of bear's skin, that him more dreadful made ;
 Yet his own face was dreadful, ne did need
 Strange horror to deform his grisly shade :
 A net in the one hand, and a rusty blade
 In the other was, this mischief, that mishap ;
 With the one his foes he threatened to invade,
 With the other he his friends meant to enwrap ;
 For whom he could not kill he practised to entrap.

Next him was Fear, all armed from top to toe,
 Yet thought himself not safe enough thereby,
 But feared each shadow moving to or fro ;
 And his own arms when glittering he did spy,
 Or clashing heard, he fast away did fly,

¹ Moved forward.

² Think.

As ashes pale of hue, and winged-heeled ;
 And evermore on Danger fixed his eye,
 Gainst whom he always bent a brazen shield,
 Which his right hand unarmed fearfully did wield.

With him went Hope in rank, a handsome maid,
 Of cheerful look, and lovely to behold ;
 In silken samite¹ she was light arrayed,
 And her fair locks were woven up in gold ;
 She always smiled, and in her hand did hold
 An holy-water-sprinkle, dipped in dew,
 With which she sprinkled favours manifold
 On whom she list, and did great liking shew,
 Great liking unto many, but true love to few.

And after them Dissemblance and Suspect
 Marched in one rank, yet an unequal pair ;
 For she was gentle and of mild aspect,
 Courteous to all, and seeming debonair,
 Goodly adorned, and exceeding fair ;
 Yet was that all but painted and purloined,
 And her bright brows were decked with borrowed hair ;
 Her deeds were forged, and her words false-coined :
 And always in her hand two clews of silk she twined :

But he was foul, ill-favoured, and grim,
 Under his eyebrows looking still askance ;
 And, ever as Dissemblance laughed on him,
 He lowered on her with dangerous eye-glance,
 Showing his nature in his countenance ;
 His rolling eyes did never rest in place,
 But walked each where for fear of hid mischance,
 Holding a lattice still before his face,
 Through which he still did peep as forward he did pace.

Next him went Grief and Fury, matched yfere ;²
 Grief all in sable sorrowfully clad,
 Down hanging his dull head with heavy cheer,
 Yet inly being more than seeming sad ;
 A pair of pincers in his hand he had,
 With which he pinched many to the heart,
 That from thenceforth a wretched life they had³

¹ Satin.² Together.³ Led.

In wilful languor and consuming smart,
Dying each day with inward wounds of Dolour's dart.

But Fury was full ill apparelled
In rags, that naked nigh she did appear,
With ghastly looks and dreadful drearihead ;
For from her back her garments she did tear,
And from her head oft rent her snarled¹ hair :
In her right hand a firebrand she did toss
About her head ; still roaming here and there,
As a dismayed deer in chace embost,²
Forgetful of his safety, hath his right way lost.

After them went Displeasure and Pleasance ;
He looking lumpish and full sullen sad,
And hanging down his heavy countenance ;
She cheerful, fresh, and full of joyance glad,
As if no sorrow she ne felt ne drad,³
That evil-matched pair they seemed to be :
An angry wasp the one in a vial had,
The other in her's an honey lady-bee.
Thus marched these six couples forth in fair degree.

After all these there marched a most fair dame,
Led of two grisly villains ; the one Despite,
The other cleped⁴ Cruelty by name :
She, doleful lady, like a dreary sprite
Called by strong charms out of eternal night,
Had Death's own image figured in her face,
Full of sad signs, fearful to living sight ;
Yet in that horror shewed a seemly grace,
And with her feeble feet did move a comely pace.

Her breast all naked, as nett ivory
Without adorn of gold or silver bright,
Wherewith the craftsman wonts it beautify,
Of her due honour was despoiled quite,
And a wide wound therein (O rueful sight !)
Entrenched deep with knife accursed keen,
Yet freshly bleeding forth⁵ her fainting sprite,
(The work of cruel hand) was to be seen,
That dyed in sanguine red her skin all snowy clean.

¹ Entangled, knotted.² Hard run, and wearied out.³ Dreaded.⁴ Called.⁵ Out of, forth from.

At that wide orifice her trembling heart
 Was drawn forth, and in silver basin laid,
 Quite through transfixed with a deadly dart,
 And in her blood yet steaming fresh embayed ;¹
 And those two villains (which her steps upstayed,
 When her weak feet could scarcely her sustain,
 And fading vital powers gan to fade²)
 Her forward still with torture did constrain,
 And ever more increased her consuming pain.

Next after her the winged God himself
 Came riding on a lion ravenous,
 Taught to obey the menage of that elf,
 That man and beast with power imperious
 Subdueth to his kingdom tyrannous :
 His blindfold eyes he bade awhile unbind,
 That his proud spoil, of that same dolorous
 Fair dame, he might behold in perfect kind ;
 Which seen, he much rejoiced in his cruel mind.

Of which full proud, himself uprearing high,
 He looked round about with stern disdain,
 And did survey his goodly company,
 And marshalled the evil-ordered train ;
 With that the darts which his right hand did strain
 Full dreadfully he shook, that all did quake,
 And clapped on high his coloured winges twain,
 That all his meny³ it afraid did make ;
 Tho,⁴ blinding him again, his way he forth did take.

Behind him was Reproach, Repentance, Shame ;
 Reproach the first, Shame next, Repent behind :
 Repentance feeble, sorrowful, and lame ;
 Reproach spiteful, careless, and unkind ;
 Shame most ill-favoured, bestial, and blind :
 Shame loured, Repentance sighed, Reproach did scold :
 Reproach sharp stings, Repentance whips entwined,
 Shame burning brand-irons in her hand did hold :
 All three to each unlike, yet all made in one mould.

¹ Bathed.

² It may be doubted if this be the right word. Perhaps it should be "gan to fade" — that is, to pass away.

³ Company, attendants.

⁴ Then.

And after them a rude confused route
 Of persons flocked, whose names is hard to read :
 Amongst them was stern Strife, and Anger stout,
 Unquiet Care, and fond Unthriftihead,
 Lewd Loss of Time, and Sorrow seeming-dead,
 Inconstant Change, and false Disloyalty,
 Consuming Riotise, and guilty Dread
 Of heavenly vengeance, faint Infirmity,
 Vile Poverty, and, lastly, Death with Infamy.

There were full many moe¹ like maladies,
 Whose names and natures I note readen² well ;
 So many moe as there be fantasies
 In wavering women's wit, that none can tell,
 Or pains in love, or punishments in hell ;
 All which disguised marched in masquing wise
 About the chamber by the damozell,
 And then returned, having marched thrice,
 Into the inner room, from whence they first did rise.

A volume of poetry such as this, Spenser might fitly, and with some pride in the worth of the offering, as well as "in all humility, dedicate, present, and consecrate, to the Most High, Mighty, and Magnificent Empress, Elizabeth, to live with the eternity of her fame." The latter Books of the Fairy Queen have less continuity of splendor than the three first ; but, besides innumerable single stanzas and short passages of exquisite beauty, they contain not a few pictures on a more extended canvas, which must be reckoned among the most remarkable in the work. Among others may be mentioned those of the Temple of Venus in the Tenth, and of the gathering of the rivers at the marriage of the Thames and the Medway, in the Eleventh Canto of the Fourth Book ; those of the night spent by Sir Caledon among the shepherds in the Ninth, and of the Dance of the Graces in the Tenth Canto of Book Fifth ; and that of the procession of the Seasons in the second of the Two Cantos of Mutability. But, passing over these more brilliant displays of an inventive and florid fancy, we will select, as our sample of this portion of the poem, one of its more soberly colored passages, in which, nevertheless, there may perhaps be thought to be as much of "the vision and the faculty divine,"

¹ More.

² Know not (wot not) to read.

though otherwise exercised, as in any of those we have yet quoted. The following, from the Second Canto of the Fifth Book, might seem to be a satire written in our own day on the folly and madness of seventy years ago, and it is difficult to believe that it was published two centuries before the events which it so strikingly prefigures : —

There they beheld a mighty giant stand
 Upon a rock, and holding forth on high
 An huge great pair of balance in his hand,
 With which he boasted, in his surquedry,¹
 That all the world he would weigh equally,
 If aught he had the same to counterpoise ;
 For want whereof he weighed vanity,
 And filled his balance full of idle toys ;
 Yet was admired much of fools, women, and boys.

He said that he would all the earth uptake,
 And all the sea, divided each from either ;
 So would he of the fire one balance make,
 And one of the air, without or wind or weather ;
 Then would he balance heaven and hell together,
 And all that did within them all contain,
 Of all whose weight he would not miss a feather ;
 And look, what surplus did of each remain,
 He would to his own part restore the same again.

For why, he said, they all unequal were ;
 And had encroached upon other's share ;
 Like as the sea (which plain he showed there)
 Had worn the earth ; so did the fire the air ;
 So all the rest did other's parts impair ;
 And so were realms and nations run awry ;
 All which he undertook for to repair,
 In sort as they were formed anciently,
 And all things would reduce unto equality.

Therefore the vulgar did about him flock,
 And cluster thick unto his leasings vain,
 Like foolish flies about an honey-crook,
 In hope by him great benefit to gain,
 And uncontrolled freedom to obtain.

¹ Pride, presumption.

All which when Artegal did see, and hear
 How he misled the simple people's train,
 In 'sdainful wise he drew unto him near,
 And thus unto him spake, without regard or fear :

“Thou that presum'st to weigh the world anew,
 And all things to an equal to restore,
 Instead of right, meseems, great wrong dost shew,
 And far above thy force's pitch to soar :
 For, ere thou limit what is less or more
 In every thing, thou oughtest first to know
 What was the poise of every part of yore,
 And look then how much it doth overflow
 Or fail thereof ; so much is more than just, I trow.

“For at the first they all created were
 In goodly measure by their Maker's might,
 And weighed out in balances so near
 That not a dram was missing of their right ;
 The earth was in the middle centre pight,¹
 In which it doth immovable abide,
 Hemmed in with waters like a wall in sight,²
 And they with air, that not a drop can slide ;
 All which the heavens contain, and in their courses guide.

“Such heavenly justice doth among them reign,
 That every one do know their certain bound,
 In which they do these many years remain,
 And 'mongst them all no change hath yet been found ;
 But, if thou now should'st weigh them new in pound,
 We are not sure they would so long remain ;
 All change is perilous, and all chance unsound ;
 Therefore leave off to weigh them all again,
 Till we may be assured they shall their course retain.”

“Thou foolish elf,” said then the Giant wroth,
 “See'st not how badly all things present be,
 And each estate quite out of order goth ?
 The sea itself dost thou not plainly see
 Encroach upon the land there under thee ?
 And the earth itself, how daily it's increased
 By all that dying to it turned be ?
 Were it not good that wrong were then surceased,
 And from the most that some were given to the least ?

¹ Pitched, fixed.

² Perhaps, site.

"Therefore I will throw down these mountains high,
 And make them level with the lowly plain ;
 These towering rocks, which reach unto the sky,
 I will thrust down into the deepest main,
 And, as they were, them equalize again.
 Tyrants, that make men subject to their law,
 I will suppress, that they no more may reign,
 And lordings curb that commons over-awe,
 And all the wealth of rich men to the poor will draw."²

"Of things unseen how canst thou deem aright,"
 Then answered the righteous Artegal,
 "Sith thou misdeem'st so much of things in sight ?
 What though the sea with waves continual
 Do eat the earth, it is no more at all,
 Ne is the earth the less or loseth aught ;
 For whatsoever from one place doth fall,
 Is with the tide unto another brought ;
 For there is nothing lost that may be found if sought.

"Likewise the earth is not augmented more
 By all that dying unto it do fade ;
 For of the earth they formed were of yore :
 However gay their blossom or their blade
 Do flourish now, they into dust shall vade ;¹
 What wrong then is it if that when they die
 They turn to that whereof they first were made ?
 All in the power of their great Maker lie ;
 All creatures must obey the voice of the Most High.

"They live, they die, like as he doth ordain,
 Ne ever any asketh reason why.
 The hills do not the lowly dales disdain ;
 The dales do not the lofty hills envÿ.
 He maketh kings to sit in sovereignty ;
 He maketh subjects to their power obey ;
 He pulleth down, he setteth up on high ;
 He gives to this, from that he takes away ;
 For all we have is his ; what he list do he may.

"Whatever thing is done by him is done,
 Ne any may his mighty will withstand ;
 Ne any may his sovereign power shun,

¹ Pass away.

Ne loose that he hath bound with stedfast band ;
 In vain, therefore, dost thou now take in hand
 To call to count, or weigh his works anew,
 Whose counsels' depth thou canst not understand,
 Sith of things subject to thy daily view
 Thou dost not know the causes nor their courses due.

“ For take thy balance, if thou be so wise,
 And weigh the wind that under heaven doth blow ;
 Or weigh the light that in the east doth rise ;
 Or weigh the thought that from man's mind doth flow :
 But, if the weight of these thou canst not show,
 Weigh but one word which from thy lips doth fall :
 For how canst thou those greater secrets know,
 That dost not know the least thing of them all ?
 Ill can he rule the great that cannot reach the small.”

Therewith the Giant, much abashed, said,
 That he of little things made reckoning light ;
 Yet the least word that ever could be laid
 Within his balance he could weigh aright.
 “ Which is,” said he, “ more heavy, then, in weight,
 The right or wrong, the false or else the true ? ”
 He answered that he would try it straight ;
 So he the words into his balance threw,
 But straight the winged words out of his balance flew.

Wroth wexed he then, and said that words were light,
 Ne could within his balance well abide ;
 But he could justly weigh the wrong or right.
 “ Well, then,” said Artegal, “ let it be tried ;
 First in one balance set the true aside.”
 He did so first, and then the false he laid
 In the other scale ; but still it down did slide,
 And by no mean could in the weight be stayed ;
 For by no means the false will with the truth be weighed.

“ Now take the right likewise,” said Artegale,
 “ And counterpoise the same with so much wrong.”
 So first the right he put into one scale,
 And then the Giant strove, with puissance strong,
 To fill the other scale with so much wrong ;
 But all the wrongs that he therein could lay
 Might it not poise ; yet did he labour long,

And swat, and chaufed, and proved every way ;
Yet all the wrongs could not a little right downweigh.

Which when he saw he greatly grew in rage,
And almost would his balances have broken ;
But Artegal him fairly gan assuage,
And said, " Be not upon thy balance wroken,¹
For they do nought but right or wrong betoken ;
But in the mind the doom of right must be ;
And so likewise of words, the which be spoken,
The ear must be the balance to decree
And judge whether with truth or falsehood they agree.

" But set the truth and set the right aside,
For they with wrong or falsehood will not fare,
And put two wrongs together to be tried,
Or else two falses, of each equal share,
And then together do them both compare ;
For truth is one, and right is ever one."
So did he, and then plain it did appear
Whether of them the greater were attone ;²
But right sat in the midst of the beam alone.

But he the right from thence did thrust away,
For it was not the right which he did seek ;
But rather strove extremities to weigh,
The one to diminish, the other for to eke,
For of the mean he greatly did misleke ;³
Whom when so lewdly minded Talus found,
Approaching nigh unto him cheek by cheek,
He shouldered him from off the higher ground,
And, down the rock him throwing, in the sea him drowned.

Like as a ship, whom cruel tempest drives
Upon a rock with horrible dismay,
Her shattered ribs in thousand pieces rives,
And, spoiling all her gears and goodly ray,⁴
Does make herself misfortune's piteous prey ;
So down the cliff the wretched Giant tumbled ;
His battered balances in pieces lay,
His timbered bones all broken rudely rumbled :
So was the high-aspiring with huge ruin humbled.

¹ Revenged.² Taken all together.³ Mislike.⁴ Array.

That when the people, which had thereabout
 Long waited, saw his sudden desolation,
 They gan¹ together in tumultuous rout,
 And mutining to stir up civil faction,²
 For certain loss of so great expectation ;
 For well they hoped to have got great good
 And wondrous riches by his innovation ;
 Therefore, resolving to revenge his blood,
 They rose in arms, and all in battle order stood.

In old Greece and Rome the Poet was regarded as a species of Prophet, and called by the same name ; both were held to be alike divinely inspired ; but there are not many unveilings of the distant future in poetry so remarkable as this anticipation and refutation of the Liberty and Equality philosophism of the end of the eighteenth century in the end of the sixteenth. Nor has the kernel of that false philosophy ever perhaps been so acutely detected as it is in these verses, by the exposure, first, of the assumption involved in the original notion that equality is anywhere a law or principle of nature ; secondly, of the impossibility of either establishing true equality, or even of ascertaining its existence, by such rude, superficial, almost mechanical methods as human legislation has alone at its command. The essence or reality of things will not be weighed in any scales which its hand can hold.



OTHER ELIZABETHAN POETRY.

IN the six or seven years from 1590 to 1596, what a world of wealth had thus been added to our poetry by Spenser alone ! what a different thing from what it was before had the English language been made by his writings to natives, to foreigners, to all posterity ! But England was now a land of song, and the busiest and most productive age of our poetical literature had fairly commenced. What are commonly called the minor poets of the Elizabethan age are to be counted by hundreds, and few of them are altogether without merit. If they have nothing else, the least

¹ Perhaps misprint for "ran."

² The reading of this line may be doubted.

gifted of them have at least something of the freshness and airiness of that balmy morn, some tones caught from their greater contemporaries, some echoes of the spirit of music that then filled the universal air. For the most part the minor Elizabethan poetry is remarkable for ingenuity and elaboration, often carried to the length of quaintness, both in the thought and the expression; but, if there be more in it of art than of nature, the art is still that of a high school, and always consists in something more than the mere disguising of prose in the dress of poetry. If it is sometimes unnatural, it is at least very seldom simply insipid, like much of the well-sounding verse of more recent eras. The writers are always in earnest, whether with their nature or their art; they never write from no impulse, and with no object except that of stringing commonplaces into rhyme or rhythm; even when it is most absurd, what they produce is still fanciful, or at the least fantastical. The breath of some sort of life or other is almost always in it. The poorest of it is distinguished from prose by something more than the mere sound.



WARNER.

THE three authors of the poems of most pretension, with the exception of the *Fairy Queen*, that appeared during the period now under review, are Warner, Drayton, and Daniel. William Warner is supposed to have been born about the year 1558; he died in 1609. He has told us himself (in his *Eleventh Book*, chapter 62), that his birthplace was London, and that his father was one of those who sailed with Chancellor to Muscovy, in 1555: this, he says, was before he himself was born. Warner's own profession was the not particularly poetical one of an attorney of the Common Pleas. According to Anthony Wood, who makes him to have been a Warwickshire man, he had before 1586 written several pieces of verse, "whereby his name was cried up among the minor poets;" but this is probably a mistake; none of this early poetry imputed to Warner is now known to exist; and in the Preface to his *Albion's England*, he seems to intimate that that was his first performance in verse. "Written," he says, "have I already in prose, allowed [that is, with the approbation] of some: and now offer I verse,

attending indifferent censures" [impartial judgments]. In his Dedication to Henry Carey, the first Lord Hunsdon, he speaks of a former book, which he had dedicated to the son of that Lord — "To him that from your honour deriveth his birth." This, we suppose, must be his prose work entitled *Syrinx*, or a *Sevenfold History*, pleasant and profitable, comical and tragical, of which the only edition known to exist is dated 1597, but which was licensed in 1584, and was probably first printed about that time. In the Dedication to his poem he explains the meaning of the title, which is not very obvious: "This our whole island," he observes, "anciently called Britain, but more anciently Albion, presently containing two kingdoms, England and Scotland, is cause (right honourable) that, to distinguish the former, whose only occurrences [occurrences] I abridge from our history, I entitle this my book *Albion's England*." *Albion's England* first appeared, in thirteen Books, in 1586; and was reprinted in 1589, in 1592, in 1596, in 1597, and in 1602. In 1606 the author added a *Continuance*, or continuation, in three Books; and the whole work was republished (without, however, the last three Books having been actually reprinted) in 1612. In this last edition it is described on the title-page as "now revised, and newly enlarged [by the author] a little before his death." It thus appears that, so long as its popularity lasted, *Albion's England* was one of the most popular long poems ever written. But that was only for about twenty years: although the early portion of it had in less than that time gone through half a dozen editions, the *Continuation*, published in 1606, sold so indifferently that enough of the impression still remained to complete the book when the whole was republished in 1612, and after that no other edition was ever called for, till the poem was reprinted in Chalmers's collection in 1810. The entire neglect into which it so soon fell, from the height of celebrity and popular favor, was probably brought about by various causes. Warner, according to Anthony Wood, was ranked by his contemporaries on a level with Spenser, and they were called the Homer and Virgil of their age. If he and Spenser were ever equally admired, it must have been by very different classes of readers. *Albion's England* is undoubtedly a work of very remarkable talent of its kind. It is in form a history of England, or Southern Britain, from the Deluge to the reign of James I., but may fairly be said to be, as the title-page of the last edition describes it, "not barren in variety of inventive intermixtures."

Or, to use the author's own words in his Preface, he certainly, as he hopes, has no great occasion to fear that he has grossly failed "in verity, brevity, invention, and variety, profitable, pathetic, pithy, and pleasant." In fact, it is one of the liveliest and most amusing poems ever written. Every striking event or legend that the old chronicles afford is seized hold of, and related always clearly, often with very considerable spirit and animation. But it is far from being a mere compilation; several of the narratives are not to be found anywhere else, and a large proportion of the matter is Warner's own, in every sense of the word. In this, as well as in other respects, it has greatly the advantage over the *Mirror for Magistrates*, as a rival to which work it was perhaps originally produced, and with the popularity of which it could scarcely fail considerably to interfere. Though a long poem (not much under 10,000 verses), it is still a much less ponderous work than the *Mirror*, absolutely as well as specifically. Its variety, though not obtained by any very artificial method, is infinite: not only are the stories it selects, unlike those in the *Mirror*, generally of a merry cast, and much more briefly and smartly told, but the reader is never kept long even on the same track or ground: all subjects, all departments of human knowledge or speculation, from theology down to common arithmetic, are intermixed, or rather interlaced, with the histories and legends in the most extraordinary manner. The verse is the favorite fourteen-syllable line of that age, the same in reality with that which has in modern times been commonly divided into two lines, the first of eight, the second of six syllables, and which in that form is still most generally used for short compositions in verse, more especially for those of a narrative or otherwise popular character. What Warner was chiefly admired for in his own day was his style. Meres in his *Wit's Treasury* mentions him as one of those by whom the English tongue in that age had been "mightily enriched, and gorgeously invested in rare ornaments and resplendent habiliments." And for fluency, combined with precision and economy of diction, Warner is probably unrivalled among the writers of English verse. We do not know whether his professional studies and habits may have contributed to give this character to his style; but, if the poetry of attorneys be apt to take this curt, direct, lucid, and at the same time flowing shape, it is a pity that we had not a little more of it. His command of the vulgar tongue, in particular, is wonderful. This indeed is perhaps his

most remarkable poetical characteristic ; and the tone which was thus given to his poem (being no doubt that of his own mind) may be conjectured to have been in great part the source both of its immense popularity for a time, and of the neglect and oblivion into which it was afterwards allowed to drop. That Warner's poetry and that of Spenser could have ever come in one another's way is impossible. Albion's England must from the first have been a book rather for the many than the few, — for the kitchen rather than the hall ; its spirit is not, what it has been sometimes called, merely naïve, but essentially coarse and vulgar. We do not allude so much to any particular abundance of warm description, or freedom of language, as to the low note on which the general strain of the composition is pitched. With all its force and vivacity, and even no want of fancy, at times, and graphic descriptive power, it is poetry with as little of high imagination in it as any that was ever written. Warner's is only at the most a capital poetical business style. Its positive offences, however, in the way of broadness and indecency of allusion are also very considerable — and are more pervading, run more through its whole texture, than the same thing will be found to do in the writing of any other eminent poet of that time. When the poem was first produced, the middle classes in general, for whom we must suppose it to have been principally intended, were still unrefined enough not to be scared or offended by this grossness, but rather to relish and enjoy it : this is proved by the eagerness with which so many editions were called for in so short a time. We do not believe that, as has been said, "its publication was at one time interdicted by the Star-Chamber for no other reason, that can now be assigned, but that it contains some love-stories more simply than delicately related."¹ The prohibition by the Star-Chamber was of the first edition, and apparently before it had been published ; and the ground seems to have been merely the invasion of the property of one printer by another (in whose house a seizure of the copies he had thrown off was made by the wardens of the Stationers' Company, he, it is stated, having been forbidden to print the book both by the Archbishop of Canterbury and by the wardens, and his doing so being also contrary to the late decrees of the Honourable Court of Star-Chamber).² If the book had been attempted to be suppressed for the

¹ Campbell, *Specimens*, p. 71 (edit. of 1844).

² See Ritson's *Bibliographia Poetica*, p. 385, note.

nakedness of some of the descriptions, it probably would not have appeared at all, — whereas it was given to the world that same year from the press of another printer, and was afterwards freely multiplied, as we have seen, in a rapid succession of new editions. But by the first years of the next century a new generation had grown up, — and even among the most numerous class of readers a change of manners had taken place which made it impossible that such a work as Albion's England should retain the favor it had once enjoyed. It was probably now universally voted vulgar, and held to have been suitable only for a more barbarous age. Nevertheless, the poem, as we have said, has very remarkable merit in some respects, and many passages, or rather portions of passages, in it may still be read with pleasure. It is also in the highest degree curious both as a repository of our old language, and for many notices of the manners and customs of our ancestors which are scattered up and down in it. All that is commonly known of Warner is from the story of Argentile and Curan, which has been reprinted from his Fourth Book by Mrs. Cooper in 'The Muses' Library (1738), and by Percy in his Reliques, and that of The Patient Countess, which Percy has also given, from his Eighth Book. We shall endeavor to select a few such short passages as may convey a fair notion of what the work contains and of the manner in which it is executed. It is difficult, for the reason that has been stated above, to find many pages, at least in the more interesting parts of the poem, that can be transcribed entire.

The following passage from the Third Book, being the conclusion of the 17th Chapter, is a specimen of Warner's very neatest style of narration. He has related Cæsar's victory over the Britons, which he says was won with difficulty, the conquest of the country having been only accomplished through the submission of that "traitorous knight, the Earl of London," whose disloyal example in yielding his charge and city to the foe was followed by the other cities; and then he winds up thus: —

But he, that won in every war, at Rome in civil robe
 Was stabbed to death: no certainty is underneath this globe;
 The good are envied of the bad, and glory finds disdain,
 And people are in constancy as April is in rain;
 Whereof, amidst our serious pen, this fable entertain: —
 An Ass, an Old Man, and a Boy did through the city pass;

And, whilst the wanton Boy did ride, the ¹ Old Man led the Ass.
 See yonder doting fool, said folk, that crawleth scarce for age,
 Doth set the boy upon his ass, and makes himself his page.
 Anon the blamed Boy alights, and lets the Old Man ride,
 And, as the Old Man did before, the Boy the Ass did guide.
 But, passing so, the people then did much the Old Man blame,
 And told him, Churl, thy limbs be tough ; let ride the boy, for shame.
 The fault thus found, both Man and Boy did back the ass and ride ;
 Then that the ass was over-charged each man that met them cried.
 Now both alight and go on foot, and lead the empty beast ;
 But then the people laugh, and say that one might ride at least.
 The Old Man, seeing by no ways he could the people please,
 Not blameless then, did drive the ass and drown him in the seas.
 Thus, whilst we be, it will not be that any pleaseth all ;
 Else had been wanting, worthily, the noble Cæsar's fall.

The end of Richard the Third, in the Sixth Book (Chapter 26th), is given with much spirit : —

Now Richard heard that Richmond was assisted, and on shore,
 And like unkenneled Cerberus the crooked tyrant swore,
 And all complexions act at once confusedly in him ;
 He studieth, striketh, threats, entreats, and looketh mildly grim ;
 Mistrustfully he trusteth, and he dreadingly doth ² dare,
 And forty passions in a trice in him consort and square.
 But when, by his convented force, his foes increased more,
 He hastened battle, finding his corrival apt therefore.

When Richmond orderly in all had battailed his aid,
 Enringed by his complices, their cheerful leader said : —
 Now is the time and place, sweet friends, and we the persons be
 That must give England breath, or else unbreath for her must we.
 No tyranny is fabled, and no tyrant was indeed,
 Worse than our foe, whose works will act my words if well he speed.
 For ills ³ to ills superlative are easily enticed,
 But entertain amendment as the Gergesites did Christ.
 Be valiant then ; he biddeth so that would not be outbid
 For courage, yet shall honour him, though base, that better did.
 I am right heir Lancastrian, he in York's destroyed right

¹ In the printed copy, "a." The edition before us, that of 1612, abounds with typographical errata.

² There can be no question that this is the true word, which is misprinted "did" in the edition before us.

³ Misprinted "ill."

Usurpeth ; but, through either source,¹ for neither claim I fight,
But for our country's long-lacked weal, for England's peace, I war ;
Wherein He speed us, unto whom I all events refer.

Meanwhile had furious Richard set his armies in array,
And then, with looks even like himself, this or the like did say : —
Why, lads ? shall yonder Welshman, with his stragglers, overmatch ?
Disdain ye not such rivals, and defer ye their dispatch ?
Shall Tudor from Plantagenet the crown by craking snatch ?
Know Richard's very thoughts (he touched the diadem he wore)
Be metal of this metal : then believe I love it more
Than that for other law than life to supersede my claim ;
And lesser must not be his plea that counterpleads the same.

The weapons overtook his words, and blows they bravely change,
When like a lion, thirsting blood, did moody Richard range,
And made large slaughters where he went, till Richmond he espied,
Whom singling, after doubtful swords, the valorous tyrant died.

Others of Shakspeare's historical or legendary subjects are also in Albion's England ; particularly the story of Lear, and that of Macbeth. In the former, which is in the Third Book (Chapter 14), the following well-turned lines occur : —

His aged eyes pour out their tears, when, holding up his hands,
He said, O God ! whoso thou art that my good hap withstands,
Prolong not life, defer not death ; my self I overlive
When those that owe to me their lives to me my death would give.
Thou town, whose walls rose of my wealth, stand evermore to tell
Thy founder's fall, and warn that none do fall as Leir fell.
Bid none affy in friends ; for say, His children wrought his wrack ;
Yea, those that were to him most dear did loath and let him lack.
Cordella, well Cordella said, she loved as a child ;
But sweeter words we seek than sooth, and so are men beguiled.
She only rests untried yet ; but what may I expect
From her, to whom I nothing gave, when these do me reject ?
Then die : nay, try ; the rule may fail, and nature may ascend ;
Nor are they ever surest friends on whom we most do spend.

The three last books, forming the continuation published in 1606 are occupied with the history of the Scots and Welsh ; and the story of Macbeth is told in the Fifteenth Book (Chapter 94). Shakspeare's witches (as they are commonly called) are here designated the "three fairies," and also "the weird-elves."

¹ This is the only reading like sense we can make out of "through eithers ours," which is the nonsense of the edition before us.

There are occasionally touches of true pathos in Warner; and one great merit which he has is, that his love of brevity generally prevents him from spoiling any stroke of this kind by multiplying words and images with the view of heightening the effect, as many of his contemporaries are prone to do. His picture of Fair Rosamond in the hands of Queen Eleanor is very touching:—

Fair Rosamund, surprised thus ere thus she did expect,
Fell on her humble knees, and did her fearful hands erect:
She blushed out beauty, whilst the tears did wash her pleasing face,
And begged pardon, meriting no less of common grace.
So far, forsooth, as in me lay, I did, quoth she, withstand;
But what may not so great a king by means or force command?
And dar'st thou, minion, quoth the Queen, thus article to me?

With that she dashed her on the lips, so dyed double red:
Hard was the heart that gave the blow; soft were those lips that bled.
Then forced she her to swallow down, prepared for that intent,
A poisoned potion

But we must also give an example or two of the eloquence of another kind with which the poem more abounds. Much of it is in the style of the following curious passage (from Book IX. Chap. 47):—

The younger of these widows (for they both had thrice been so)
Trots to the elder's cottage, hers but little distance fro:
There, cowering o'er two sticks across, burnt at a smokey stock,
They chat how young men them in youth, and they did young men mock;
And how since threescore years ago (they aged fourscore now)
Men, women, and the world were changed in all, they knew not how.
When we were maids, quoth the one of them, was no such new-found
pride;
Yet served I gentles, seeing store of dainty girls beside.
Then wore they shoes of ease; now of an inch broad, corked high:
Black karsey stoekings; worsted now, yea silk of youthful'st dye:
Garters of lists; but now of silk, some edged deep with gold:
With costlier toys — for coarser turns than used, perhaps, of old.
Fringed and embroidered petticoats now beg: but heard you named,
Fill now of late, busks, periwigs, masks, plumes of feathers framed,
Supporters, pooters,¹ fardingales above the loins to wear?

Some wives, grey headed, shame not locks of youthful borrowed hair;

¹ Chalmers has "posters."

Some, tiring art, attire their heads with only tresses bare.
 Some (grosser pride than which, think I, no passed age might shame)
 By art abusing nature, heads of antick't hair do frame.
 Once lacked each foresaid term,¹ because was lacking once the toy ;
 And, lacked we all those toys and terms, it were no grief but joy :
 But, lawful were it some be such, should all alike be coy ?
 Now dwells each drossel in her glass : when I was young, I wot,
 On holydays (for sildom else such idle times we got)
 A tub or pail of water clear stood us instead of glass.

My parents they were wealthy, and myself in wanton youth
 Was fair enough, but proud enough, so fool enough in truth.
 I might have had good husbands, which my destiny withstood :
 Of three now dead (all grief is dry, gossip, this ale is good)
 In faith not one of them was so ; for by this drink I swear
 (Requarrelling the cup) we — and her lips imparted were
 When the other beldam, great with chat (for talkative be cups)
 The former's prate, not worth the while, thus fondly interrupts : —
 When I, quoth she, the country left to be a London lass,
 I was not fairer than myself believed fair I was.
 Good God ! how formal, pranked, and pert became I in a trice,
 As if unto the place it were a nature to be nice.

And so the dialogue proceeds, though with more spirit than refinement, for a couple of pages farther. In another place (Book XIV. Chap. 91) a Lar, or Elf, is introduced inveighing against the decay of ancient manners, in the following strain : —

To farmers came I, that at least their loaf and cheese once freed
 For all would eat, but found themselves the parings now to need ;
 So do their landlords rack their rents : though in the manor place
 Scarce smoked a chimney, yet did smoke perplex me in strange case.
 I saw the chimneys cleared of fire, where ne'ertheless it smoked
 So bitterly as one not used to like it might have choked,
 But, when I saw it did proceed from nostrils and from throats
 Of ladies, lords, and silly grooms, not burning skins nor coats,
 Great Belsabub ! thought I, can all spit fire as well as thine ?
 Or where am I ? It cannot be under the torrid line.
 My fellow Incubus

Did put me by that fear, and said it was an Indian weed,
 That fumed away more wealth than would a many thousands feed.
 Freed of that fear, the novelty of coaches scathed me so,

¹ Chalmers has "Once starching lacked the term."

As from their drifts and clattering I knew not where to go.
 These also work, quoth Inebus, to our avail, for why?
 They tend to idle pride, and to inhospitality.
 With that I, comforted, did then peep into every one,
 And of my old acquaintances spied many a country Joan,
 Whose fathers drove the dung-cart, though the daughters now will none.
 I knew when prelates and the peers had fair attendance on
 By gentlemen and yeomanry; but that fair world is gone:
 For most, like Jehu, hurry with pedanties two or three,
 Yet all go down the wind, save those that hospitalious be.
 Greatest ladies, with their women, on their palfreys mounted fair,
 Went through the streets, well waited on, their artless faces bare,
 Which now in coaches scorn to be saluted of the air.
 I knew when men judicial rode on sober mules, whereby
 They might of suitors, these and they, ask, answer, and reply.
 I knew when more was thrived abroad by war than now by peace,
 And English feared where they be frumpt since hostile terms did cease:
 But by occasion all things are produced, be, decrease.
 Times were when practice also preached, and well said was well done;
 When courtiers cleared the old before they on the new world run;
 When no judicial place was bought, lest justice might be sold;
 When quirts nor quillets overthrew or long did causes hold;
 When lawyers more deserved their fees, and fatted less with gold;
 When to the fifteenth Psalm sometimes had citizens recourse;
 When Lords of farmers, farmers of the poor, had more remorse;
 When poverty had patience more; when none, as some of late,
 Illiterate, ridiculous, might on the altar wait; &c.

Warner's most abusive invectives, however, in which he exhausts the vocabulary of the kitchen and the streets, are directed against the old religion. But we cannot afford room for any further specimens.



DANIEL.

THE great work of Samuel Daniel, who was born at Taunton, in Somersetshire, in 1562, and died in 1619, is his Civil Wars between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York, in eight Books, the first four published in 1595, the fifth in 1599, the sixth in 1602, the two last in 1609; the preceding Books being always, we believe, republished along with the new edition. He is also

the author of various minor poetical productions, of which the principal are a collection of fifty-seven Sonnets entitled *Delia* his *Musophilus*, containing a General Defence of Learning, some short epistles, and several tragedies and court masques. And he wrote, besides, in prose, a History of England, from the Conquest to the end of the reign of Edward III., as well as the Defence of Rhyme (in answer to Campion) which has been already mentioned. Very opposite judgments have been passed upon Daniel. Ben Jonson, in his conversations with Drummond, declared him to be no poet: Drummond, on the contrary, pronounces him "for sweetness of rhyming second to none." His style, both in prose and verse, has a remarkably modern air: if it were weeded of a few obsolete expressions, it would scarcely seem more antique than that of Waller, which is the most modern of the seventeenth century. Bishop Kennet, who has republished Daniel's History, after telling us that the author had a place at Court in the reign of King James I., being groom of the privy chambers to the Queen, observes, that he "seems to have taken all the refinement a court could give him;" and probably the absence of pedantry in his style, and its easy and natural flow, are to be traced in great part to the circumstance of his having been a man of the world. His verse, too, always careful and exact, is in many passages more than smooth; even in his dramatic writings (which, having nothing dramatic about them except the form, have been held in very small estimation) it is frequently musical and sweet, though always artificial. The highest quality of his poetry is a tone of quiet, pensive reflection in which he is fond of indulging, and which often rises to dignity and eloquence, and has at times even something of depth and originality. Daniel's was the not uncommon fate of an attendant upon courts and the great: he is believed to have experienced some neglect from his royal patrons in his latter days, or at least to have been made jealous by Ben Jonson being employed to furnish part of the poetry for the court entertainments, the supply of which he used to have all to himself; upon which he retired to a life of quiet and contemplation in the country. It sounds strange in the present day to be told that his favorite retreat from the gayety and bustle of London was a house which he rented in Old Street, St. Luke's. In his gardens here, we are informed by the writer of the Life prefixed to his collected poems, he would often indulge in entire solitude for many months, or at most receive the

visits of only a few select friends. It is said to have been here that he composed most of his dramatic pieces. Towards the end of his life he retired to a farm which he had at Beckington, near Philip's Norton, in Somersetshire, and his death took place there. "He was married," says the editor of his works, "but whether to the person he so often celebrates under the name of Delia, is uncertain." Fuller, in his *Worthies*, tells us that his wife's name was Justina. They had no children. Daniel is said to have been appointed to the honorary post of Poet-Laureate after the death of Spenser.

In his narrative poetry, Daniel is in general wire-drawn, flat, and feeble. He has no passion, and very little descriptive power. His *Civil Wars* has certainly as little of martial animation in it as any poem in the language. There is abundance, indeed, of "the tranquil mind"; but of "the plumed troops," and the rest of "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war," Daniel seems, in composing this work (we had nearly written in this composing work), to have taken as complete a farewell as Othello himself. It is mostly a tissue of long-winded disquisition and cold and languid declamation, and has altogether more of the qualities of a good opiate than of a good poem. We will therefore take the few extracts for which we can make room from some of his other productions, where his vein of reflection is more in place, and also better in itself. His *Musophilus* is perhaps upon the whole his finest piece. The poem, which is in the form of a dialogue between *Philocosmus* (a lover of the world) and *Musophilus* (a lover of the Muse), commences thus: —

Philocosmus.

Fond man, *Musophilus*, that thus dost spend
 In an ungainful art thy dearest days,
 Tiring thy wits, and toiling to no end
 But to attain that idle smoke of praise!
 Now, when this busy world cannot attend
 The untimely music of neglected lays,
 Other delights than these, other desires,
 This wiser profit-seeking age requires.

Musophilus.

Friend *Philocosmus*, I confess indeed
 I love this sacred art thou set'st so light:

And, though it never stand my life in stead,
 It is enough it gives myself delight,
 The whilst my unafflicted mind doth feed
 On no unholy thoughts for benefit.

Be it that my unseasonable song
 Come out of time, that fault is in the time ;
 And I must not do virtue so much wrong
 As love her aught the worse for others' crime ;
 And yet I find some blessed spirits among
 That cherish me, and like and grace my rhyme.

A gain that ¹ I do more in soul esteem
 Than all the gain of dust the world doth crave
 And, if I may attain but to redeem
 My name from dissolution and the grave,
 I shall have done enough ; and better deem
 To have lived to *be* than to have died to *have*.

Short-breathed mortality would yet extend
 That span of life so far forth as it may,
 And rob her fate ; seek to beguile her end
 Of some few lingering days of after-stay ;
 That all this Little All might not descend
 Into the dark an universal prey ;
 And give our labours yet this poor delight
 That, when our days do end, they are not done,
 And, though we die, we shall not perish quite,
 But live two lives where others have but one.

Further on in the dialogue, Musophilus exclaims : —

So fares this humorous world, that ever-more,
 Rapt with the current of a present course,
 Runs into that which lay contemned before ;
 Then, glutted, leaves the same, and falls to a worse :
 Now zeal holds all, no life but to adore ;
 Then cold in spirit, and life is of no force.

Strait all that holy was unhallowed lies,
 The scattered carcasses of ruined vows ;
 Then truth is false, and now hath blindness eyes ;
 Then zeal trusts all, now scarcely what it knows ;

¹ Erroneously printed in the edition before us (2 vols. 12mo. 1718) "Again that."

That evermore, to foolish or to wise,
It fatal is to be seduced with shows.

Sacred Religion! Mother of Form and Fear!¹
How gorgeously sometimes dost thou sit decked!
What pompous vestures do we make thee wear!
What stately piles we prodigal erect!
How sweet perfumed thou art! how shining clear!
How solemnly observed! with what respect!

Another time, all plain, all quite thread-bare,
Thou must have all within, and nought without;
Sit poorly, without light, disrobed; no care
Of outward grace, to amuse the poor devout;
Powerless, unfollowed; scarcely men can spare
The necessary rites to set thee out.

Either Truth, Goodness, Virtue are not still
The selfsame which they are, and always one,
But alter to the project of our will;
Or we our actions make them wait upon,
Putting them in the livery of our skill,
And cast them off again when we have done.

Afterwards he replies very finely to an objection of Philocosmus to the cultivation of poetry, from the small number of those who really cared for it:—

And for the few that only lend their ear,
That few is all the world; which with a few
Do ever live, and move, and work, and stir.
This is the heart doth feel, and only know;
The rest, of all that only bodies bear,
Roll up and down, and fill up but the row;

And serve as others' members, not their own,
The instruments of those that do direct.
Then, what disgrace is this, not to be known
To those know not to give themselves respect?
And, though they swell, with pomp of folly blown,
They live ungraced, and die but in neglect.

And, for my part, if only one allow
The care my labouring spirits take in this,

¹ This fine line has been adopted by Wordsworth, a reader and admirer of Daniel, in one of his sonnets on the Duddon.

He is to me a theatre large enow,
 And his applause only sufficient is ;
 All my respect is bent but to his brow ;
 That is my all, and all I am is his.

And, if some worthy spirits be pleased too,
 It shall more comfort breed, but not more will.
 But what if none? It cannot yet undo
 The love I bear unto this holy skill :
 This is the thing that I was born to do ;
 This is my scene ; this part must I fulfil.

Our last extract shall be from his epistle to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland (the mother of Lady Anne Clifford, afterwards Countess of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery, to whom Daniel had been tutor) : —

He that of such a height hath set his mind,
 And reared the dwelling of the thoughts so strong,
 As neither fear nor hope can shake the frame
 Of his resolved powers ; nor all the wind
 Of vanity or malice pierce to wrong
 His settled peace, or to disturb the same ;
 What a fair seat hath he from whence he may
 The boundless wastes and weals of man survey !

And with how free an eye doth he look down
 Upon these lower regions of turmoil !
 Where all the storms of passions mainly beat
 On flesh and blood ; where honour, power, renown
 Are only gay affections, golden toil ;
 Where greatness stands upon as feeble feet
 As frailty doth, and only great doth seem
 To little minds who do it so esteem.

Thus, Madam, fares that man that hath prepared
 A rest for his desires ; and sees all things
 Beneath him ; and hath learned this Book of Man,
 Full of the notes of frailty ; and compared
 The best of glory with her sufferings :
 By whom, I see, you labour all you can
 To plant your heart, and set your thoughts as near
 His glorious mansion as your powers can bear.

Which, Madam, are so soundly fashioned
 By that clear judgment, that hath carried you

Beyond the feeble limits of your kind,
 As they can stand against the strongest head
 Passion can make ; inured to any hue
 The world can east ; that cannot east that mind
 Out of the form of goodness ; that doth see
 Both what the best and worst of earth can be.

Which makes that, whatsoever here befalls,
 You in the region of your self remain,
 Where no vain breath of the impudent molests ;
 That lieth¹ secured within the brazen walls
 Of a clear conscience ; that, without all stain,
 Rises in peace, in innocency rests,
 Whilst all what malice from without procures
 Shows her own ugly heart, but hurts not yours.

And, whereas none rejoice more in revenge
 Than women use to do, yet you well know
 That wrong is better checked by being contemned
 Than being pursued ; leaving to Him to avenge
 To whom it appertains. Wherein you show
 How worthily your clearness hath condemned
 Base malediction, living in the dark,
 That at the rays of goodness still doth bark.

Knowing the heart of man is set to be
 The centre of this world, about the which
 These revolutions of disturbances
 Still roll ; where all the aspects of misery
 Predominate ; whose strong effects are such
 As he must bear, being powerless to redress ;
 And that, unless above himself he can
 ERECT himself, how poor a thing is man !

And this note, Madam, of your worthiness
 Remains recorded in so many hearts,
 As time nor malice cannot wrong your right
 In the inheritance of fame you must possess :
 You that have built you by your great deserts,
 Out of small means, a far more exquisite
 And glorious dwelling for your honoured name
 Than all the gold of² leaden minds can frame.

¹ This apparently must be the true word. The edition before us has "hath."

² The text before us has "that," which is nonsense.

DRAYTON.

MICHAEL DRAYTON, who is computed to have been born in 1563, and who died in 1631, is one of the most voluminous of our old poets; being the author, besides many minor compositions, of three works of great length:—his Barons' Wars (on the subject of the civil wars of the reign of Edward II.), originally entitled Mortimeriados, under which name it was published in 1596; his England's Heroical Epistles, 1598; and his Polyolbion, the first eighteen Books of which appeared in 1612, and the whole, consisting of thirty Books, and extending to as many thousand lines, in 1622. This last is the work on which his fame principally rests. It is a most elaborate and minute topographical description of England, written in Alexandrine rhymes; and is a very remarkable work for the varied learning it displays, as well as for its poetic merits. The genius of Drayton is neither very imaginative nor very pathetic; but he is an agreeable and weighty writer, with an ardent, if not a highly creative, fancy. From the height to which he occasionally ascends, as well as from his power of keeping longer on the wing, he must be ranked, as he always has been, much before both Warner and Daniel. He has greatly more elevation than the former, and more true poetic life than the latter. His most graceful poetry, however, is perhaps to be found in some of his shorter pieces,—in his Pastorals, his very elegant and lively little poem entitled, Nymphidia; or, the Court of Fairy, and his verses on Poets and Poesy, in which occur the lines on Marlow that have been quoted in a preceding page. From a mass of verse extending in all to not far from 100,000 lines, the few extracts that we can give must be far from affording a complete illustration of the author's genius. The following is from the commencement of the Thirteenth Book, or Song, of the Polyolbion, the subject of which is the County of Warwick, of which Drayton, as he here tells us, was a native:—

Upon the mid-lands now the industrious muse doth fall;
That shire which we the heart of England well may call,
As she herself extends (the midst which is decreed)
Betwixt St. Michael's Mount and Berwick bordering Tweed,
Brave Warwick, that abroad so long advanced her Bear,

By her illustrious Earls renowned every where ;
Above her neighbouring shires which always bore her head.

My native country then, which so brave spirits hast bred,
If there be virtues yet remaining in thy earth,
Or any good of thine thou bred'st into my birth,
Accept it as thine own, whilst now I sing of thee,
Of all thy later brood the unworthiest though I be.

When Phœbus lifts his head out of the water's¹ wave,
No sooner doth the earth her flowery bosom brave,
At such time as the year brings on the pleasant spring
But Hunt's up to the morn the feathered sylvans sing ;
And, in the lower grove as on the rising knowl,
Upon the highest spray of every mounting pole
These quiristers are perched, with many a speckled breast :
Then from her burnished gate the goodly glittering East
Gilds every mountain-top, which late the humorous night
Bespangled had with pearl, to please the morning's sight ;
On which the mirthful quires, with their clear open throats,
Unto the joyful morn so strain their warbling notes
That hills and valleys ring, and even the echoing air
Seems all composed of sounds about them every where.
The throstle with shrill sharps, as purposely he song
To awake the lustless sun, or chiding that so long
He was in coming forth that should the thickets thrill ;
The woosel near at hand ; that hath a golden bill,
As nature him had marked of purpose t' let us see
That from all other birds his tunes should different be .
For with their vocal sounds they sing to pleasant May ;
Upon his dulcet pipe the merle doth only play.
When in the lower brake the nightingale hard by
In such lamenting strains the joyful hours doth ply
As though the other birds she to her tunes would draw
And, but that Nature, by her all-constraining law,
Each bird to her own kind this season doth invite,
They else, alone to hear that charmer of the night
(The more to use their ears) their voices sure would spare,
That moduleth her notes so admirably rare
As man to set in parts at first had learned of her.
To Philomel the next the linnæ we prefer ;
And by that warbling bird the woodlark place we then,
The red-sparrow, the nope, the redbreast, and the wren ;

¹ Or, perhaps, "watery." The common text gives "winter's."

The yellow-pate, which, though she hurt the blooming tree,
 Yet scarce hath any bird a finer pipe than she.
 And, of these chanting fowls, the goldfinch not behind,
 That hath so many sorts descending from her kind.
 The tydy, for her notes as delicate as they ;
 The laughing hecco ; then, the counterfeiting jay.
 The softer with the shrill, some hid among the leaves,
 Some in the taller trees, some in the lower greaves,
 Thus sing away the morn, until the mounting sun
 Through thick exhaled fogs his golden head hath run,
 And through the twisted tops of our close covert creeps
 To kiss the gentle shade, this while that sweetly sleeps.

And, near to these our thicks, the wild and frightful herds,
 Not hearing other noise but this of chattering birds,
 Feed fairly on the lawns ; both sorts of seasoned deer :
 Here walk the stately red, the freckled fallow there ;
 The bucks and lusty stags amongst the rascals strewed,
 As sometime gallant spirits amongst the multitude.
 Of all the beasts which we for our venerial name
 The hart among the rest, the hunter's noblest game.
 Of which most princely chace sith none did e'er report,
 Or by description touch to express that wondrous sport
 (Yet might have well beseeemed the ancients' noble songs)
 To our old Arden here most fitly it belongs.
 Yet shall she not invoke the Muses to her aid,
 But thee, Diana bright, a goddess and a maid ;
 In many a huge-grown wood, and many a shady grove
 Which oft hast borne thy bow, Great Huntress, used to rove,
 At many a cruel beast, and with thy darts to pierce
 The lion, panther, ounce, the bear, and tiger fierce ;
 And, following thy fleet game, chaste mighty forest's queen,
 With thy dishevelled nymphs attired in youthful green,
 About the lawns hast scoured, and wastes both far and near,
 Brave huntress ! But no beasts shall prove thy quarries here
 Save those the best of chase, the tall and lusty red.
 The stag, for goodly shape and stateliness of head,
 Is fittest to hunt at force. For whom when, with his hounds,
 The labouring hunter tufts the thick unbarbed grounds,
 Where harboured is the hart, there often from his feed
 The dogs of him do find ; or, thorough skilful heed,
 The huntsman by his shot, or breaking earth, perceives,
 Or entering of the thick by pressing of the greaves,
 Where he had gone to lodge. Now, when the hart doth hear

The often bellowing hounds to vent his secret leir,¹
 He rousing rusheth out, and through the brakes doth drive,
 As though up by the roots the bushes he would rive ;
 And, through the cumbrous thicks as fearfully he makes,
 He with his branched head the tender saplings shakes,
 That, sprinkling their moist pearls, do seem for him to weep,
 When after goes the cry, with yellings loud and deep,
 That all the forest rings, and every neighbouring place.
 And there is not a hound but falleth to the chace ;
 Rechating with his horn, which then the hunter cheers,
 Whilst still the lusty stag his high-palmed head uprears,
 His body showing state, with unbent knees upright,
 Expressing, from all beasts, his courage in his flight.
 But when, the approaching foes still following, he perceives
 That he his speed must trust, his usual walk he leaves,
 And o'er the champain flies ; which when the assembly find,
 Each follows as his horse were footed with the wind.
 But, being then embost, the noble stately deer
 When he hath gotten ground (the kennel east arear)
 Doth beat the brooks and ponds for sweet refreshing soil ;
 That serving not, then proves if he his scent can foil,
 And makes amongst the herds, and flocks of shag-woolled sheep,
 Them frightening from the guard of those who had their keep ;
 But, whenas all his shifts his safety still denies,
 Put quite out of his walk, the ways and fallows tries.
 Whom when the ploughman meets, his team he letteth stand,
 To assail him with his goad ; so, with his hook in hand,
 The shepherd him pursues, and to his dog doth hollo,
 When, with tempestuous speed, the hounds and huntsmen follow ;
 Until the noble deer, through toil bereaved of strength,
 His long and sinewy legs then failing him at length,
 The villages attempts, enraged, not giving way
 To any thing he meets now at his sad decay.
 The cruel ravenous hounds and bloody hunters near,
 This noblest beast of chace, that vainly doth not² fear,
 Some bank or quick-set finds ; to which his haunch opposed,
 He turns upon his foes, that soon have him inclosed,
 The churlish-throated hounds then holding him at bay ;
 And, as their cruel fangs on his harsh skin they lay,
 With his sharp-pointed head he dealeth deadly wounds.
 The hunter, coming in to help his wearied hounds,
 He desperately assails ; until, oppressed by force,

¹ Lair.² "But" is the common reading.

He, who the mourner is to his own dying corse,
Upon the ruthless earth his precious tears lets fall.

This passage, though long, will scarcely be felt to be tedious. It is one of the most animated descriptions in poetry. We add a short specimen of Drayton's lighter style from his *Nymphidia* — the account of the equipage of the Queen of the Fairies, when she set out to visit her lover Pigwiggen. The reader may compare it with Mercutio's description in *Romeo and Juliet* : —

Her chariot ready straight is made ;
Each thing therein is fitting laid,
That she by nothing might be stayed,
For nought must be her letting ;
Four nimble guests the horses were,
Their harnesses of gossamer,
Fly Cranion, her charioteer,
Upon the coach-box getting.

Her chariot of a snail's fine shell,
Which for the colours did excel,
The fair Queen Mab becoming well,
So lively was the limning ;
The seat the soft wool of the bee,
The cover (gallantly to see)
The wing of a pied butterfly ;
I trow 'twas simple trimming.

The wheels composed of cricket's bones,
And daintily made for the nonce ;
For fear of rattling on the stones
With thistle down they shod it ;
For all her maidens much did fear
If Oberon had chanced to hear
That Mab his queen should have been there,
He would not have abode it.

She mounts her chariot with a trice,
Nor would she stay for no advice
Until her maids, that were so nice,
To wait on her were fitted ;
But ran herself away alone ;
Which when they heard, there was not one

But hasted after to be gone,
As she had been diswitted.

Hop, and Mop, and Drab so clear,
Pip and Trip, and Skip, that were
To Mab their sovereign so dear,
Her special maids of honour ;
Fib, and Tib, and Pink, and Pin,
Tick, and Quick, and Jill, and Jin,
Tit, and Nit, and Wap, and Win,
The train that wait upon her.

Upon a grasshopper they got,
And, what with amble and with trot,
For hedge nor ditch they spared not,
But after her they hie them :
A cobweb over them they throw,
To shield the wind if it should blow ;
Themselves they wisely could bestow
Lest any should espy them.

JOSEPH HALL.

HERE should not be omitted a name of great note, that of Joseph Hall, who was born in 1574, and was successively bishop of Exeter and Norwich, from the latter of which sees, having been expelled by the Long Parliament, he died, after protracted sufferings from imprisonment and poverty, in 1656. Hall began his career of authorship by the publication of *Three Books of Satires*, in 1597, while he was a student at Cambridge, and only in his twenty-third year. A continuation followed the next year under the title of *Virgidemiarum* the *Three last Books* ; and the whole were afterwards republished together, as *Virgidemiarum Six Books* ; that is, six books of bundles of rods. "These satires," says Warton, who has given an elaborate analysis of them, "are marked with a classical precision to which English poetry had yet hardly attained. They are replete with animation of style and sentiment. . . . The characters are delineated in strong and lively coloring.

and their discriminations are touched with the masterly traces of genuine humor. The versification is equally energetic and elegant and the fabric of the couplets approaches to the modern standard.”¹ Hall’s Satires have been repeatedly reprinted in modern times.

SYLVESTER.

ONE of the most popular poets of this date was Joshua Sylvester, the translator of *The Divine Weeks and Works*, and other productions, of the French poet Du Bartas. Sylvester has the honor of being supposed to have been one of the early favorites of Milton.² In one of his publications he styles himself a Merchant-Adventurer, and he seems to have belonged to the Puritan party, which may have had some share in influencing Milton’s regard. His translation of Du Bartas was first published in 1605; and the seventh edition (beyond which, we believe, its popularity did not carry it) appeared in 1641.³ Nothing can be more uninspired than the general run of Joshua’s verse, or more fantastic and absurd than the greater number of its more ambitious passages; for he had no taste or judgment, and, provided the stream of sound and the jingle of the rhyme were kept up, all was right in his notion. His poetry consists chiefly of translations from the French; but he is also the author of some original pieces, the title of one of which, a courtly offering from the poetical Puritan to the prejudices of King James, may be quoted as a lively specimen of his style and genius:—“Tobacco battered, and the pipes shattered, about their ears that idly idolize so base and barbarous a weed, or at leastwise overlove so loathsome a vanity, by a volley of holy shot thundered from Mount Helicon.”⁴ But, with all his general flatness and frequent absurdity, Sylvester has an uncommon flow

¹ Hist. of Eng. Poet. iv. 338.

² Milton’s obligations to Sylvester were first pointed out in *Considerations on Milton’s Early Reading, and the Prima Stamina of his Paradise Lost, together with Extracts from a Poet of the Sixteenth Century*, by the Rev. Charles Dunster (who had a few years before produced his well-known edition of the *Paradise Regained*). 1800.

³ Ritson, in his *Bibliographia Poetica*, makes the edition of 1613 to have been only the third; but it is called the fourth on the title-page.

⁴ Svo. Lond. 1615.

of harmonious words at times, and occasionally even some fine lines and felicitous expressions. His contemporaries called him the "Silver-tongued Sylvester," for what they considered the sweetness of his versification; and some of his best passages justify the title. Indeed, even when the substance of what he writes approaches nearest to nonsense, the sound is often very graceful, soothing the ear with something like the swing and ring of Dryden's heroics. But, after a few lines, is always sure to come in some ludicrous image or expression which destroys the effect of the whole. The translation of Du Bartas is inscribed to King James in a most adulatory and elaborate Dedication, consisting of a string of sonnet-shaped stanzas, ten in all, of which the two first are a very fair sample of the mingled good and bad of Sylvester's poetry:—

To England's, Scotland's, France', and Ireland's king;
 Great Emperor of Europe's greatest isles;
 Monarch of hearts, and arts, and everything
 Beneath Bootes, many thousand miles;
 Upon whose head honour and fortune smiles;
 About whose brows clusters of crowns do spring;
 Whose faith him Champion of the Faith enstyles;
 Whose wisdom's fame o'er all the world doth ring:
 Mnemosyne and her fair daughters bring
 The Daphnean crown to crown him laureate;
 Whole and sole sovereign of the Thespian spring,
 Prince of Parnassus and Pierian state;
 And with their crown their kingdom's arms they yield,
 Thrice three pens sunlike in a Cynthian field;
 Signed by themselves and their High Treasurer
 Bartas, the Great; engrossed by Sylvester.

Our sun did set, and yet no night ensued;
 Our woeful loss so joyful gain did bring.
 In tears we smile, amid our sighs we sing;
 So suddenly our dying light renewed.
 As when the Arabian only bird doth burn
 Her aged body in sweet flames to death,
 Out of her cinders a new bird hath breath,
 In whom the beauties of the first return;
 From spicy ashes of the sacred urn
 Of our dead Phenix, dear Elizabeth,

A new true Phenix lively flourisheth,
Whom greater glories than the first adorn.
So much, O King, thy sacred worth presume-I-on,
James, thou just heir of England's joyful un-i-on.

It is not to be denied that there is considerable skill in versification here, and also some ingenious rhetoric ; but, not to notice the pervading extravagance of the sentiment, some of the best sounding of the lines and phrases have next to no meaning ; and the close of each stanza, that of the last in particular, is in the manner of a ludicrous travesty. Many of Sylvester's conceits, however, belong to the original upon which he worked, and which upon the whole may be considered as fairly represented, perhaps occasionally improved, in his translation. Some passages are very melodiously given, — the following, for instance, the commencement of which may put the reader in mind of Milton's " Hail, holy light ! offspring of heaven first-born " : —

All hail, pure lamp, bright, sacred, and excelling ;
Sorrow and care, darkness and dread repelling ;
Thou world's great taper, wicked men's just terror,
Mother of truth, true beauty's only mirror,
God's eldest daughter ; O ! how thou art full
Of grace and goodness ! O ! how beautiful !

But yet, because all pleasures wax unpleasant
If without pause we still possess them present,
And none can right discern the sweets of peace
That have not felt war's irksome bitterness,
And swans seem whiter if swart crows be by
(For contraries each other best descry),
The All's architect alternately decreed
That Night the Day, the Day should Night succeed.

The Night, to temper Day's exceeding drought,
Moistens our air, and makes our earth to sprout :
The Night is she that all our travails eases,
Buries our cares, and all our griefs appeases :
The Night is she that, with her sable wing
In gloomy darkness hushing every thing,
Through all the world dumb silence doth distil,
And wearied bones with quiet sleep doth fill.

Sweet Night ! without thee, without thee, alas !
Our life were loathsome, even a hell, to pass ;

For outward pains and inward passions still,
 With thousand deaths, would soul and body thrill.
 O Night, thou pullest the proud masque away
 Wherewith vain actors, in this world's great play,
 By day disguise them. For no difference
 Night makes between the peasant and the prince,
 The poor and rich, the prisoner and the judge,
 The foul and fair, the master and the drudge,
 The fool and wise, Barbarian and the Greek ;
 For Night's black mantle covers all alike.

He that, condemned for some notorious vice,
 Seeks in the mines the baits of avarice,
 Or, melting at the furnace, fineth bright
 Our soul's dire sulphur, resteth yet at night.
 He that, still stooping, tugs against the tide
 His laden barge alongst a river's side,
 And, filling shores with shouts, doth melt him quite,
 Upon his pallet resteth yet at night.
 He that in summer, in extremest heat
 Scorched all day, in his own scalding sweat,
 Shaves with keen scythe the glory and delight
 Of motley meadows, resteth yet at night,
 And in the arms of his dear pheer forgoes
 All former troubles and all former woes.
 Only the learned Sisters' sacred minions,
 While silent Night under her sable pinions
 Folds all the world, with painless pain they tread
 A sacred path that to the heavens doth lead ;
 And higher than the heavens their readers raise
 Upon the wings of their immortal lays.

CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

OF the translators from the ancients in this age, by far the greatest is Chapman. George Chapman was born at Hitching Hill, in the county of Hertford, in 1557, and lived till 1634. Besides his plays, which will be afterwards noticed, he is the author of several original poetical pieces ; but he is best and most favorably known by his versions of the Iliad and the Odyssey. "He would have

made a great epic poet," Charles Lamb has said, in his *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets*, turning to these works after having characterized his dramas, "if, indeed, he has not abundantly shown himself to be one: for his Homer is not so properly a translation as the stories of Achilles and Ulysses rewritten. The earnestness and passion which he has put into every part of these poems would be incredible to a reader of mere modern translations. His almost Greek zeal for the honor of his heroes is only paralleled by that fierce spirit of Hebrew bigotry with which Milton, as if personating one of the zealots of the old law, clothed himself when he sat down to paint the acts of Samson against the uncircumcised. The great obstacle to Chapman's translations being read is their unconquerable quaintness. He pours out in the same breath the most just and natural, and the most violent and forced expressions. He seems to grasp whatever words come first to hand during the impetus of inspiration, as if all other must be inadequate to the divine meaning. But passion (the all in all in poetry) is everywhere present, raising the low, dignifying the mean, and putting sense into the absurd. He makes his readers glow, weep, tremble, take any affection which he pleases, be moved by words or in spite of them, be disgusted and overcome that disgust." Chapman's Homer is, in some respects, not unworthy of this enthusiastic tribute. Few writers have been more copiously inspired with the genuine frenzy of poetry — with that "fine-madness," which, as Drayton has said in his lines on Marlow, "rightly should possess a poet's brain." Indeed, in the character of his genius, out of the province of the drama, Chapman bears a considerable resemblance to Marlow, whose unfinished translation of Musæus's *Hero and Leander* he completed. With more judgment and more care he might have given to his native language, in his version of the *Iliad*, one of the very greatest of the poetical works it possesses. But what, except the most extreme irregularity and inequality, — a rough sketch rather than a finished performance, — was to be expected from his boast of having translated half the poem — namely, the last twelve books — in fifteen weeks? Yet, rude and negligent upon the whole as it is, Chapman's is by far the most Homeric *Iliad* we yet possess. The enthusiasm of the translator for his original is uncompromising to a degree of the ludicrous. "Of all books," he exclaims in his Preface, "extant in all kinds, Homer is the first and best;" and in the same spirit, in quoting

a passage from Pliny's *Natural History* in another portion of his preliminary matter, he proceeds first to turn it into verse, "that no prose may come near Homer." In spite, however, of all this eccentricity, and of a hurry and impetuosity which betray him into many mistranslations, and, on the whole, have the effect perhaps of giving a somewhat too tumultuous and stormy representation of the Homeric poetry, the English into which Chapman transfuses the meaning of the mighty ancient is often singularly and delicately beautiful. He is the author of nearly all the happiest of the compound epithets which Pope has adopted, and of many others equally musical and expressive. "Far-shooting Phœbus," — "the ever-living gods," — "the many-headed hill," — "the ivory-wristed queen," — are a few of the felicitous combinations with which he has enriched his native tongue. Carelessly executed, indeed, as the work for the most part is, there is scarcely a page of it that is not irradiated by gleams of the truest poetic genius. Often in the midst of a long paragraph of the most chaotic versification, the fatigued and distressed ear is surprised by a few lines, — or it may be sometimes only a single line, — "musical as is Apollo's lute," — and sweet and graceful enough to compensate for ten times as much ruggedness. Such, for instance, is the following version of part of the description of the visit paid by Ulysses and his companions to the shrine of Apollo at Chrysa, in the First Book : —

— The youths crowned cups of wine

Drank off, and filled again to all : that day was held divine,
 And spent in pœans to the Sun ; who heard with pleased ear :
 When whose bright chariot stooped to sea, and twilight hid the clear,
 All soundly on their cables slept, even till the night was worn ;
 And when the Lady of the Light, the rosy-fingered morn,
 Rose from the hills, all fresh arose, and to the camp retired,
 While Phœbus with a fore-right wind their swelling bark inspired.

And here are a few more verses steeped in the same liquid beauty, from the *Catalogue of the Ships*, in the Second Book : —

Who dwell in Pylos' sandy soil and Arene¹ the fair,
 In Thryon near Alpheus' flood, and Aepy full of air,

¹ This name is incorrectly accented, but Pope has copied the error. Warton had a copy of Chapman's translation, which had belonged to Pope, and in which the latter had noted many of the interpolations of his predecessor, of whom, indeed, as Warton remarks, a diligent observer will easily discern that he was no careless

In Cyparysseus, Amphygen, and little Pteleon,
 The town where all the Eleots dwell, and famous Doreon ;
 Where all the Muses, opposite, in strife of poesy,
 To ancient Thanyris of Thrace, did use him cruelly :
 He coming from Eurytus' ¹ court, the wise Oechalian king,
 Because he proudly durst affirm he could more sweetly sing
 Than that Pierian race of Jove, they, angry with his vaunt,
 Bereft his eyesight and his song, that did the ear enchant,
 And of his skill to touch his harp disfurnished his hand :
 All these, in ninety hollow keels, grave Nestor did command.

Almost the whole of this Second Book, indeed, is admirably translated : in the harangues, particularly, of Agamemnon and the other generals, in the earlier part of it, all the fire of Homer burns and blazes in English verse.²

HARINGTON. FAIRFAX. FANSHAWE.

OF the translators of foreign poetry which belong to this period, three are very eminent. Sir John Harington's translation of the Orlando Furioso first appeared in 1591, when the author was in

reader. *Hist. Eng. Poet.* iv. 272. This copy, described in the newspaper account as having been presented to Warton by Bishop Warburton, is stated to have been knocked down for 12*l.* at the sale by auction in April 1860 of the library of the late Rev. John Mitford. In the preface to his own *Iliad*, Pope has allowed to Chapman, "a daring fiery spirit that animates his translation, which is something like what one might imagine Homer himself might have writ before he arrived to years of discretion." Dryden has told us also that Waller used to say he never could read it without incredible transport. In a note upon Warton's *History*, by the late Mr. Park, it is stated that "Chapman's own copy of his translation of Homer, corrected by him throughout for a future edition, was purchased for five shillings from the shop of Edwards by Mr. Stevens, and, at the sale of his books in 1800, was transferred to the invaluable library of Mr. Heber." This important copy, it appears, cannot now be found. Chapman's *Iliad* in a complete form was first printed without date, but certainly after the accession of James I., to whose son, Prince Henry, it is dedicated. The *Odyssey*, which is in the common heroic verse of ten syllables, was published in 1614.

¹ This name is also misaccented. Both works are probably very incorrectly printed.

² Chapman's Translation of the *Iliad*, formerly a scarce book, has now been rendered generally accessible by two reprints of it : the first edited by the late Dr. W. Cooke Taylor, 2 vols. 8vo. 1843 ; the second (along with the *Odyssey* and others of Chapman's translations) by Mr. R. Hooper, 5 vols. 8vo. 1857.

his thirtieth year. It does not convey all the glow and poetry of Ariosto ; but it is, nevertheless, a performance of great ingenuity and talent. The translation of Tasso's great epic by Edward Fairfax was first published, under the title of *Godfrey of Bulloigne, or the Recoverie of Jerusalem*, in 1600. This is a work of true genius, full of passages of great beauty ; and, although by no means a perfectly exact or servile version of the Italian original, is throughout executed with as much care as taste and spirit.¹ Sir Richard Fanshawe is the author of versions of Camoens's *Lusiad*, of Guarini's *Pastor Fido*, of the Fourth Book of the *Æneid*, of the Odes of Horace, and of the *Querer por Solo Querer* (To love for love's sake) of the Spanish dramatist Mendoza. Some passages from the last-mentioned work, which was published in 1649, may be found in Lamb's *Specimens*,² the ease and flowing gayety of which never have been excelled even in original writing. The *Pastor Fido* is also rendered with much spirit and elegance. Fanshawe is, besides, the author of a Latin translation of Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, and of some original poetry. His genius, however, was sprightly and elegant rather than lofty, and perhaps he does not succeed so well in translating poetry of a more serious style : at least, Mickle, the modern translator of Camoens, in the discourse prefixed to his own version, speaks with great contempt of that of his predecessor ; affirming not only that it is exceedingly unfaithful, but that Fanshawe had not "the least idea of the dignity of the epic style, or of the true spirit of poetical translation." He seems also to sneer at Fanshawe's *Lusiad* because it was "published during the usurpation of Cromwell," — as if even the poets and translators of that time must have been a sort of illegitimates and usurpers in their way. But Fanshawe was all his life a steady royalist, and served both Charles I. and his son in a succession of high employments. Mickle, in truth, was not the man to appreciate either Fanshawe or Cromwell.

¹ Reprinted in the Tenth and Fourteenth Volumes of "Knight's Weekly Volume."

² Vol. ii. pp 242-253.

DRUMMOND.

ONE of the most graceful poetical writers of the reign of James I. is William Drummond, of Hawthornden, near Edinburgh; and he is further deserving of notice as the first of his countrymen, at least of any eminence, who aspired to write in English. He has left us a quantity of prose as well as verse; the former very much resembling the style of Sir Philip Sidney in his *Arcadia*, — the latter, in manner and spirit, formed more upon the model of Surrey, or rather upon that of Petrarch and the other Italian poets whom Surrey and many of his English successors imitated. No early English imitator of the Italian poetry, however, has excelled Drummond, either in the sustained melody of his verse, or its rich vein of thoughtful tenderness. We will transcribe one of his sonnets as a specimen of the fine moral painting, tinged with the coloring of scholarly recollections, in which he delights to indulge: —

Trust not, sweet soul, those curled waves of gold
With gentle tides that on your temples flow,
Nor temples spread with flakes of virgin snow,
Nor snow of cheeks with Tyrian grain enrolled.
Trust not those shining lights which wrought my woe
When first I did their azure rays behold,
Nor voice whose sounds more strange effects do show
Than of the Thracian harper have been told;
Look to this dying lily, fading rose,
Dark hyacinth, of late whose blushing beams
Made all the neighbouring herbs and grass rejoice,
And think how little is 'twixt life's extremes:
The cruel tyrant that did kill those flowers
Shall once, ay me! not spare that spring of yours.

DAVIES.

A REMARKABLE poem of this age, first published in 1599, is the *Nosce Teipsum*¹ of Sir John Davies, who was successively solicitor and attorney-general in the reign of James, and had been appointed to the place of Chief-Justice of the King's Bench, when he died,

¹ The full title is *Nosce Teipsum*. This oracle expounded in two elegies: — 1. Of human knowledge. 2. Of the soul of man and the immortality thereof.

before he could enter upon its duties, in 1626. Davies is also the author of a poem on dancing, entitled *Orchestra*, and of some minor pieces, all distinguished by vivacity as well as precision of style; but he is only now remembered for his philosophical poem, the earliest of the kind in the language. It is written in rhyme, in the common heroic ten-syllable verse, but disposed in quatrains, like the early play of *Misogonus* already mentioned, and other poetry of the same era, or like Sir Thomas Overbury's poem of *The Wife*, the *Gondibert* of Sir William Davenant, and the *Annus Mirabilis* of Dryden, at a later period. No one of these writers has managed this difficult stanza so successfully as Davies: it has the disadvantage of requiring the sense to be in general closed at certain regularly and quickly recurring turns, which yet are very ill adapted for an effective pause; and even all the skill of Dryden has been unable to free it from a certain air of monotony and languor, — a circumstance of which that poet may be supposed to have been himself sensible, since he wholly abandoned it after one or two early attempts. Davies, however, has conquered its difficulties; and, as has been observed, “perhaps no language can produce a poem, extending to so great a length, of more condensation of thought, or in which fewer languid verses will be found.”¹ In fact, it is by this condensation and sententious brevity, so carefully filed and elaborated, however, as to involve no sacrifice of perspicuity or fulness of expression, that he has attained his end. Every quatrain is a pointed expression of a separate thought, like one of *Rochefoucault's Maxims*; each thought being, by great skill and painstaking in the packing, made exactly to fit and to fill the same case. It may be doubted, however, whether Davies would not have produced a still better poem if he had chosen a measure which would have allowed him greater freedom and real variety; unless, indeed, his poetical talent was of a sort that required the suggestive aid and guidance of such artificial restraints as he had to cope with in this; and what would have been a bondage to a more fiery and teeming imagination, was rather a support to his. He wrote, among other things, a number of acrostics upon the name of Queen Elizabeth; which, says Ellis, “are probably the best acrostics ever written, and all equally good; but they seem to prove that their author was too fond of struggling with useless difficulties.”² Perhaps he found the limitations of the acrostic, too, a help rather than a hindrance.

¹ Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii. 227.

² *Spec. of Early Eng. Poets*, ii. 370.

DONNE.

THE title of the Metaphysical School of poetry, which in one sense of the words might have been given to Davies and his imitators, has been conferred by Dryden upon another race of writers, whose founder was a contemporary of Davies, the famous Dr. John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's. Donne, who died at the age of fifty-eight, in 1631, is said to have written most of his poetry before the end of the sixteenth century; but none of it was published till late in the reign of James. It consists of lyrical pieces (entitled Songs and Sonnets), epithalamiums or marriage-songs, funeral and other elegies, satires, epistles, and divine poems. On a superficial inspection, Donne's verses look like so many riddles. They seem to be written upon the principle of making the meaning as difficult to be found out as possible, — of using all the resources of language, not to express thought, but to conceal it. Nothing is said in a direct, natural manner; conceit follows conceit without intermission; the most remote analogies, the most far-fetched images, the most unexpected turns, one after another, surprise and often puzzle the understanding; while things of the most opposite kinds — the harsh and the harmonious, the graceful and the grotesque, the grave and the gay, the pious and the profane — meet and mingle in the strangest of dances. But, running through all this bewilderment, a deeper insight detects not only a vein of the most exuberant wit, but often the sunniest and most delicate fancy, and the truest tenderness and depth of feeling. Donne, though in the latter part of his life he became a very serious and devout poet as well as man, began by writing amatory lyrics, the strain of which is anything rather than devout; and in this kind of writing he seems to have formed his poetic style, which, for such compositions, would, to a mind like his, be the most natural and expressive of any. The species of lunacy which quickens and exalts the imagination of a lover, would, in one of so seething a brain as he was, strive to expend itself in all sorts of novel and wayward combinations, just as Shakspeare has made it do in his *Romeo and Juliet*, whose rich intoxication of spirit he has by nothing else set so livingly before us as by making them thus exhaust all the eccentricities of language in their struggle to give expression to that inexpressible passion which had taken captive the whole heart and being of both. Donne's later poetry, in addition to the same abundance and orig-

inality of thought, often running into a wildness and extravagance not so excusable here as in his erotic verses, is famous for the singular movement of the versification, which has been usually described as the extreme degree of the rugged and tuneless. Pope has given us a translation of his four Satires into modern language, which he calls *The Satires of Dr. Donne Versified*. Their harshness, as contrasted with the music of his lyrics, has also been referred to as proving that the English language, at the time when Donne wrote, had not been brought to a sufficiently advanced state for the writing of heroic verse in perfection.¹ That this last notion is wholly unfounded, numerous examples sufficiently testify: not to speak of the blank verse of the dramatists, the rhymed heroics of Shakspeare, of Fletcher, of Jonson, of Spenser, and of other writers contemporary with and of earlier date than Donne, are, for the most part, as perfectly smooth and regular as any that have since been written; at all events, whatever irregularity may be detected in them, if they be tested by Pope's narrow gamut, is clearly not to be imputed to any immaturity in the language. These writers evidently preferred and cultivated, deliberately and on principle, a wider compass, and freer and more varied flow, of melody than Pope had a taste or an ear for. Nor can it be questioned, we think, that the peculiar construction of Donne's verse in his satires and many of his other later poems was also adopted by choice and on system. His lines, though they will not suit the see-saw style of reading verse, — to which he probably intended that they should be invincibly impracticable, — are not without a deep and subtle music of their own, in which the cadences respond to the sentiment, when enunciated with a true feeling of all that they convey. They are not smooth or luscious verses, certainly; nor is it contended that the endeavor to raise them to as vigorous and impressive a tone as possible, by depriving them of all over-sweetness or liquidity, has not been carried too far; but we cannot doubt that whatever harshness they have was designedly given to them, and was conceived to infuse into them an essential part of their relish.

Here is one of Donne's Songs: —

Sweetest love, I do not go
 For weariness of thee,
 Nor in hope the world can show
 A fitter love for me;

¹ See article on Donne in *Penny Cyclopædia*, vol. ix. p. 85.

But, since that I
Must die at last, 'tis best
Thus to use myself in jest
By feigned death to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
And yet is here to-day ;
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way :
Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Hastier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurs than he.

O how feeble is man's power !
That, if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour,
Nor a lost hour recall ;
But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And we teach it art and length
Itself o'er us to advance.

When thou sigh'st thou sigh'st not wind,
But sigh'st my soul away ;
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
My life's blood doth decay.
It cannot be
That thou lov'st me as thou say'st,
If in thine my life thou waste,
Which art the life of me.

Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill ;
Destiny may take thy part
And may thy fears fulfil ;
But think that we
Are but laid aside to sleep :
They who one another keep
Alive ne'er parted be.

Somewhat fantastic as this may be thought, it is surely, notwithstanding, full of feeling ; and nothing can be more delicate than

the execution. Nor is it possible that the writer of such verses can have wanted an ear for melody, however capriciously he may have sometimes experimented upon language, in the effort, as we conceive, to bring a deeper, more expressive music out of it than it would readily yield. We add one of his elegies as a specimen of his more elaborate style : —

Language, thou art too narrow and too weak
 To ease us now ; great sorrows cannot speak.
 If we could sigh our accents, and weep words,
 Grief wears, and lessens, that tears breath affords.
 Sad hearts, the less they seem, the more they are ;
 So guiltiest men stand mutest at the bar ;
 Not that they know not, feel not their estate,
 But extreme sense hath made them desperate.
 Sorrow ! to whom we owe all that we be,
 Tyrant in the fifth and greatest monarchy,
 Was 't that she did possess all hearts before
 Thou hast killed her, to make thy empire more ?
 Knew'st thou some would, that knew her not, lament,
 As in a deluge perish the innocent ?
 Was 't not enough to have that palace won,
 But thou must raze it too, that was undone ?
 Had'st thou stay'd there, and looked out at her eyes,
 All had adored thee, that now from thee flies ;
 For they let out more light than they took in ;
 They told not when, but did the day begin.
 She was too sapphirine and clear for thee ;
 Clay, flirt, and jet now thy fit dwellings be.
 Alas, she was too pure, but not too weak ;
 Whoe'er saw crystal ordnance but would break ?
 And, if we be thy conquest, by her fall
 Thou hast lost thy end ; in her we perish all :
 Or, if we live, we live but to rebel,
 That know her better now, who knew her well.
 If we should vapour out, and pine and die,
 Since she first went, that were not misery ;
 She changed our world with hers ; now she is gone,
 Mirth and prosperity is oppression.
 For of all moral virtues she was all
 That ethics speak of virtues cardinal :
 Her soul was Paradise ; the cherubin
 Set to keep it was grace, that kept out sin :

She had no more than let in death, for we
 All reap consumption from one fruitful tree.
 God took her hence lest some of us should love
 Her, like that plant, him and his laws above ;
 And, when we tears, he mercy shed in this,
 To raise our minds to heaven, where now she is ;
 Who, if her virtues would have let her stay,
 We had had a saint, have now a holiday.
 Her heart was that strange bush, where sacred fire
 Religion, did not consume. but inspire
 Such piety, so chaste use of God's day,
 That what we turn to feast she turned to pray,
 And did prefigure here, in devout taste,
 The rest of her high Sabbath, which shall last.
 Angels did hand her up, who next God dwell,
 For she was of that order whence most fell.
 Her body 's left with us, lest some had said
 She could not die, except they saw her dead ;
 For from less virtue, and less beauteousness,
 The Gentiles framed them Gods and Goddesses.
 The ravenous earth that now woos her to be
 Earth too will be a Lemnia ;¹ and the tree
 That wraps that crystal in a wooden round ²
 Shall be took up spruce filled with diamond.
 And we, her sad glad friends, all bear a part
 Of grief, for all would break a Stoic's heart.



SHAKSPEARE'S MINOR POEMS.

IN the long list of the minor names of the Elizabethan poetry appears the bright name of William Shakspeare. Shakspeare published his *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, and his *Tarquin and Lucrece* in 1594 ; his *Passionate Pilgrim* did not appear till 1599 ; the *Sonnets* not till 1609. It is probable, however, that the first-mentioned of these pieces, which, in his dedication of it to the Earl

¹ The earth of the isle of Lemnos was supposed by the ancients to be medicinal.

² We have ventured to introduce this word instead of "Tomb," which is the reading in the edition before us (*Poems, &c.*, 8vo. Lond. 1669), and which cannot possibly be right.

of Southampton, he calls the first heir of his invention, was written some years before its publication; and, although the *Tarquin* and *Lucrece* may have been published immediately after it was composed, it, too, may be accounted an early production. We have no positive evidence that any wholly original drama, such as would be considered a work of invention, had yet been produced by Shakspeare; and, notwithstanding the force of some of the reasons which have been lately urged¹ for carrying back some of his original plays to a date preceding the year 1593, we are still inclined to think it probable that all the other poetry we have of Shakspeare's was composed at least before he had fairly given himself up to dramatic poetry, or had done anything in that line to which he could properly set his name, or by which he could hope that he would live and be remembered among the poets of his country. But, although this minor poetry of Shakspeare sounds throughout like the utterance of that spirit of highest invention and sweetest song before it had found its proper theme, much is here also, immature as it may be, that is still all Shakspearian, — the vivid conception, the inexhaustible fertility and richness of thought and imagery, the glowing passion, the gentleness withal that is ever of the poetry as it was of the man, the enamored sense of beauty, the living words, the ear-delighting and heart-enthraling music; nay, even the dramatic instinct itself, and the idea at least, if not always the realization, of that sentiment of all subordinating and consummating art of which his dramas are the most wonderful exemplification in literature.

Resuming now the history of that dramatic poetry which is the chief glory of the Elizabethan age of our literature, we begin with a notice of these productions, which constitute by much the most valuable part of it.

¹ Both by Mr. Knight and by Mr. Collier. Mr. Knight conceives, also, that the *Tarquin* and *Lucrece* is a composition of seven or eight years' later date than the *Venus* and *Adonis*.

SHAKSPEARE'S DRAMATIC WORKS.

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, born in 1564, is enumerated as one of the proprietors of the Blackfriars Theatre in 1589; is sneered at by Robert Greene in 1592, in terms which seem to imply that he had already acquired a considerable reputation as a dramatist and a writer in blank verse, though the satirist insinuates that he was enabled to make the show he did chiefly by the plunder of his predecessors; ¹ and in 1598 is spoken of by a critic of the day as indisputably the greatest of English dramatists, both for tragedy and comedy, and as having already produced his *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labours Lost*, *Love's Labours Won* (generally supposed to be *All's Well that Ends Well*), ² *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II.*, *Richard III.*, *Henry IV.*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.³ There is no ground, however, for feeling assured, and, indeed, it is rather improbable, that we have here a complete catalogue of the plays written by Shakspeare up to this date; nor is the authority of so evidently loose a statement, embodying, it is to be supposed, the mere report of the town, sufficient even to establish absolutely the authenticity of every one of the plays enumerated. It is very possible, for example, that Meres may be mistaken in assigning *Titus Andronicus* to Shakspeare; and, on the other hand, he may be the author of *Pericles*, and may have already written that play and some others, although Meres does not mention them. The only other direct or positive information we possess on this subject is, that a *History* called *Titus Andronicus*, presumed to be the play afterwards published as Shakspeare's, was entered for publication at Stationers' Hall in 1593; that the

¹ "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 *Shake-scene* in a country." — Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592.

² But the Rev. Joseph Hunter, in the *Second Part of New Illustrations of the Life, Studies, and Writings of Shakespeare*, 8vo. Lond. 1844, and previously in a *Disquisition on the Tempest*, separately published, has contended that it must be the *Tempest*; and I have more recently stated some reasons for supposing that it may be the *Taming of the Shrew* (see *The English of Shakespeare*, 1857; *Prolegomena*, pp. 8, 9).

³ *Pallias Tamia*; *Wit's Treasury*. Being the *Second Part of Wit's Common wealth*. By Francis Meres. 1598, p. 282.

Second Part of Henry VI. (if it is by Shakspeare), in its original form of *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, was published in 1594; the Third Part of Henry VI. (if by Shakspeare), in its original form of *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, in 1595; his Richard II., Richard III., and *Romeo and Juliet*, in 1597; *Love's Labours Lost* and the First Part of Henry IV. in 1598 (the latter, however, having been entered at Stationers' Hall the preceding year); "a corrected and augmented" edition of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1599; *Titus Andronicus* (supposing it to be Shakspeare's), the Second Part of Henry IV., Henry V., in its original form, the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and the *Merchant of Venice*, in 1600 (the last having been entered at Stationers' Hall in 1598); the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, in its original form, in 1602 (but entered at Stationers' Hall the year before¹); *Hamlet* in 1603 (entered likewise the year before); a second edition of *Hamlet*, "enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy," in 1604; *Lear* in 1608, and *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Pericles*, in 1609 (each being entered the preceding year); *Othello* not till 1622, six years after the author's death; and all the other plays, namely, the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the *Winter's Tale*, the *Comedy of Errors*, *King John*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *As You Like It*, *King Henry VIII.*, *Measure for Measure*, *Cymbeline*, *Macbeth*, the *Taming of the Shrew*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, the *Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, the First Part of Henry VI. (if Shakspeare had anything to do with that play²), and also the perfect editions of Henry V., the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the Second and Third Parts of Henry VI., not, so far as is known, till they appear, along with those formerly printed, in the first folio, in 1623.

Such, then, is the sum of the treasure that Shakspeare has left us; but the revolution which his genius wrought upon our national

¹ This first sketch of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* has been reprinted for the Shakespeare Society, under the care of Mr. Halliwell, 1842.

² See, upon this question, Mr. Knight's *Essay upon the Three Parts of King Henry VI.*, and *King Richard III.*, in the Seventh Volume of his *Library Edition of Shakspeare*, pp. 1-119. And see also Mr. Halliwell's *Introduction to the reprint of The First Sketches of the Second and Third Parts of King Henry the Sixth (the First Part of the Contention and the True Tragedy)*, edited by him for the Shakespeare Society, 1843.

drama is placed in the clearest light by comparing his earliest plays with the best which the language possessed before his time. He has made all his predecessors obsolete. While his Merchant of Venice, and his Midsummer Night's Dream, and his Romeo and Juliet, and his King John, and his Richard II., and his Henry IV., and his Richard III., all certainly produced, as we have seen, before the year 1598, are still the most universally familiar compositions in our literature, no other dramatic work that had then been written is now popularly read, or familiar to anybody except to a few professed investigators of the antiquities of our poetry. Where are now the best productions even of such writers as Greene, and Peele, and Marlow, and Decker, and Marston, and Webster, and Thomas Heywood, and Middleton? They are to be found among our Select Collections of Old Plays, — publications intended rather for the mere preservation of the pieces contained in them, than for their diffusion among a multitude of readers. Or, if the entire works of a few of these elder dramatists have recently been collected and republished, this has still been done only to meet the demand of a comparatively very small number of curious students, anxious to possess and examine for themselves whatever relics are still recoverable of the old world of our literature. Popularly known and read the works of these writers never again will be; there is no more prospect or probability of this than there is that the plays of Shakspeare will ever lose their popularity among his countrymen. In that sense, everlasting oblivion is their portion, as everlasting life is his. In one form only have they any chance of again attracting some measure of the general attention, namely, in the form of such partial and very limited exhibition as Lamb has given us an example of in his Specimens. And herein we see the first great difference between the plays of Shakspeare and those of his predecessors, and one of the most immediately conspicuous of the improvements which he introduced into dramatic writing. He did not create our regular drama, but he regenerated and wholly transformed it, as if by breathing into it a new soul. We possess no dramatic production anterior to his appearance that is at once a work of high genius and of anything like equably sustained power throughout. Very brilliant flights of poetry there are in many of the pieces of our earlier dramatists; but the higher they soar in one scene, the lower they generally seem to think it expedient to sink in the next. Their great efforts are made only by

fits and starts: for the most part it must be confessed that the best of them are either merely extravagant and absurd, or do nothing but trifle or dote away over their task with the expenditure of hardly any kind of faculty at all. This may have arisen in part from their own want of judgment or want of painstaking, in part from the demands of a very rude condition of the popular taste; but the effect is to invest all that they have bequeathed to us with an air of barbarism, and to tempt us to take their finest displays of successful daring for mere capricious inspirations, resembling the sudden impulses of fury by which the listless and indolent man of the woods will sometimes be roused for the instant from his habitual laziness and passiveness to an exhibition of superhuman strength and activity. From this savage or savage-looking state our drama was first redeemed by Shakspeare. Even Milton has spoken of his "wood-notes wild"; and Thomson, more unceremoniously, has baptized him "wild Shakspeare,"¹—as if a sort of half insane irregularity of genius were the quality that chiefly distinguished him from other great writers. If he be a "wild" writer, it is in comparison with some dramatists and poets of succeeding times, who, it must be admitted, are sufficiently tame: compared with the dramatists of his own age and of the age immediately preceding, — with the general throng of the writers from among whom he emerged, and the coruscations of whose feebler and more desultory genius he has made pale, — he is distinguished from them by nothing which is more visible at the first glance than by the superior regularity and elaboration that mark his productions. Marlow, and Greene, and Kyd may be called wild, and wayward, and careless; but the epithets are inapplicable to Shakspeare, by whom, in truth, it was that the rudeness of our early drama was first refined, and a spirit of high art put into it, which gave it order and symmetry as well as elevation. It was the union of the most consummate judgment with the highest creative power that made Shakspeare the miracle that he was, — if, indeed, we ought not rather to say that such an endowment as his of the poetical faculty necessarily implied the clearest and truest discernment as well as the utmost productive energy, — even as the most intense heat must illuminate as well as warm.

But, undoubtedly, his dramas are distinguished from those of his predecessors by much more than merely this superiority in the

¹ "Is not wild Shakspeare thine and Nature's boast?" — Thomson's *Summer*.

general principles upon which they are constructed. Such rare passages of exquisite poetry, and scenes of sublimity or true passion, as sometimes brighten the dreary waste of their productions, are equalled or excelled in almost every page of his; — “the highest heaven of invention,” to which they ascend only in far distant flights, and where their strength of pinion never sustains them long, is the familiar home of his genius. Other qualities, again, which charm us in his plays are nearly unknown in theirs. He first informed our drama with true wit and humor. Of boisterous, uproarious, blackguard merriment and buffoonery there is no want in our earlier dramatists, nor of mere gibing and jeering and vulgar personal satire; but of true airy wit there is little or none. In the comedies of Shakspeare the wit plays and dazzles like dancing light. This seems to have been the excellence, indeed, for which he was most admired by his contemporaries; for quickness and felicity of repartee they placed him above all other play-writers. But his humor was still more his own than his wit. In that rich but delicate and subtile spirit of drollery, moistening and softening whatever it touches like a gentle oil, and penetrating through all infoldings and rigorous incrustments into the kernel of the ludicrous that is in everything, which mainly created Malvolio, and Shallow, and Slender, and Dogberry, and Verges, and Bottom, and Lancelot, and Launce, and Costard, and Touchstone, and a score of other clowns, fools, and simpletons, and which, gloriously overflowing in Falstaff, makes his wit exhilarate like wine, Shakspeare has had almost as few successors as he had predecessors.

And in these and all his other delineations he has, like every other great poet, or artist, not merely observed and described, but, as we have said, created, or invented. It is often laid down that the drama should be a faithful picture or representation of real life; or, if this doctrine be given up in regard to the tragic or more impassioned drama, because even kings and queens in the actual world never do declaim in the pomp of blank verse, as they do on the stage, still it is insisted that in comedy no character is admissible that is not a transcript, — a little embellished perhaps, but still substantially a transcript from some genuine flesh and blood original. But Shakspeare has shown that it belongs to such an imagination as his to create in comedy, as well as in tragedy or in poetry of any other kind. Most of the characters that have just been mentioned are as truly the mere creations of the poet's brain

as are Ariel, or Caliban, or the Witches in Macbeth. If any modern critic will have it that Shakspeare must have actually seen Malvolio, and Launce, and Touchstone, before he could or at least would have drawn them, we would ask the said critic if he himself has ever seen such characters in real life; and, if he acknowledge, as he needs must, that he never has, we would then put it to him to tell us why the contemporaries of the great dramatist might not have enjoyed them in his plays without ever having seen them elsewhere, just as we do, — or, in other words, why such delineations might not have perfectly fulfilled their dramatic purpose then as well as now, when they certainly do not represent anything that is to be seen upon earth, any more than do Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. There might have been professional clowns and fools, in the age of Shakspeare such as are no longer extant; but at no time did there ever actually exist such fools and clowns as his. These and other similar personages of the Shakspearian drama are as much mere poetical phantasmata as are the creations of the kindred humor of Cervantes. Are they the less amusing or interesting, however, on that account? — do we the less sympathize with them? — nay, do we feel that they are the less naturally drawn? that they have for us less of a truth and life than the most faithful copies from the men and women of the real world?

But in the region of reality, too, there is no other drama so rich as that of Shakspeare. He has exhausted the old world of our actual experience as well as imagined for us new worlds of his own.¹ What other anatomist of the human heart has searched its hidden core, and laid bare all the strength and weakness of our mysterious nature, as he has done in the gushing tenderness of Juliet, and the “fine frenzy” of the discrowned Lear, and the sublime melancholy of Hamlet, and the wrath of the perplexed and tempest-torn Othello, and the eloquent misanthropy of Timon, and the fixed hate of Shylock? What other poetry has given shape to anything half so terrific as Lady Macbeth, or so winning as Rosalind, or so full of gentlest womanhood as Desdemona? In what other drama do we behold so living a humanity as in his? Who has given us a scene either so crowded with diversities of character, or so stirred with the heat and hurry of actual existence? The men and the manners of all countries and of all ages are there:

¹ “Each change of many-coloured life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new.” — Johnson.

the lovers and warriors, the priests and prophetesses, of the old heroic and kingly times of Greece, — the Athenians of the days of Pericles and Alcibiades, — the proud patricians and turbulent commonalty of the earliest period of republican Rome, — Cæsar, and Brutus, and Cassius, and Antony, and Cleopatra, and the other splendid figures of that later Roman scene, — the kings, and queens, and princes, and courtiers of barbaric Denmark, and Roman Britain, and Britain before the Romans, — those of Scotland in the time of the English Heptarchy, — those of England and France at the era of Magna Charta, — all ranks of the people of almost every reign of our subsequent history from the end of the fourteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century, — not to speak of Venice, and Verona, and Mantua, and Padua, and Illyria, and Navarre, and the Forest of Arden, and all the other towns and lands which he has peopled for us with their most real inhabitants.

Nor even in his plays is Shakspeare merely a dramatist. Apart altogether from his dramatic power he is the greatest poet that ever lived. His sympathy is the most universal, his imagination the most plastic, his diction the most expressive, ever given to any writer. His poetry has in itself the power and varied excellences of all other poetry. While in grandeur, and beauty, and passion, and sweetest music, and all the other higher gifts of song, he may be ranked with the greatest, — with Spenser, and Chaucer, and Milton, and Dante, and Homer, — he is at the same time more nervous than Dryden, and more sententious than Pope, and more sparkling and of more abounding conceit, when he chooses, than Donne, or Cowley, or Butler. In whose handling was language ever such a flame of fire as it is in his? His wonderful potency in the use of this instrument would alone set him above all other writers.¹ Language has been called the costume of thought: it is

¹ Whatever may be the extent of the vocabulary of the English language, it is certain that the most copious writer has not employed more than a fraction of the entire number of words of which it consists. It has been stated that some inquiries set on foot by the telegraph companies have led to the conclusion that the number of words in ordinary use does not exceed 3000. A rough calculation, founded on Mrs. Clarke's Concordance, gives about 21,000 as the number to be found in the Plays of Shakspeare, without counting inflectional forms as distinct words. Probably the vocabulary of no other of our great writers is nearly so extensive. Todd's Verbal Index would not give us more than about 7000 for Milton; so that, if we were to add even fifty per cent. to compensate for Milton's inferior voluminousness, the Miltonic vocabulary would still be not more than half as copious as the Shakspearian.

such a costume as leaves are to the tree or blossoms to the flower, and grows out of what it adorns. Every great and original writer accordingly has distinguished, and as it were individualized, himself as much by his diction as by even the sentiment which it embodies; and the invention of such a distinguishing style is one of the most unequivocal evidences of genius. But Shakspeare has invented twenty styles. He has a style for every one of his great characters, by which that character is distinguished from every other as much as Pope is distinguished by his style from Dryden, or Milton from Spenser. And yet all the while it is he himself with his own peculiar accent that we hear in every one of them. The style, or manner of expression, that is to say,—and if the manner of expression, then also the manner of thinking, of which the expression is always the product,—is at once both that which belongs to the particular character and that which is equally natural to the poet, the conceiver and creator of the character. This double individuality, or combination of two individualities, is inherent of necessity in all dramatic writing; it is what distinguishes the imaginative here from the literal, the artistic from the real, a scene of a play from a police report. No more in this than in any other kind of literature, properly so called, can we dispense with that infusion of the mind from which the work has proceeded, of something belonging to that mind and to no other, which is the very life or constituent principle of all art, the one thing that makes the difference between a creation and a copy, between the poetical and the mechanical.



CHAPMAN. WEBSTER. MIDDLETON. DECKER. CHETTLÉ.
MARSTON. TAILOR. TOURNEUR. ROWLEY. THOMAS
HEYWOOD.

SHAKSPEARE died in 1616. The space of a quarter of a century, or more, over which his career as a writer for the stage extends, is illustrated also by the names of a crowd of other dramatists, many of them of very remarkable genius; but Shakspeare is distinguished from the greater number of his contemporaries nearly as much as he is from his immediate predecessors. With

regard to the latter, it has been well observed by a critic of eminent justness and delicacy of taste, that, while they "possessed great power over the passions, had a deep insight into the darkest depths of human nature, and were, moreover, in the highest sense of the word, poets, of that higher power of creation with which Shakspeare was endowed, and by which he was enabled to call up into vivid existence all the various characters of men and all the events of human life, Marlow and his contemporaries had no great share, — so that their best dramas may be said to represent to us only gleams and shadowings of mind, confused and hurried actions, from which we are rather led to guess at the nature of the persons acting before us than instantaneously struck with a perfect knowledge of it; and, even amid their highest efforts, with them the fictions of the drama are felt to be but faint semblances of reality. If we seek for a poetical image, a burst of passion, a beautiful sentiment, a trait of nature, we seek not in vain in the works of our very oldest dramatists. But none of the predecessors of Shakspeare must be thought of along with him, when he appears before us, like Prometheus, moulding the figures of men, and breathing into them the animation and all the passions of life."¹ "The same," proceeds this writer, "may be said of almost all his illustrious contemporaries. Few of them ever have conceived a consistent character, and given a perfect drawing and coloring of it; they have rarely, indeed, inspired us with such belief in the existence of their personages as we often feel towards those of Shakspeare, and which makes us actually unhappy unless we can fully understand everything about them, so like are they to living men. . . . The plans of their dramas are irregular and confused, their characters often wildly distorted, and an air of imperfection and incompleteness hangs in general over the whole composition; so that the attention is wearied out, the interest flags, and we rather hurry on, than are hurried, to the horrors of the final catastrophe."² In other words, the generality of the dramatic writers who were contemporary with Shakspeare still belong to the semi-barbarous school which subsisted before he began to write.

George Chapman, already mentioned as the translator of Homer,

¹ Analytical Essays on the Early English Dramatists (understood to be by the late Henry MacKenzie), in Blackwood's Magazine, vol. ii. p. 657.

² Ibid.

was born six or seven years before Shakspeare, but did not begin to write for the stage till about the year 1595, after which date he produced sixteen plays that have survived, besides one in the composition of which he was assisted by Ben Jonson and Marston, and two others in which he and Shirley joined. One anonymous play, *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (printed for the first time in 1824), and five others that are lost, have also been attributed to him. All these pieces were probably produced before the year 1620, although he lived till 1634. Chapman's best known, and probably also his best, plays are his tragedy of *Bussy d'Ambois*, reprinted in the third volume of Dilke's *Old Plays* (1814); his comedy of *Monsieur d'Olive*, in the same collection; and his comedies of *All Fools*, *The Widow's Tears*, and *Eastward Hoe* (the last the piece in which he was assisted by Jonson and Marston), in Dodsley's collection.¹ "Of all the English play-writers," says Lamb, "Chapman perhaps approaches nearest to Shakspeare in the descriptive and didactic, in passages which are less purely dramatic. Dramatic imitation was not his talent. He could not go out of himself, as Shakspeare could shift at pleasure, to inform and animate other existences; but in himself he had an eye to perceive, and a soul to embrace, all forms."² He was a great poet; but his genius was essentially epic, not dramatic.

Webster, Middleton, Decker, Chettle, Marston, Robert Taylor, Tourneur, and Rowley, may also be reckoned among the dramatic writers of considerable note who were the contemporaries of Shakspeare, though most, or all, of them survived him, and none of them began to write so early as he did. John Webster was parish clerk of St. Andrews, Holborn, and a member of the Merchant Tailors' Company. Of four dramatic pieces of which he is the sole author, besides two comedies which he wrote in conjunction with Rowley, and other two in which he assisted Decker, his tragedies of *The White Devil* and *the Duchess of Malfy* are the most celebrated. The character of *Vittoria Corombona*, the *White Devil*, is drawn with great spirit; and the delineation of the *Duchess of Malfy* displays not only remarkable power and originality of imagination, but a dramatic skill and judgment which perhaps no one of the other writers we have named along with Web-

¹ The comedy of *All Fools* appeared for the first time in the second (Reed's) edition of Dodsley.

² Specimens, i. 107.

ster has anywhere matched. None of them has either so little extravagance, or so much of the true terrific. "To move a horror skilfully," says Lamb, — "to touch a soul to the quick, — to lay upon fear as much as it can bear, — to wean and weary a life till it is ready to drop, and then step in with mortal instruments to take its last forfeit, — this only a Webster can do. Writers of an inferior genius may 'upon horror's head horrors accumulate,' but they cannot do this."¹ Webster seems to have been a slow writer, which it may be presumed few of his contemporaries were. In an advertisement prefixed to his *White Devil*, he says, "To those who report I was a long time in finishing this tragedy, I confess I do not write with a goose-quill winged with two feathers; and, if they will needs make it my fault, I must answer them with that of Euripides to Alcestides, a tragic writer. Alcestides objecting that Euripides had only in three days composed three verses, whereas himself had written three hundred; Thou tell'st truth, quoth he; but here's the difference: thine shall only be read for three days, whereas mine shall continue three ages." It will be seen from this passage that Webster was not wanting in a due sense of his own merits; he seems also to have had a sufficient contempt for the public taste of his day, or at least for that of the ordinary audiences of the theatre where his piece had been brought out: — "I have noted," he says, "most of the people that come to that playhouse resemble those ignorant asses who, visiting stationers' shops, their use is not to inquire for good books, but new books;" and he adds, "Should a man present to such an auditory the most sententious tragedy that ever was written, observing all the critical laws, as height of style and gravity of person; enrich it with the sententious Chorus, and, as it were, enliven death in the passionate and weighty Nuntius; yet, after all this divine rapture, . . . the breath that comes from the uncapable multitude is able to poison it." It is difficult to discern in all this the modesty which Lamb so much praises.² Neither does Webster greatly shine as a critic of the performances of others in a subsequent paragraph of his advertisement or preface, in which he gives us his opinion of some of his contemporaries: — "I have ever," he observes, "truly cherished my good opinion of other men's worthy labours, especially of that full and heightened style of Master Chapman; the laboured and understanding works of Master Jonson; the no less worthy composures of the most worthily excellent

Master Beaumont and Master Fletcher; and lastly, without wrong last to be named, *the right happy and copious industry of Master Shakspeare, Master Decker, and Master Heywood.*" All this may be frank enough, as Lamb calls it, but it is certainly not very discriminating.

Thomas Middleton is the author, in whole or in part, of between twenty and thirty dramatic pieces; his associates in those which he did not write entirely himself being Decker, Rowley, Jonson, Fletcher, and Massinger. One of his plays, a comedy called *The Old Law*, which he wrote in conjunction with Rowley (and which was afterwards improved by Massinger), appears to have been acted so early as 1599; and another was published in 1602. The greater number of his pieces are comedies, and, compared with most of his contemporaries, he has a good deal of comic talent; but his most noted dramatic production is his tragi-comedy of *The Witch*, which remained in manuscript till a small impression of it was printed, in 1778, by Isaac Reed, after it had been suggested by Steevens that it had probably been written before *Macbeth*, and might have been the source from which Shakspeare borrowed his *Witches* in that play. The commentators would have everything, in Shakspeare and everybody else, to be borrowed or stolen: they have the genius and the zeal of thief-catchers in ferreting out and exposing all transferences among writers, real and imaginary, of thoughts, words, and syllables; and in the present case, as in many others, their professional ardor seems to have made a great deal out of very little. Lamb, in an admirable criticism, has pointed out the essential differences between the witches of Shakspeare and those of Middleton,¹ from whose play, however, Shakspeare appears to have taken a few lines of his incantations; unless, indeed — which we think not improbable — the verses in question were common popular rhymes, preserved among the traditions of the nursery or the country fireside. Middleton's witches have little of the supernatural awfulness of Shakspeare's. "Their names, and some of the properties," as Lamb observes, "which Middleton has given to his hags, excite smiles. The *Weird Sisters* are serious things. Their presence cannot coëxist with mirth. But, in a lesser degree, the witches of Middleton are fine creations. Their power, too, is, in some measure, over the mind. They raise jars, jealousies, strifes, *like a thick scurf o'er life.*"

Still another and lower species of witch — "the plain, tradi-

tional, old-woman witch, of our ancestors," as Lamb has called her, "poor, deformed, and ignorant, the terror of villages, herself amenable to a justice" — is the heroine of the tragi-comedy of *The Witch of Edmonton*, the joint production of Rowley, Ford, and Decker. Thomas Decker was the author of, or a contributor to, more than thirty plays in all, nearly two thirds of which, however, have perished. He has not much high imagination, but considerable liveliness of fancy, and also no little power of pathos. His best pieces are his comedies of *Old Fortunatus* and *The Honest Whore*; and his spirited *Satiromastix*, the principal character in which, Horace Junior, is a humorous caricature of Ben Jonson, who had previously ridiculed Decker upon the stage, in *Crispinus*, the hero of his satirical comedy of *The Poetaster*. Decker is also supposed to be the author of the best parts of the very touching play of *Patient Grissil*, which appeared in 1603, and which has been reprinted, from a unique copy of that edition, for the Shakespeare Society, under the care of Mr. Collier, 1841. It was written by him in conjunction with William Haughton, who is the author of several plays of little merit, and Henry Chettle, who was one of the most active and prolific dramatic writers of this time, although of eight-and-thirty plays, in which he is stated to have been more or less concerned, only the present and three others have been preserved. He has force as well as fertility, but it is apt to run into rant and absurdity. John Marston is the author of eight plays, and appears to have enjoyed in his own day a great reputation as a dramatist. He is to be classed, however, with Sackville and Chapman, as having more poetical than dramatic genius; although he has given no proof of a creative imagination equal to what is displayed in the early poetry of the former, and the best of Chapman's is instinct with a diviner fire. But he is, nevertheless, a very imposing declaimer in verse. Besides his plays, Marston published two volumes of poetry: the second, by which he is best known, a collection of satires, in three books, entitled *The Scourge of Villainy*, a set of very vigorous and animated Juvenalian chants. Of Robert Tailor nothing is known, except that he is the author of one play, a comedy, entitled *The Hog hath Lost his Pearl*, which was acted in 1613, and published the following year. It is reprinted in Dodsley's Collection, and Mr. Lamb has extracted from it the most interesting scenes, which, however, derive their interest rather from the force of the situation

(one that has been turned to better account in other hands) than from anything very impressive in its treatment. The merit of a perspicuous style is nearly all that can be awarded to this writer. Cyril Tourneur is known as the author of two surviving dramas, — *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and *The Atheist's Tragedy*, — besides a tragi-comedy, called *The Nobleman*, which is lost.¹ *The Revenger's Tragedy*, in particular, which is reprinted in Dodsley's Collection, both in the development of character and the conduct of the action evinces a rare dramatic skill, and the dialogue in parts is wonderfully fine — natural and direct as that of real passion, yet ennobled by the breathing thoughts and burning words of a poetic imagination, by images and lines that plough into the memory and the heart.

William Rowley, whose coöperation in the *Witch of Edmonton* with Decker and Ford has been already noticed, owes the greater part of his reputation to his having been taken into partnership, in the composition of some of their pieces, by Middleton, Webster, Massinger, and other writers more eminent than himself; but he has also left us a tragedy and three comedies of his own. He has his share of the cordial and straightforward manner of our old dramatists; but not a great deal more that is of much value. Of the style of his comedy a judgment may be formed from the fact, recorded by Langbaine, that certain of the scenes of one of his pieces, *A Shoemaker's a Gentleman*, used to be commonly performed by the strolling actors at Bartholomew and Southwark fairs. Though he appears to have begun to write, at least in association with others, some ten years before the death of Shakspeare, Rowley probably survived the middle of the century. So also, it is supposed, did Thomas Heywood, the most rapid and voluminous of English writers, who appears to have written for the stage as early as 1596, but whose last-published piece, written in conjunction with Rowley, was not printed till 1655.² Heywood, according to his own account, in an Address to the Reader prefixed to his tragi-comedy of *The English Traveller*, published in

¹ Drake, in his work entitled *Shakspeare and his Times* (vol. ii. p. 570), speaks of *The Nobleman* as if he had read it — telling us that it, as well as Tourneur's two tragedies, contains "some very beautiful passages and some entire scenes of great merit." In fact, the play is believed never to have been printed; but a manuscript copy of it was in the collection of Mr. Warburton, the Somerset herald, which was destroyed by his cook.

² See Dodsley's *Old Plays*, edit. of 1826; vii. 218 and 222.

1633, had then, as he phrases it, "had either an entire hand, or, at the least, a main finger," in the incredible number of two hundred and twenty dramatic productions! "True it is," he adds, "that my plays are not exposed unto the world in volumes, to bear the title of Works, as others. One reason is that many of them by shifting and change of companies, have been negligently lost; others of them are still retained in the hands of some actors who think it against their peculiar profit to have them come in print, and a third, that it never was any great ambition in me to be in this kind voluminously read." Besides his plays, too, Heywood, who was an actor, and engaged in the practice of his profession for a great part of his life, wrote numerous other works, several of them large volumes in quarto and folio. Among them are a translation of Sallust; a folio volume entitled *The Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels*; a *General History of Women*; and another work entitled *Nine Books of Various History concerning Women*, a folio of between four and five hundred pages, which, in a Latin note on the last page, he tells us was all excogitated, written, and printed in seventeen weeks. Of his plays above twenty are still extant, — about a tithe of the prodigious litter. Two of them, his tragedy of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, and his historical play of *The Four Prentices of London*, are in Dodsley; three more, his tragi-comedies of *The English Traveller*, *The Royal King and Loyal Subject*, and *A Challenge for Beauty*, are in Dilke's Collection; and about a dozen others have been reprinted for the Shakespeare Society. Lamb has very happily characterized Heywood in a few words: "Heywood is a sort of *prose* Shakspeare. His scenes are to the full as natural and affecting. But we miss *the poet*, that which in Shakspeare always appears out and above the surface of *the nature*." His plays, however, are for the greater part in verse, which at least has ease of flow enough; and he may be styled not only a *prose* Shakspeare, but a more poetical Richardson. If he has not quite the power of Lillo in what has been called the domestic tragedy, which is the species to which his best pieces belong, he excels that modern dramatist both in facility and variety.¹

¹ Mr. Hallam (Introd. to Lit. of Eur. iii. 345) states that between forty and fifty plays are ascribed to Heywood; in fact, only twenty-six existing plays have been ascribed to him, and only twenty-three can be decisively said to be his (see Dodsley, edit. of 1826, vii. 218, *et seq.*). Mr. Hallam is also not quite correct in elsewhere stating (ii. 275) that Heywood's play of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* bears the date of 1600, and in speaking of it as certainly his earliest production. The earliest

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

BUT the names of the dramatic writers of the present period that hold rank the nearest to Shakspeare still remain to be mentioned. Those of Beaumont and Fletcher must be regarded as indicating one poet rather than two, for it is impossible to make anything of the contradictory accounts that have been handed down as to their respective shares in the plays published in their conjoint names, and the plays themselves furnish no evidence that is more decisive. The only ascertained facts relating to this point are the following:—that John Fletcher was about ten years older than his friend Francis Beaumont, the former having been born in 1576, the latter in 1585; that Beaumont, however, so far as is known, came first before the world as a writer of poetry, his translation of the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, from the Fourth Book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, having been published in 1602, when he was only in his seventeenth year; that the *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn* (consisting of only a few pages), produced in 1612, was written by Beaumont alone; that the pastoral drama of the *Faithful Shepherdess* is entirely Fletcher's; that the first published of the pieces which have been ascribed to the two associated together, the comedy of *The Woman-Hater*, appeared in 1607; that Beaumont died in March 1616; and that, between that date and the death of Fletcher, in 1625, there were brought out, as appears from the note-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Deputy Master of the Revels, at least eleven of the plays found in the collection of their works, besides two others that were brought out in 1626, and two more that are lost. Deducting the fourteen pieces which thus appear certainly to belong to Fletcher exclusively (except that in one of them, *The Maid in the Mill*, he is said to have been assisted by Rowley), there still remain thirty-seven or thirty-eight which it is possible they may have written together in the nine or ten years over which their poetical partnership is supposed to have extended.¹ Eighteen of Beaumont and

known edition, which is called the third, is dated 1617; and the earliest notice of the play being acted is in 1603. Two other plays, the *First and Second Parts of The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, otherwise called *Robin Hood*, which have been ascribed to Heywood, were published in 1601. But there is some doubt as to his claim to these pieces.

¹ One, the comedy of *The Coronation*, is also attributed to Shirley.

Fletcher's plays, including the *Masque* by the former and the *Pastoral* by the latter, were published separately before 1640; thirty-four more were first published together in a folio volume in 1647; and the whole were reprinted, with the addition of a comedy, supposed to have been lost (*The Wild Goose Chase*),¹ making a collection of fifty-three pieces in all, in another folio, in 1679. Beaumont and Fletcher want altogether that *white heat* of passion by which Shakspeare fuses all things into life and poetry at a touch, often making a single brief utterance flash upon us a full though momentary view of a character, which all that follows deepens and fixes, and makes the more like to actual seeing with the eyes and hearing with the ears. His was a deeper, higher, in every way more extended and capacious nature than theirs. They want his profound meditative philosophy as much as they do his burning poetry. Neither have they avoided nearly to the same degree that he has done the degradation of their fine gold by the intermixture of baser metal. They have given us all sorts of writing, good, bad, and indifferent, in abundance. Without referring in particular to what we now deem the indecency and licentiousness which pollutes all their plays, but which, strange to say, seems not to have been looked upon in that light by anybody in their own age, simply because it is usually wrapped in very transparent *double entendre*, they might, if judged by nearly one half of all they have left us, be held to belong to almost the lowest rank of our dramatists instead of to the highest. There is scarcely one of their dramas that does not bear marks of haste and carelessness, or of a blight in some part or other from the playhouse tastes or compliances to which they were wont too easily to give themselves up when the louder applause of the day and the town made them thoughtless of their truer fame. But fortunately, on the other hand, in scarcely any of their pieces is the deformity thus occasioned more than partial: the circumstances in which they wrote have somewhat debased the produce of their fine genius, but their genius itself suffered nothing from the unworthy uses it was often put to. It springs up again from the dust and mud, as gay a creature of the element as ever, soaring and singing at heaven's gate as if it had never touched the ground. Nothing can go beyond the flow and

¹ This play, one of the best of Fletcher's comedies, for it was not produced till some years after Beaumont's death, had been previously recovered and printed by itself in 1652.

brilliancy of the dialogue of these writers in their happier scenes it is the richest stream of real conversation, edged with the fire of poetry. For the drama of Beaumont and Fletcher is as essentially poetical and imaginative, though not in so high a style, as that of Shakspeare; and they, too, even if they were not great dramatists, would still be great poets. Much of their verse is among the sweetest in the language; and many of the lyrical passages, in particular, with which their plays are interspersed, have a diviner soul of song in them than almost any other compositions of the same class. As dramatists they are far inferior to Shakspeare, not only, as we have said, in striking development and consistent preservation of character, — in other words, in truth and force of conception, — but also both in the originality and the variety of their creations in that department; they have confined themselves to a comparatively small number of broadly distinguished figures, which they delineate in a dashing, scene-painting fashion, bringing out their peculiarities rather by force of situation, and contrast with one another, than by the form and aspect with which each individually looks forth and emerges from the canvas. But all the resources of this inferior style of art they avail themselves of with the boldness of conscious power, and with wonderful skill and effect. Their invention of plot and incident is fertile in the highest degree; and in the conduct of a story for the mere purposes of the stage, — for keeping the attention of an audience awake and their expectation suspended throughout the whole course of the action, — they excel Shakspeare, who, aiming at higher things, and producing his more glowing pictures by fewer strokes, is careless about the mere excitement of curiosity, whereas they are tempted to linger as long as possible over every scene, both for that end, and because their proper method of evolving character and passion is by such delay and repetition of touch upon touch. By reason principally of this difference, the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, in the great days of the stage, and so long as the state of public manners tolerated their license and grossness, were much greater favorites than those of Shakspeare in our theatres; two of theirs, Dryden tells us, were acted in his time for one of Shakspeare's; their intrigues, — their lively and florid but not subtle dialogue, — their strongly-marked but somewhat exaggerated representations of character, — their exhibitions of passion, apt to run a little into the melo-dramatic, — were more level to the general apprehension, and were

found to be more entertaining, than his higher art and grander poetry. Beaumont and Fletcher, as might be inferred from what has already been said, are, upon the whole, greater in comedy than in tragedy; and they seem themselves to have felt that their genius led them more to the former, — for, of their plays, only ten are tragedies, while their comedies amount to twenty-four or twenty-five, the rest being what were then called tragi-comedies — in many of which, however, it is true, the interest is, in part at least, of a tragic character, although the story ends happily.¹ But, on the other hand, all their tragedies have also some comic passages; and, in regard to this matter, indeed, their plays may be generally described as consisting, in the words of the prologue to one of them,² of

“Passionate scenes mixed with no vulgar mirth.”

Undoubtedly, taking them all in all, they have left us the richest and most magnificent drama we possess after that of Shakspeare; the most instinct and alive both with the true dramatic spirit and with that of general poetic beauty and power; the most brilliantly lighted up with wit and humor; the freshest and most vivid, as well as various, picture of human manners and passions; the truest mirror, and at the same time the finest embellishment, of nature.



JONSON.

BEN JONSON was born in 1574, or two years before Fletcher, whom he survived twelve years, dying in 1637. He is supposed to have begun to write for the stage so early as 1593; but nothing that he produced attracted any attention till his Comedy of Every Man in his Humour was brought out at the Rose Theatre in 1596. This play, greatly altered and improved, was published in 1598;

¹ The following definition of what was formerly understood by the term tragi-comedy, or tragic-comedy, is given by Fletcher in the preface to his Faithful Shepherdess: — “A tragic-comedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths (which is enough to make it no tragedy): yet brings some near to it (which is enough to make it no comedy): which [*viz.* tragic-comedy] must be a representation of familiar people, with such kind of trouble as no life can be without; so that a god is as lawful in this as in a tragedy; and mean people as in a comedy.”

² The Custom of the Country.

and between that date and his death Jonson produced above fifty more dramatic pieces in all, of which ten are comedies, three what he called comical satires, only two tragedies, and all the rest masques, pageants, or other court entertainments. His two tragedies of *Sejanus* and *Catiline* are admitted on all hands to be nearly worthless; and his fame rests almost entirely upon his first comedy, his three subsequent comedies of *Volpone* or *The Fox*, *Epicoene* or *The Silent Woman*, and *The Alchemist*, his court Masques, and a Pastoral entitled *The Sad Shepherd*, which was left unfinished at his death. Ben Jonson's comedies admit of no comparison with those of Shakspeare or of Beaumont and Fletcher: he belongs to another school. His plays are professed attempts to revive, in English, the old classic Roman drama, and aim in their construction at a rigorous adherence to the models afforded by those of Plautus, and Terence, and Seneca. They are admirable for their elaborate art, which is, moreover, informed by a power of strong conception of a decidedly original character; they abound both in wit and eloquence, which in some passages rises to the glow of poetry; the figures of the scene stand out in high relief, every one of them, from the most important to the most insignificant, being finished off at all points with the minutest care; the dialogue carries on the action, and is animated in many parts with the right dramatic reciprocation; and the plot is in general contrived and evolved with the same learned skill, and the same attention to details, that are shown in all other particulars. But the execution, even where it is most brilliant, is hard and angular; nothing seems to flow naturally and freely; the whole has an air of constraint, and effort, and exaggeration; and the effect that is produced by the most arresting passages is the most undramatic that can be, — namely, a greater sympathy with the performance as a work of art than as anything else. It may be added that Jonson's characters, though vigorously delineated, and though not perhaps absolutely false to nature, are most of them rather of the class of her occasional excrescences or eccentricities than samples of any general humanity; they are the oddities and perversions of a particular age or state of manners, and have no universal truth or interest. What is called the humor of Jonson consists entirely in the exhibition of the more ludicrous kinds of these morbid aberrations; like everything about him, it has force and raciness enough, but will be most relished by those who are most amused by dancing-

bears and other shows of that class. It seldom or never makes the heart laugh, like the humor of Shakspeare, — which is, indeed, a quality of altogether another essence. As a poet, Jonson is greatest in his masques and other court pageants. The airy elegance of these compositions is a perfect contrast to the stern and rugged strength of his other works; the lyrical parts of them especially have often a grace and sportiveness, a flow as well as a finish, the effect of which is very brilliant. Still, even in these, we want the dewy light and rich colored irradiation of the poetry of Shakspeare and Fletcher: the lustre is pure and bright, but at the same time cold and sharp, like that of crystal. In Jonson's unfinished pastoral of *The Sad Shepherd* there is some picturesque description and more very harmonious verse, and the best parts of it (much of it is poor enough) are perhaps in a higher style than anything else he has written; but to compare it, as has sometimes been done, either as a poem or as a drama, with *The Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher seems to us to evince a deficiency of true feeling for the highest things, equal to what would be shown by preferring, as has also been done by some critics, the humor of Jonson to that of Shakspeare. Fletcher's pastoral, blasted as it is in some parts by fire not from heaven, is still a green and leafy wilderness of poetical beauty; Jonson's, deformed also by some brutality more elaborate than anything of the same sort in Fletcher, is at the best but a trim garden, and, had it been ever so happily finished, would have been nothing more.

MASSINGER. FORD.

AFTER Shakspeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Jonson, the next great name in our drama is that of Philip Massinger, who was born in 1584, and is supposed to have begun to write for the stage soon after 1606, although his first published play, his tragedy of *The Virgin Martyr*, in which he was assisted by Decker, did not appear till 1622. Of thirty-eight dramatic pieces which he is said to have written, only eighteen have been preserved; eight others were in the collection of Mr. Warburton, which his servant destroyed. Massinger, like Jonson, had received a learned educa-

tion, and his classic reading has colored his style and manner ; but he had scarcely so much originality of genius as Jonson. He is a very eloquent writer, but has little power of high imagination or pathos, and still less wit or comic power. He could rise, however, to a vivid conception of a character moved by some single aim or passion ; and he has drawn some of the darker shades of villainy with great force. His Sir Giles Overreach, in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, and his Luke in the City Madam, are perhaps his most successful delineations in this style. In the conduct of his plots, also, he generally displays much skill. In short, all that can be reached by mere talent and warmth of susceptibility he has achieved ; but his province was to appropriate and decorate rather than to create.

John Ford, the author of about a dozen plays that have survived, and one of whose pieces is known to have been acted so early as 1613, has one quality, that of a deep pathos, perhaps more nearly allied to high genius than any Massinger has shown ; but the range of the latter in the delineation of action and passion is so much more extensive, that we can hardly refuse to regard him as the greater dramatist. Ford's blank verse is not so imposing as Massinger's ; but it has often a delicate beauty, sometimes a warbling wildness and richness, beyond anything in Massinger's fuller swell.



LATER ELIZABETHAN PROSE WRITERS.

EVEN the prose literature of the present period is much of it of so imaginative a character, that it may be considered to be a kind of half-poetry. We have already traced the change which English prose-writing underwent in the course of the second and third quarters of the sixteenth century, passing from the familiar but elegant simplicity of the style of Sir Thomas More to the more formal and elaborate but still succinct and unincumbered rhetoric of Ascham, from thence to the affectations of Lyly the Euphuist and his imitators, and finally out of what we may call that sickly and unnatural state of transition to the richly decorated eloquence of Sidney. Along with Sidney's famous work, though of somewhat later date, may be mentioned his friend Spenser's *View of*

the State of Ireland, written, as has been already intimated, probably in the year 1596. It is a composition worthy of the many-visioned poet—full of matter, full of thought, full of life, with passages of description in it that make present the distant and the past, like the painter's colors. The style has not so much that is outwardly imposing as Sidney's, but more inward vigor and earnestness, as well as more compactness and sinew; in short, more of the true glow of eloquence, more of a heart leaping within it, and sending a pulse through every word and cadence.

On the whole, by the end of the sixteenth century, our prose, as exhibited in its highest examples, if it had lost something in ease and clearness, had gained considerably in copiousness, in sonorousness, and in splendor. In its inferior specimens, also, a corresponding change is to be traced, but of a modified character. In these the ancient simplicity and directness had given place only to a long-winded wordiness, and an awkwardness and intricacy, sometimes so excessive as to be nearly unintelligible, produced by piling clause upon clause, and involution upon involution, in the endeavor to crowd into every sentence as much meaning or as many particulars as possible. Here the change was nearly altogether for the worse; the loss in one direction was compensated by hardly anything that could be called a gain in another. It ought also to be noticed that towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth a singularly artificial mode of composition became fashionable, more especially in sermons and other theological writings, consisting mainly in the remotest or most recondite analogies of thought and the most elaborate verbal ingenuities or conceits. This may be designated the opposite pole in popular preaching to what we have in the plainness and simplicity, natural sometimes even to buffoonery, of Latimer.



TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

THE authorized translation of the Bible, on the whole so admirable both for correctness and beauty of style, is apt, on the first thought, to be regarded as exhibiting the actual state of the language in the time of James I., when it was first published. It is to be remembered, however, that the new translation was formed,

by the special directions of the king, upon the basis of that of Parker's, or the Bishops' Bible, which had been made nearly forty years before, and which had itself been founded upon that of Cranmer, made in the reign of Henry VIII. The consequence is, as Mr. Hallam has remarked, that, whether the style of King James's translation be the perfection of the English language or no, it is not the language of his reign. "It may, in the eyes of many," adds Mr. Hallam, "be a better English, but it is not the English of Daniel, or Raleigh, or Bacon, as any one may easily perceive. It abounds, in fact, especially in the Old Testament, with obsolete phraseology, and with single words long since abandoned, or retained only in provincial use."¹ This is, perhaps, rather strongly put; for although the preceding version served as a general guide to the translators, and was not needlessly deviated from, they have evidently modernized its style, not perhaps quite up to that of their own day, but so far, we apprehend, as to exclude nearly all words and phrases that had then passed out even of common and familiar use. In that theological age, indeed, few forms of expression found in the Bible could well have fallen altogether into desuetude, although some may have come to be less apt and significant than they once were, or than others that might now be substituted for them. But we believe the new translators, in any changes they made, were very careful to avoid the employment of any mere words of yesterday, the glare of whose recent coinage would have contrasted offensively with the general antique color of diction which they desired to retain. If ever their version were to be revised, whether to improve the rendering of some passages by the lights of modern criticism, or to mend some hardness and intricacy of construction in others, it ought to be retouched in the same spirit of affectionate veneration for the genius and essential characteristics of its beautiful diction; and a good rule to be laid down might be, that no word should be admitted in the improved renderings which was not in use in the age when the translation was originally made. The language was then abundantly rich enough to furnish all the words that could be wanted for the purpose.

¹ Lit. of Eur. ii. 464.

THEOLOGICAL WRITERS.—JAMES I. BISHOP ANDREWS.
DONNE. HALL. HOOKER.

BESIDES the translation of the Bible, the portion of the English literature of the present period that is theological is very great in point of quantity, and a part of it also possesses distinguished claims to notice in a literary point of view. Religion was the great subject of speculation and controversy in this country throughout the entire space of a century and a half between the Reformation and the Revolution; and nothing can more strikingly illustrate the universality of the interest that was now taken in theological controversy, than the fact that both the kings whose reigns fill the first half of the seventeenth century have left us a considerable quantity of literary manufacture of their own, and that it is almost all theological. The writings of Charles I. will be noticed afterwards. King James, whose works were collected and published in a folio volume in 1616, under the care of Dr. Mountague, bishop of Winchester, had given to the world what he called a Fruitful Meditation upon part of the Apocalypse, "in form of ane sermon," so early as the year 1588, when he was only a youth of two-and-twenty. Indeed, according to Bishop Mountague's account, this performance was "written by his majesty before he was twenty years of age." Soon after, on the destruction of the Spanish Armada, he produced another Meditation on certain verses of one of the chapters of the First Book of Chronicles. Among his subsequent publications are Meditations on the Lord's Prayer and on some verses of the 27th chapter of St. Matthew. And nearly all his other works—his *Dæmonologie*, first published in 1597; his *True Law of Free Monarchies*, 1598; his *Basilicon Doron*, or advice to his son Prince Henry, 1599; his *Apology for the Oath of Allegiance*, 1605—are, in the main, theological treatises. It is scarcely necessary to add that they are of little or no value, either theological or literary; though they are curious as illustrating the intellectual and moral character of James, who was certainly a person of no depth either of learning or of judgment, though of some reading in the single province of theology, and also of considerable shrewdness and readiness, and an inexhaustible flow of words, which he mistook for eloquence and genius.

One of the most eminent preachers, perhaps the most eminent, of the age of Elizabeth and James, was Dr. Lancelot Andrews,

who, after having held the sees of Chichester and Ely, died bishop of Winchester in 1626. Bishop Andrews was one of the translators of the Bible, and is the author, among other works, of a folio volume of Sermons published, by direction of Charles I., soon after his death; of another folio volume of Tracts and Speeches, which appeared in 1629; of a third volume of Lectures on the Ten Commandments, published in 1642; and of a fourth, containing Lectures delivered at St. Paul's and at St. Giles's, Cripplegate, published in 1657. He was, perhaps, the most learned of the English theologians of that learned time, and was besides a person of great vigor and acuteness of understanding; so that his death was regarded by scholars both at home and abroad as the extinction of the chief light of the English Church. Milton, then a youth of seventeen, bewailed the event in a Latin elegy, full of feeling and fancy; and even in a tract written many years afterwards, when his opinions had undergone a complete change, he admits that "Bishop Andrews of late years, and in these times the Primate of Armagh (Usher), for their learning are reputed the best able to say what may be said" in defence of episcopacy.¹ Both the learning and ability of Andrews, indeed, are conspicuous in everything he has written; but his eloquence, nevertheless, is to a modern taste grotesque enough. In his more ambitious passages he is the very prince of verbal posture-masters, — if not the first in date, the first in extravagance, of the artificial, quibbling, syllable-tormenting school of our English pulpit rhetoricians; and he undoubtedly contributed more to spread the disease of that manner of writing than any other individual. Not only did his eminence in this line endear him to the royal tastes of Elizabeth and James; all men admired and strove to copy after him. Fuller declares that he was "an inimitable preacher in his way"; and then he tells us that "pious and pleasant Bishop Felton, his contemporary and colleague, endeavoured in vain in his sermons to assimilate his style, and therefore said merrily of himself, I had almost marred my own natural trot by endeavouring to imitate his artificial amble." Many a "natural trot" Andrews no doubt was the cause of spoiling in his day, and long after it. This bishop is further very notable, in the history of the English Church, as the first great asserter of those semi-popish notions touching doctrines,

¹ The Reason of Church Government argued against Prelacy (published in 1641), Book i. chap. 3.

rites, and ecclesiastical government with which Laud afterwards blew up the establishment. Andrews, however, was a very different sort of person from Laud, — as superior to him in sense and policy as in learning and general strength and comprehensiveness of understanding. A well-known story that is told of him proves his moderation as much as his wit and readiness: when he and Dr. Neal, bishop of Durham, were one day standing behind the king's chair as he sat at dinner (it was the day on which James dissolved his third parliament, and the anecdote is related on the authority of Waller, the poet, who was present), his majesty, turning round, addressed the two prelates — My lords, cannot I take my subjects' money when I want it, without all this formality in parliament? “The bishop of Durham readily answered, God forbid, sir, but you should; you are the breath of our nostrils. Wherenpon the king turned, and said to the bishop of Winchester, Well, my lord, what say you? Sir, replied the bishop, I have no skill to judge of parliamentary cases. The king answered, No put-offs, my lord, answer me presently. Then, sir, said he, I think it is lawful for you to take my brother Neal's money, for he offers it.”¹ Clarendon has expressed his belief that if Archbishop Bancroft had been succeeded in the see of Canterbury by Andrews, instead of Abbot, the infection of the Geneva fire would have been kept out, which could not afterwards be so easily expelled.²

Donne, the poet, was also a voluminous writer in prose; having left a folio volume of Sermons, besides a treatise against Popery entitled *The Pseudo-Martyr*, another singular performance, entitled *Biathanatos*, in confutation of the common notion about the necessary sinfulness of suicide, and some other professional disquisitions. His biographer, Izaak Walton, says that he preached “as an angel, *from a cloud, but not in a cloud*”; but most modern readers will probably be of opinion that he has not quite made his escape from it. His manner is fully as quaint in his prose as in his verse, and his way of thinking as subtle and peculiar. His sermons are also, as well as those of Andrews, overlaid with learning, much of which seems to be only a useless and cumbersome show. Doubtless, however, there are deep and beautiful things in Donne, for those that will seek for them; as has, indeed, been testified by

¹ Life of Waller, prefixed to his Poems, 1712.

² Hist. i. 88 (edit. of 1717).

some who in modern times have made themselves the best acquainted with these long-neglected theological works of his.¹

Another of the most learned theologians and eloquent preachers of those times was as well as Donne an eminent poet, Bishop Joseph Hall. Hall's English prose works, which are very voluminous, consist of sermons, polemical tracts, paraphrases of Scripture, casuistical divinity, and some pieces on practical religion, of which his *Contemplations*, his *Art of Divine Meditation*, and his *Enochismus*, or *Treatise on the Mode of Walking with God*, are the most remarkable. The poetic temperament of Hall reveals itself, in his prose as well as in his verse, by the fervor of his piety, and the forcible and often picturesque character of his style, in which it has been thought he made Seneca his model. "The writer of the *Satires*," observes Warton, "is perceptible in some of his gravest polemical or Scriptural treatises; which are perpetually interspersed with excursive illustrations, familiar allusions, and observations on life."² It will be perceived, from all this, that both in style and in mind Hall and Donne were altogether opposed; neither in his prose nor in his verse has the former the originality of the latter, or the fineness of thought that will often break out in a sudden streak of light from the midst of his dark sayings; but, on the other hand, he is perfectly free from the dominant vices of Donne's manner, his conceits, his quaintness, his remote and fantastic analogies, his obscurity, his harshness, his parade of a useless and encumbering erudition.

Last of all may be mentioned, among the great theological writers of this great theological time, one who stands alone, Richard Hooker, the illustrious author of the *Eight Books of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*; of which the first four were published in 1594, the fifth in 1597, the three last not till 1632, many years after the author's death. Hooker's style is almost without a rival for its sustained dignity of march: but that which makes it most remarkable is its union of all this learned gravity and correctness with a flow of genuine, racy English, almost as little tinctured with pedantry as the most familiar popular writing. The effect, also,

¹ The first edition of the collected Works of Dr. Donne was published by the Rev. Henry Alford, M. A., in 6 vols. 8vo. in 1839. Three folio volumes of his Sermons, however, had been successively published in 1640, 1649, and 1661.

² *Hist. Eng. Poet.* iv. 336. A complete collection of the works of Bishop Hall, edited by the Rev. Peter Hall, was brought out at Oxford, in 12 vols. 8vo. in 1837-39.

of its evenness of movement is the very reverse of tameness or languor ; the full river of the argument dashes over no precipices, but yet rolls along without pause, and with great force and buoyancy.



BACON.

UNDOUBTEDLY the principal figure in English prose literature, as well as in philosophy, during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, is Francis Bacon. Bacon, born in 1561, published the first edition of his *Essays* in 1597 ; his *Two Books of the Advancement of Learning* in 1605 ; his *Wisdom of the Ancients* (in Latin) in 1610 ; a third edition of his *Essays*, greatly extended, in 1612 ; his *Two Books of the Novum Organum, or Second Part of the Instauration Magna*, designed to consist of Six Parts (also in Latin), in 1620 ; his *History of the Reign of Henry VII.*, in 1622 ; his *Nine Books De Augmentis Scientiarum*, a Latin translation and extension of his *Advancement of Learning*, in 1623. He died in 1626. The originality of the Baconian or Inductive method of philosophy, the actual service it has rendered to science, and ever the end which it may be most correctly said to have in view, have all been subjects of dispute almost ever since Bacon's own day ; but, notwithstanding all differences of opinion upon these points, the acknowledgment that he was intellectually one of the most colossal of the sons of men has been nearly unanimous. They who have not seen his greatness under one form have discovered it in another ; there is a discordance among men's ways of looking at him, or their theories respecting him ; but the mighty shadow which he projects athwart the two bygone centuries lies there immovable, and still extending as time extends. The very deductions which are made from his merits in regard to particular points thus only heighten the impression of his general eminence, — of that something about him not fully understood or discerned, which, spite of all curtailment of his claims in regard to one special kind of eminence or another, still leaves the sense of his eminence as strong as ever. As for his *Novum Organum*, or so-called new instrument of philosophy, it may be that it was not really new when he announced it as such, either as a process followed in the

practice of scientific discovery, or as a theory of the right method of discovery. Neither may Bacon have been the first writer, in his own or the immediately preceding age, who recalled attention to the inductive method, or who pointed out the barrenness of what was then called philosophy in the schools. Nor can it be affirmed that it was really he who brought the reign of that philosophy to a close: it was falling fast into disrepute before he assailed it, and would probably have passed away quite as soon as it did although his writings had never appeared. Nor possibly has he either looked at that old philosophy with a very penetrating or comprehensive eye, or even shown a perfect understanding of the inductive method in all its applications and principles. As for his attempts in the actual practice of the inductive method, they were, it must be owned, either insignificant or utter failures; and that, too, while some of his contemporaries, who in no respect acknowledged him as their teacher, were turning it to account in extorting from nature the most brilliant revelations. Nay, can it be doubted that, if Bacon had never lived, or never written, the discoveries and the writings of Galileo, and Kepler, and Pascal, and others who were now extending the empire of science by the very method which he has explained and recommended, but most assuredly without having been instructed in that method by him, would have established the universal recognition of it as the right method of philosophy just as early as such recognition actually took place? That Bacon's *Novum Organum* has, even down to the present day, affected in any material degree the actual progress of science, may be very reasonably questioned. What great discovery or improvement can be named among all those that have been made since his time, which, from the known facts of its history, we may not fairly presume would have been made at any rate, though the *Novum Organum* had never been written? What instance can be quoted of the study of that work having made, or even greatly contributed to make, any individual a discoverer in science who would not in all probability have been equally such if he had never seen or heard of it? In point of fact, there is no reason to believe that almost any of those by whom science has been most carried forward since it appeared had either much studied Bacon's *Novum Organum*, or had even acquired any intimate or comprehensive acquaintance with the rules and directions therein laid down from other sources. Nor is it likely that they would have been more

successful experimenters or greater discoverers if they had. For there is surely nothing in any part of the method of procedure prescribed by Bacon for the investigation of truth, that would not occur of itself to the sagacity and common sense of any person of an inventive genius pursuing such investigation; indeed, every discovery that has been made, except by accident, since science had any being, must have been arrived at by the very processes which he has explained. There can be little doubt that it would be found, on a survey of the whole history of scientific discovery, that its progress has always depended partly upon the remarkable genius of individuals, partly upon the general state of the world and the condition of civilization at different times, and not in any sensible degree upon the mere speculative views as to the right method of philosophy that have at particular eras been taught in schools or books, or otherwise generally diffused. In fact it is much more reasonable to suppose that such speculative views should have been usually influenced by the actual progress of discovery than it by them; for the recognition of sound principles of procedure, in as far as that is implied in their practical application, though not perhaps the contemplation and exposition of them in a systematic form, is necessarily involved, as has been just observed, in the very act of scientific discovery. All this being considered, there cannot well be attributed to Bacon's *Novum Organum* any considerable direct share, nor even much indirect influence in promoting the progress which science has made in certain departments since his time; it is most probable that that progress is to be traced to other causes altogether, and that it would have been pretty nearly what it is though the *Novum Organum* never had been written. Galileo, and not Bacon, is the true father of modern natural philosophy. That, in truth, was not Bacon's province at all; neither his acquirements nor the peculiar character and constitution of his mind fitted him for achieving anything on that ground. The common mistake regarding him is the same as if it were to be said that not Homer, but Aristotle, was the father of poetry, because he first investigated and explained the principles or philosophy of a part of the art of poetry. (Bacon belongs not to mathematical or natural science, but to literature and to moral science in its most extensive acceptance, — to the realm of imagination, of wit, of eloquence, of æsthetics, of history, of jurisprudence, of political philosophy, of logic, of metaphysics and the investigation

of the powers and operations of the human mind. He is either not at all or in no degree worth mentioning an investigator or expounder of mathematics, or of mechanics, or of astronomy, or of chemistry, or of any other branch of geometrical or physical science; but he is a most penetrating and comprehensive investigator, and a most magnificent expounder, of that higher wisdom in comparison with which all these things are but a more intellectual sort of legerdemain. All his works, his essays, his philosophical writings, commonly so called, and what he has done in history, are of one and the same character; reflective and, so to speak, poetical, not simply demonstrative, or elucidatory of mere matters of fact. What, then, is his glory? — in what did his greatness consist? In this, we should say: — that an intellect at once one of the most capacious and one of the most profound ever granted to a mortal — in its powers of vision at the same time one of the most penetrating and one of the most far-reaching — was in him united and reconciled with an almost equal endowment of the imaginative faculty; and that he is, therefore, of all philosophical writers, the one in whom are found together, in the largest proportions, depth of thought and splendor of eloquence. His intellectual ambition, also, — a quality of the imagination, — was of the most towering character; and no other philosophic writer has taken up so grand a theme as that on which he has laid out his strength in his greatest works. But with the progress of scientific discovery that has taken place during the last two hundred years, it would be difficult to show that these works have had almost anything to do. His *Advancement of Learning* and his *Novum Organum* have more in them of the spirit of poetry than of science; and we should almost as soon think of fathering modern physical science upon *Paradise Lost* as upon them.

A late distinguished writer, Mr. Hallam in his *History of European Literature*, although his estimate of what Bacon has done for science is much higher than we are able to go along with, yet in the following passage seems to come very near to the admission of, or at least very strongly to corroborate, much of what has just been advanced: — “It is evident that he had turned his thoughts to physical philosophy rather for an exercise of his reasoning faculties, and out of his insatiable thirst for knowledge, than from any peculiar aptitude for their [*these, or such?*] subjects, much less any advantage of opportunity for their cultivation. He was more emi-

nently the philosopher of human than of general nature. Hence he is exact as well as profound in all his reflections on civil life and mankind; while his conjectures in natural philosophy, though often very acute, are apt to wander far from the truth in consequence of his defective acquaintance with the phenomena of nature. His Centuries of Natural History give abundant proof of this. He is, in all these inquiries, like one doubtfully, and by degrees, making out a distant prospect, but often deceived by the haze. But if we compare what may be found in the sixth, seventh, and eighth Books De Augmentis, in the Essays, the History of Henry VII., and the various short treatises contained in his works, on moral and political wisdom, and on human nature, from experience of which all such wisdom is drawn, with the Rhetoric, Ethics, and Politics of Aristotle, or with the historians most celebrated for their deep insight into civil society and human character, — with Thucydides, Tacitus, Philip de Comines, Machiavel, Davila, Hume, — we shall, I think, find that one man may almost be compared with all of these together. When Galileo is named as equal to Bacon, it is to be remembered that Galileo was no moral or political philosopher; and in this department Leibnitz certainly falls very short of Bacon. Burke, perhaps, comes, of all modern writers, the nearest to him; but, though Bacon may not be more profound than Burke, he is still more copious and comprehensive.”¹

¹ Lit. of Eur. iii. 61. Among many other admirable things thickly scattered over the whole of this section on Bacon (pp. 23–68), Mr. Hallam has taken an opportunity of pointing out an almost universal misapprehension into which the modern expositors of Bacon's *Novum Organum* have fallen on the subject of his celebrated *Idola*, which, as is here shown, are not at all what we now call idols, that is, false divinities, but merely, in the Greek sense of the word, images or fallacious appearances of things as opposed to realities (pp. 44–46). The reader may also be referred to another disquisition on Bacon, of great brilliancy, by Mr. Macaulay, which originally appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* (No. 132, for July, 1837, pp. 1–104). And in addition to the illustrative expositions of the *Novum Organum*, of a more scientific character, by the late Professor Playfair, in his *Dissertation on the Progress of Mathematical and Physical Science*, prefixed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (pp. 453–474); and by Sir John Herschel, in his *Preliminary Discourse on the Objects, Advantages, and Pleasures of the Study of Natural Philosophy*, in Dr. Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopædia*, may be mentioned, as containing some views of the greatest importance, the Second Section of Coleridge's *Introduction to the Encyclopædia Metropolitana* (pp. 24–32), partly founded on what had been previously published in the *Friend*. Coleridge is one of the very few modern writers who have not fallen into the misconception noticed above about Bacon's *Idola*. See his treatise, p. 28. But the most learned, elaborate, and complete examination that Bacon's philosophical system and claims have received, is what is given from the papers of the late R. L. Ellis, Esq., in the new edition of his works, superintended

BURTON.

A REMARKABLE prose work of this age, which ought not to be passed over without notice, is Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Robert Burton, who, on his title-page, takes the name of Democritus Junior, died in 1640, and his book was first published in 1621. It is an extraordinary accumulation of out-of-the-way learning, interspersed, somewhat in the manner of Montaigne's *Essays*, with original matter, but with this among other differences, — that in Montaigne the quotations have the air of being introduced, as we know that in fact they were, to illustrate the original matter, which is the web of the discourse, they but the embroidery; whereas in Burton the learning is rather the web, upon which what he has got to say of his own is worked in by way of forming a sort of decorative figure. Burton is far from having the variety or abundance of Montaigne; but there is considerable point and penetration in his style, and he says many striking things in a sort of half-splenetic, half-jocular humor, which many readers have found wonderfully stimulating. Dr. Johnson declared that Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* was the only book that ever drew him out of bed an hour sooner than he would otherwise have got up.

HISTORICAL WRITERS.

AMONG the historical writers of the reign of James may be first mentioned the all-accomplished Sir Walter Raleigh. Raleigh is the author of a few short poems, and of some miscellaneous pieces in prose; but his great work is his *History of the World*, composed during his imprisonment in the Tower, and first published in a folio volume in 1614. It is an unfinished work, coming down only to the first Macedonian war; and there is no reason to suppose that any more of it was ever written, although it has been asserted that a second volume was burnt by the author. Raleigh's *History*, as a record of facts, has long been superseded; the interest it pos-
by Mr. Spedding, Lond. 1857, *et seq.* The reader may also be referred to a remarkable volume, entitled *Francis Bacon of Verulam*, by Kuno Fischer; translated from the German by John Oxenford, Lond. 1857

esses at the present day is derived almost entirely from its literary merits, and from a few passages in which the author takes occasion to allude to circumstances that have fallen within his own experience. Much of it is written without any ambition of eloquence; but the style, even where it is most careless, is still lively and exciting, from a tone of the actual world which it preserves, and a certain frankness and heartiness coming from Raleigh's profession and his warm impetuous character. It is not disfigured by any of the petty pedantries to some one or other of which most of the writers of books in that day gave way more or less, and it has altogether comparatively little of the taint of age upon it; while in some passages the composition, without losing anything of its natural grace and heartiness, is wrought up to great rhetorical polish and elevation.

Another celebrated historical work of this time is Richard Knolles's *History of the Turks*, published in 1610. Johnson, in one of his *Ramblers*, has awarded to Knolles the first place among English historians; and Mr. Hallam concurs in thinking that his style and power of narration have not been too highly extolled by that critic. "His descriptions," continues Mr. Hallam, "are vivid and animated; circumstantial, but not to feebleness; his characters are drawn with a strong pencil. . . . In the style of Knolles there is sometimes, as Johnson has hinted, a slight excess of desire to make every phrase effective; but he is exempt from the usual blemishes of his age; and his command of the language is so extensive, that we should not err in placing him among the first of our elder writers."¹ Much of this praise, however, is to be considered as given to the uniformity or regularity of Knolles's style; the chief fault of which perhaps is, that it is too continuously elaborated and sustained for a long work. We have already mentioned Samuel Daniel's *History of England from the Conquest to the reign of Edward III.*, which was published in 1618. It is of little historical value, but is remarkable for the same simple ease and purity of language which distinguish Daniel's verse. The contribution to this department of literature of all those that the early part of the seventeenth century produced, which is at the same time the most valuable as an original authority and the most masterly in its execution, is undoubtedly Bacon's *History of the reign of Henry VII.*

¹ *Lit. of Eur.* iii. 372.

The series of popular national chronicles was continued in this period, from the publication of Edward Hall's *Union of the Two Noble and Illustrious Families of York and Lancaster*, in 1548, by that of Richard Grafton's *Chronicle at Large*, down to the First Year of Queen Elizabeth, in 1569; of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, in 1577; and by the various publications of the laborious antiquaries John Stow and John Speed: namely, Stow's *Summary of the English Chronicles*, of which he published many editions between 1565 and 1598; his *Annals*, also frequently reprinted with corrections and enlargements between 1573 and 1600; his *Survey of London*, first published in 1598, and again with additions in 1603; and Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*, 1606, and his *History of Great Britain*, coming down to the accession of James I., 1614. These various works of Stow and Speed rank among the head sources or fountains of our knowledge in the department of national antiquities.

CLASSICAL LEARNING.

WITH the exception of a magnificent edition of Chrysostom, in eight volumes folio, by Sir Henry Savile, printed at Eton, where Savile was provost of the College, in 1612, scarcely any great work in the department of ancient scholarship appeared in England in the portion of the seventeenth century which preceded the breaking out of the Civil War. It, however, produced a number of works written in Latin by Englishmen, which still retain more or less celebrity; among others, the illustrious Camden's *Britannia*, first published in 1586, but not enlarged to the form in which its author ultimately left it till the appearance of the sixth edition, in 1607; the same writer's *Annales Rerum Anglicarum regnante Elizabetha*, the first part of which was printed in 1615, the sequel not till after Camden's death: John Barclay's two poetical romances of the *Euphormio*, the first part of which was published in 1603, and the more famous *Argenis*, 1621; Lord Herbert's treatise *De Veritate*, 1624; and the *Mare Clausum*, the *Uxor Hebraica*, and other works of the most learned John Selden.

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HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE,

AND OF

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

VOL. II.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL
LOS ANGELES, -- CAL
A

COMPENDIOUS HISTORY
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE,
AND OF
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,
FROM
THE NORMAN CONQUEST.
WITH NUMEROUS SPECIMENS.

BY
GEORGE L. CRAIK, LL. D.,

LATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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HISTORY

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

MIDDLE AND LATTER PART OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

EXCLUDING from our view the productions of the last fifty or sixty years, as not yet ripe for the verdict of history, we may affirm that our national literature, properly so called, that is, whatever of our literature by right of its poetic shape or spirit is to be held as peculiarly belonging to the language and the country, had its noonday in the period comprehending the last quarter of the sixteenth and the first of the seventeenth century. But a splendid afternoon flush succeeded this meridian blaze, which may be said to have lasted for another half-century, or longer. Down almost to the Revolution, or at least to the middle of the reign of Charles II., our higher literature continued to glow with more or less of the colored light and the heart of fire which it had acquired in the age of Elizabeth and James. Some of the greatest of it indeed — as the verse of Milton and the prose poetry of Jeremy Taylor — was not given to the world till towards the close of the space we have just indicated. But Milton, and Taylor, and Sir Thomas Browne, and Cudworth, and Henry More, and Cowley, the most eminent of our English writers in the interval from the Restoration to the Revolution (if we except Dryden, the founder of a new school, and Barrow, whose writings, full as they are of thought, have not much of the poetical or untranslatable) were all of them, it is worthy of observation, born before the close of the reign of James I. Nor would the stormy time that followed be without its nurture for such minds. A boyhood or youth passed in the days of Shakspeare and Bacon, and a manhood in those of the Great Rebellion, was a training which could not fail to rear high powers to their highest capabilities.

SHIRLEY, AND THE END OF THE OLD DRAMA.

THE chief glory of our Elizabethan literature, however, belongs almost exclusively to the time we have already gone over. The only other name that remains to be mentioned to complete our sketch of the great age of the Drama, is that of James Shirley, who was born about the year 1594, and whose first play, the comedy of *The Wedding*, was published in 1629. He is the author of about forty dramatic pieces which have come down to us. "Shirley," observes Lamb, "claims a place among the worthies of this period, not so much for any transcendent genius in himself, as that he was the last of a great race, all of whom spoke nearly the same language, and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common. A new language and quite a new turn of tragic and comic interest came in with the Restoration."¹ Of this writer, who survived till 1666, the merits and defects have been well stated, in a few comprehensive words, by Mr. Hallam: — "Shirley has no originality, no force in conceiving or delineating character, little of pathos, and less, perhaps, of wit; his dramas produce no deep impression in reading, and of course can leave none in the memory. But his mind was poetical: his better characters, especially females, express pure thoughts in pure language; he is never tumid or affected, and seldom obscure; the incidents succeed rapidly; the personages are numerous, and there is a general animation in the scenes, which causes us to read him with some pleasure."²

A preface by Shirley is prefixed to the first collection of part of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, which, as already mentioned, appeared in 1647. "Now, reader," he says, "in this tragical age, where the theatre hath been so much out-acted, congratulate thy own happiness that, in this silence of the stage, thou hast a liberty to read these inimitable plays, — to dwell and converse in these immortal groves, — which were only showed our fathers in a conjuring-glass, as suddenly removed as represented." At this time all theatrical amusements were prohibited; and the publication of these and of other dramatic productions which were their property, or rather the sale of them to the booksellers, was resorted to by the players as a way of making a little money when thus cut off from

¹ Specimens, ii. 119.² Lit. of Eur. iii. 345.

the regular gains of their profession ; the eagerness of the public to possess the said works in print being of course also sharpened by the same cause. Before the commencement of the civil war there appear to have been no fewer than five different companies of public players in London : — 1. That called the King's Company (the same that Shakspeare had belonged to), which acted at the Globe, on the Bankside in Southwark, in the summer, and at the Blackfriars Theatre in winter. 2. The Queen's Players, who occupied the Cockpit (or the Phoenix, as it was also called), in Drury Lane, the origin of the Theatre Royal there. 3. The Prince's Players, who played at the Fortune Theatre, in Golden or Golding Lane, in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate. 4. The Salisbury Court Company. 5. The Children of the Revels, who are supposed to have performed at the theatre called the Red Bull, at the upper end of St. John's Street. It had been usual to shut up the theatres when the plague was in London, with the view of preventing such concourses of people as it was thought might help to spread the disease, and on such occasions the players were wont to go down and act in the provinces ; but their absence from town when protracted beyond a few weeks was very impatiently borne. In May, 1636, when the plague was raging with great violence, an order was issued by the privy council, forbidding the representation of all " stage-plays, interludes, shows, and spectacles " ; and the prohibition was not removed till the end of February in the following year. In the mean time, it appears, the craving of the public for their customary enjoyment, in one shape if not in another, had tempted certain booksellers to print a number of plays, surreptitiously procured, as we learn from an edict of the lord chamberlain, addressed to the Stationers' Company, in June, 1637, in which he states that complaints to that effect had been made to him by the players, the legal proprietors of those " books of comedies, tragedies, interludes, histories, and the like, which they had (for the special service of his majesty and for their own use) bought and provided at very dear and high rates." The players added, that, by these unfair publications, " not only they themselves had much prejudice, but the books much corruption, to the injury and disgrace of the authors."¹ At this time the most favorite acting-plays were in general carefully withheld from the

¹ See the edict in Chalmers's *Apclogy for the Believers in the Shakespeare Papers*, p. 513.

press by the theatrical companies whose property they were ; and the only way in which a perusal of them could be obtained was by paying a considerable sum for a loan of the manuscript or a transcript of it. Humphrey Moseley, the publisher of the collection of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays in 1647, after observing in his prefatory address that his charges in bringing out the volume had been very great, seeing that the owners of the manuscripts too well knew their value to make a cheap estimate of any of them, adds, "Heretofore, when gentlemen desired but a copy of any of these plays, the meanest piece here (if any may be called mean where every one is best) cost them more than four times the price you pay for the whole volume." The missing comedy of *The Wild Goose Chase* had been lost, he tells us in another passage, by being borrowed from the actors many years before by a person of quality, and, owing to the neglect of a servant, never returned. Sometimes, too, it appears from another of his remarks, an individual actor would write out his part for a private friend, or probably for any one who would pay him for it.

The permanent suppression of theatrical entertainments was the act of the Long Parliament. An ordinance of the Lords and Commons passed on the 2d of September, 1642, — after setting forth that "public sports do not well agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation, this being an exercise of sad and pious solemnity, and the other being spectacles of pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levity," — ordained, "that, while these sad causes and set times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne." It has been plausibly conjectured that this measure originated, "not merely in a spirit of religious dislike to dramatic performances, but in a politic caution, lest play-writers and players should avail themselves of their power over the minds of the people to instil notions and opinions hostile to the authority of a puritanical parliament."¹ This ordinance certainly put an end at once to the regular performance of plays ; but it is known to have been occasionally infringed ; and there is reason to believe that after a few years it began to be pretty frequently and openly disregarded. This would appear to have been the case from a new ordinance of the Lords and Commons published in October, 1647, entitled, "For the better suppression of stage-plays, interludes, and com-

¹ Collier, *Hist. Dram. Poet.* ii. 106.

mon players," by which the lord-mayor, justices of the peace, and sheriffs of the city of London and Westminster, and of the counties of Middlesex and Surrey, were authorized and required to enter into all houses and other places within their jurisdiction where stage-plays were acted, and to seize the players and commit them for trial at the next sessions, "there to be punished as rogues, according to law." On the 22d of January following, however, the House of Commons was informed that many stage-plays were still acted in various places in the city of London and in the county of Middlesex, notwithstanding this ordinance. The subject was then taken up with furious zeal both by Commons and Lords; and, after a great bustle of message-sending, debating, and consulting in committees, an act was agreed upon and published on the 11th of February, 1648, which, after declaring stage-plays, interludes, and common plays to be "condemned by ancient heathens, and much less to be tolerated amongst professors of the Christian religion," and denouncing them as being "the occasion of many and sundry great vices and disorders, tending to the high provocation of God's wrath and displeasure, which lies heavy upon this kingdom, and to the disturbance of the peace thereof," proceeded to ordain:—first, that all players should be taken to be rogues within the meaning of the statutes of the 39th of Elizabeth and 7th of James; secondly, that the authorities of the city of London and counties of Middlesex and Surrey should "pull down and demolish, or cause and procure to be pulled down and demolished, all stage-galleries, seats, and boxes, erected or used, or which shall be erected or used, for the acting or playing, or seeing acted or played," any species of theatrical performance within their jurisdictions; thirdly, that convicted players should be punished for the first offence with open and public whipping, and, for the second, should be dealt with according to law as incorrigible rogues; fourthly, that all the money collected from the spectators of any stage-plays should be seized for the use of the poor of the parish; and, lastly, that every person present at any such performance should forfeit the sum of five shillings to the use of the poor. Even this severe measure was not perfectly effectual; for, in the following September, we find the House of Commons appointing a provost-marshal, with authority, among other things, "to seize upon all ballad-singers and seliers of malignant pamphlets, and to send them to the several militias, and to

suppress stage-plays." And, more than a year after this, namely, in December, 1649, it is noted by Whitelock that "some stage-players in St. John's Street were apprehended by troopers, their clothes taken away, and themselves carried to prison." It appears, also, that in some of the country parts of the kingdom strolling players continued for some years to set the law at defiance, and to be connived at in their disregard of it. At so late a date as February, 1654, it is recorded that plays were performed by a company of strollers at Witney and other places in Oxfordshire.¹ It is, perhaps, more probable, however, that the statute had only in course of time come to be less rigidly enforced, than that it had been thus violated from the first. We are informed by the historians of the stage, that, though the public exhibition of stage-plays in London was effectually put down by the act of 1648, yet the players "still kept together, and, by connivance of the commanding officer at Whitehall, sometimes represented privately a few plays at a short distance from town." They also, it is added, were permitted to act at the country houses of some of the nobility; and even obtained leave at particular festivals to resume their public performances at the Red Bull. Finally, we are told, "amidst the gloom of fanaticism, and whilst the Royal cause was considered as desperate, Sir William Davenant, without molestation, exhibited entertainments of declamation and music, after the manner of the ancients, at Rutland House. He began in the year 1656, and two years afterwards removed to the Cockpit, Drury Lane, where he performed until the eve of the Restoration."² Rutland House was in Charter House Square; and it is said that Davenant's performances there were countenanced by Whitelock, Sir John Maynard, and other persons of influence. At first he called his representations operas; but at length growing bolder, it is affirmed, he wrote and caused to be acted several regular plays.³

¹ See the facts connected with the shutting of the theatres for the first time accurately stated in Mr. Collier's *History*, ii. 101-119.

² View of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage, prefixed to Reed's edition of Baker's *Biographia Dramatica*, p. xxii. Mr. Collier (ii. 119) says:—"The performance of Davenant's 'opera,' as he himself calls it, of *The Siege of Rhodes*, in 1656, is to be looked upon as the first step towards the revival of dramatic performances."

³ *Biog. Dram.* ii. 15.

GILES FLETCHER. PHINEAS FLETCHER.

NOR is the poetical produce other than dramatic of the quarter of a century that elapsed from the death of James to the establishment of the Commonwealth, of very considerable amount. Giles and Phineas Fletcher were brothers, cousins of the dramatist, and both clergymen. Giles, who died in 1623, is the author of a poem entitled *Christ's Victory and Triumph in Heaven and Earth over and after Death*, which was published in a quarto volume in 1610. It is divided into four parts, and is written in stanzas somewhat like those of Spenser, only containing eight lines each instead of nine: both the Fletchers, indeed, were professed disciples and imitators of the great author of the *Fairy Queen*. Phineas, who survived till 1650, published in 1633, along with a small collection of *Piscatory Eclogues and other Poetical Miscellanies*, a long allegorical poem, entitled *The Purple Island*, in twelve Books or Cantos, written in a stanza of seven lines. The idea upon which this performance is founded is one of the most singular that ever took possession of the brain even of an allegorist: the *purple island* is nothing else than the human body, and the poem is, in fact, for the greater part, a system of anatomy, nearly as minute in its details as if it were a scientific treatise, but wrapping up everything in a fantastic guise of double meaning, so as to produce a languid singsong of laborious riddles, which are mostly unintelligible without the very knowledge they make a pretence of conveying. After he has finished his anatomical course, the author takes up the subject of psychology, which he treats in the same luminous and interesting manner. Such a work as this has no claim to be considered a poem even of the same sort with the *Fairy Queen*. In Spenser, the allegory, whether historical or moral, is little more than formal: the poem, taken in its natural and obvious import, as a tale of "knights' and ladies' gentle deeds," — a song of their "fierce wars and faithful loves," — has meaning and interest enough, without the allegory at all, which, indeed, except in a very few passages, is so completely concealed behind the direct narrative, that we may well suppose it to have been nearly as much lost sight of and forgotten by the poet himself as it is by his readers: here, the allegory is the soul of every stanza and of every line, — that which gives to the whole work whatever mean-

ing, and consequently whatever poetry, it possesses, — with which, indeed, it is sometimes hard enough to be understood, but without which it would be absolute inanity and nonsense. The Purple Island is rather a production of the same species with Dr. Darwin's Botanic Garden ; but, forced and false enough as Darwin's style is in many respects, it would be doing an injustice to his poem to compare it with Phineas Fletcher's, either in regard to the degree in which nature and propriety are violated in the principle and manner of the composition, or in regard to the spirit and general success of the execution. Of course, there is a good deal of ingenuity shown in Fletcher's poem ; and it is not unimpregnated by poetic feeling, nor without some passages of considerable merit. But in many other parts it is quite grotesque ; and, on the whole, it is fantastic, puerile, and wearisome. Mr. Hallam thinks that Giles Fletcher, in his poem of Christ's Victory and Triumph, has shown more vigor than Phineas,¹ " but less sweetness, less smoothness, and more affectation in his style."² It ought to be mentioned, however, to the honor of these two writers, that the works of both of them appear to have been studied by Milton, and that imitations of some passages in each are to be traced in his poetry. Milton was undoubtedly a diligent reader of the English poetry of the age preceding his own ; and his predecessors of all degrees, Ben Jonson and Fletcher the dramatists, as well as the two cousins of the latter, and, as we have seen, Joshua Sylvester and the earlier dramatic writer, George Peele, had contributed something to the awakening or directing of his feeling for the grand and beautiful, and to the forming of his melodious and lofty note.

OTHER RELIGIOUS POETS.—QUARLES. HERBERT. HERRICK. CRASHAW.

THE growth of the religious spirit in the early part of the seventeenth century is shown in much more of the poetry of the time as well as in that of the two Fletchers. Others of the most notable names of this age are Quarles, Herrick, Herbert, and Crashaw. Francis Quarles, who died in 1644, was one of the most popular

¹ Called by mistake, his elder brother.

² Lit of Eur. iii. 252.

as well as voluminous writers of the day, and is still generally known by his volume of Emblems. His verses are characterized by ingenuity rather than fancy, but, although often absurd, he is seldom dull or languid. There is a good deal of spirit and coarse vigor in some of his pieces, as for instance in his well-known Song of Anarchus, portions of which have been printed both by Ellis and Campbell, and which may perhaps have suggested to Cowper, the great religious poet of a later day, his lines called The Modern Patriot. Quarles, however, though he appears to have been a person of considerable literary acquirement, must in his poetical capacity be regarded as mainly a writer for the populace. George Herbert, a younger brother of the celebrated Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury, was a clergyman. His volume, entitled The Temple, was first published soon after his death in 1633, and was at least six or seven times reprinted in the course of the next quarter of a century. His biographer, Izaak Walton, tells us that when he wrote, in the reign of Charles II., twenty thousand copies of it had been sold. Herbert was an intimate friend of Donne, and no doubt a great admirer of his poetry; but his own has been to a great extent preserved from the imitation of Donne's peculiar style, into which it might in other circumstances have fallen, in all probability by its having been composed with little effort or elaboration, and chiefly to relieve and amuse his own mind by the melodious expression of his favorite fancies and contemplations. His quaintness lies in his thoughts rather than in their expression, which is in general sufficiently simple and luminous. Robert Herrick, who was also a clergyman, is the author of a thick octavo volume of verse, published in 1648, under the title of Hesperides. It consists, like the poetry of Donne, partly of love-verses, partly of pieces of a devotional character, or, as the two sorts are styled in the title-page, Works Human and Divine. The same singular license which even the most reverend persons, and the purest and most religious minds, in that age allowed themselves to take in light and amatory poetry is found in Herrick as well as in Donne, a good deal of whose singular manner, and fondness for conceits both of sound and sense, Herrick has also caught. Yet some both of his hymns and of his anacreontics—for of such strange intermixture does his poetry consist—are beautifully simple and natural, and full of grace as well as fancy.¹ Richard

¹ A complete reprint of the Hesperides was brought out at Edinburgh, under the

Crashaw was another clergyman, who late in life became a Roman Catholic, and died a canon of Loretto in 1650. He is perhaps, after Donne, the greatest of these religious poets of the early part of the seventeenth century. He belongs in manner to the same school with Donne and Herrick, and in his lighter pieces he has much of their lyrical sweetness and delicacy; but there is often a force and even occasionally what may be called a grandeur of imagination in his more solemn poetry which Herrick never either reaches or aspires to.¹



CARTWRIGHT. RANDOLPH. CORBET. ✕

ALL the poetical clergymen of this time, however, had not such pious muses. The Rev. William Cartwright, who died at an early age in 1643, is said by Anthony Wood to have been "a most florid and seraphic preacher"; but his poetry, which is mostly amatory, is not remarkable for its brilliancy. He is the author of several plays, and he was one of the young writers who were honored with the title of his sons by Ben Jonson, who said of him, "My son Cartwright writes all like a man." Another of Ben's poetical sons was Thomas Randolph, who was likewise a clergyman, and is also the author of several plays, mostly in verse, as well as of a quantity of other poetry. Randolph has a good deal of fancy, and his verse flows very melodiously; but his poetry has in general a bookish and borrowed air. Much of it is on subjects of love and gallantry; but the love is chiefly of the head, or, at most, of the senses, — the gallantry, it is easy to see, that merely of a fellow of a college and a reader of Ovid. Randolph died under thirty in 1634, and his poems were first collected after his death by his brother. The volume, which also contains his Plays, was frequently reprinted in the course of the next thirty or forty years; the edition before us, dated 1668, is called the fifth.

care of Mr. Maitland, in 2 vols. 8vo, in 1823; and there are also London reprints of later date. A small selection from Herrick's poetry, in one volume, had been published in London before the appearance of the complete Edinburgh edition.

¹ Upon the subject of these and other religious poets of the seventeenth century, see *Lives of Sacred Poets*, by the Rev. Robert Aris Willmott, 12mo, Lon. 1834; and an article on *The Character and Progress of Religious Poetry*, in the *Church of England Quarterly Review* for January, 1837, No. I pp. 171-229.

One of the most remarkable among the clerical poets of this earlier half of the seventeenth century was Dr. Richard Corbet, successively Bishop of Oxford and of Norwich. Corbet, who was born in 1582, became famous both as a poet and as a wit early in the reign of James; but very little, if any, of his poetry was published till after his death, which took place in 1635. The first edition of his Poems appeared in 1647, and there were others in 1648 and 1672; but the most complete collection of what he has left us is that published by the late Octavius Gilchrist in 1807. A notion of what sort of man Bishop Corbet was may be gathered from some anecdotes of him preserved by Aubrey, who relates, among other things, that after he was a doctor of divinity he sang ballads at the Cross at Abingdon:—“On a market-day,” Aubrey writes, “he and some of his comrades were at the tavern by the Cross (which, by the way, was then the finest in England; I remember it when I was a freshman; it was admirable curious Gothic architecture, and fine figures in the niches; ’twas one of those built by King . . . for his Queen). The ballad-singer complained he had no custom—he could not put off his ballads. The jolly doctor puts off his gown, and puts on the ballad-singer’s leathern jacket, and, being a handsome man, and a rare full voice, he presently vended a great many, and had a great audience.” Aubrey had heard, however, that as a bishop “he had an admirable grave and venerable aspect.” Corbet’s poetry, too, is a mixture or alternation of gravity and drollery. But it is the subject or occasion, rather than the style or manner, that makes the difference; he never rises to anything higher than wit; and he is as witty in his elegies as in his ballads. As that ingredient, however, is not so suitable for the former as for the latter, his graver performances are worth very little. Nor is his merriment of a high order; when it is most elaborate it is strained and fantastic, and when more natural it is apt to run into buffoonery. But much of his verse, indeed, is merely prose in rhyme, and very indifferent rhyme for the most part. His happiest effusions are the two that are best known, his Journey into France and his ballad of The Fairies’ Farewell. His longest and most curious poem is his *Iter Boreale*, describing a journey which he took in company with other three university men, probably about 1620, from Oxford as far north as Newark and back again. Two lines in this piece might almost pass for having suggested Byron’s couplet in *Don Juan*,—

Let not a monument give you or me hopes,
 Since not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops :

Corbet, moralizing upon the tombless grave of Wolsey at Leices-
 ter, exclaims : —

If thou art thus neglected, what shall we
 Hope after death, who are but shreds of thee?

At a village near Loughborough our travellers were obliged to procure a guide to conduct them through the intricacies of that unknown country to Bosworth ; and next morning the landlord of the inn in which they passed the night in the latter town mounted his horse and accompanied them to the neighboring battle-field. Then comes a passage of some interest : —

Mine host was full of ale and history ;
 And on the morrow, when he brought us nigh
 Where the two Roses joined, you would suppose
 Chaucer ne'er made the Romaunt of the Rose.
 Hear him — ' See ye yon wood ? There Richard lay
 With his whole army : look the other way,
 And to where Richmond in a bed of gorse
 Encamped himself ere night, and all his force.
 Upon this hill they met.' Why, he could tell
 The inch where Richmond stood, where Richard fell.
 Beside what of his knowledge he could say,
 He had authentic notice from the play ;
 Which I might guess by his mustering up the ghosts
 And policies not incident to hosts ;
 But chiefly by that one perspicuous thing,
 Where he mistook a player for a king ;
 For when he would have said, King Richard died,
 And called — A horse ! a horse ! he Burbage cried.

From this passage we learn, not only, as has been remarked, that Shakspeare's Richard III. was originally represented by the famous fellow-actor of the poet, Richard Burbage, but also that both the play and the performers were already familiarly known in the country as well as in London. It may be supposed indeed that the town of Bosworth would be one of the first places in which this particular drama was represented out of the metropolis.

As a sample of Corbet's humor, we may give his description of the landlady of their inn at Warwick : —

Oh, there an hostess was,
 To whom the Castle and the Dun Cow are
 Sights after dinner; she is morning ware.
 Her whole behaviour borrowed was and mixed,
 Half fool, half puppet, and her face betwixt
 Measure and jig; her curtesy was an honour;
 Her gait, as if her neighbour had outgone her.
 She was barred up in whalebones, which did leese
 None of the whale's length, for they reached her knees.
 Off with her head, and then she hath a middle:
 As her waist stands she looks like the new fiddle,
 The favourite Theorbo, truth to tell ye,
 Whose neck and throat are deeper than the belly.
 Have you seen monkeys chained about the loins,
 Or pottle-pots with rings? Just so she joins
 Herself together: a dressing she doth love
 In a small print below and text above.
 What though her name be King, yet 'tis no treason,
 Nor breach of statute, for to ask the reason
 Of her branched ruff, a cubit every poke.
 I seem to wound her, but she strook the stroke
 At our departure; and our worships there
 Paid for our titles dear as any where.

This, then, was harder fortune than they met with in a previous instance, where, if the charge was rather high, the personal attractions of the landlady afforded some compensation in the eyes of the four Oxford clerks: —

'Twas quickly morning, though by our short stay
 We could not find that we had less to pay.
 All travellers, this heavy judgment hear: —
 A handsome hostess makes the reckoning dear;
 Her smiles, her words, your purses must requite 'em,
 And every welcome from her adds an item.

We will add the picture of a dignified clergyman, well benefited and well fed, whom they met in the company of Sir Fulk Greville (soon after created Lord Brooke) at Warwick Castle, and who is understood to be the Reverend Samuel Burton, Archdeacon of Gloucester: —

With him there was a prelate, by his place
 Archdeacon to the bishop, by his face
 A greater man; for that did counterfect

Lord abbot of some covent standing yet ;
 A corpulent relique ; marry and 'tis sin
 Some puritan gets not his face called in :
 Amongst lean brethren it may scandal bring,
 Who seek for parity in every thing.
 For us, let him enjoy all that God sends,
 Plenty of flesh, of livings, and of friends.

There was not a drop of gall in the merry-hearted bishop ; but, as may be supposed, he had but small respect for puritans or puritanism, and he never loses an opportunity of a good-natured gibe at them or it.



POETS OF THE FRENCH SCHOOL.— CAREW. LOVELACE
 SUCKLING.

BOTH our poetry and our prose eloquence continued to be generally infected by the spirit of quaintness and conceit, or over-refinement and subtlety of thought, for nearly a century after the first introduction among us of that fashion of writing. Even some of the highest minds did not entirely escape the contagion. If nothing of it is to be found in Spenser or Milton, neither Shakspeare nor Bacon is altogether free from it. Of our writers of an inferior order, it took captive not only the greater number, but some of the greatest, who lived and wrote from the middle of the reign of Elizabeth to nearly the middle of that of Charles II.,— from Bishop Andrews, whom we have already mentioned, in prose, and Donne both in prose and verse, to Cowley inclusive. The style in question appears to have been borrowed from Italy : it came in, at least, with the study and imitation of the Italian poetry, being caught apparently from the school of Petrarch, or rather of his later followers, about the same time that a higher inspiration was drawn from Tasso and Ariosto. It is observable that the species or departments of our poetry which it chiefly invaded were those which have always been more or less influenced by foreign models : it made comparatively little impression upon our dramatic poetry, the most truly native portion of our literature ; but our lyrical and elegiac, our didactic and satirical verse, was overrun and materially modified by it, as we have said, for

nearly a whole century. The return to a more natural manner, however, was begun to be made long before the expiration of that term. And, as we had received the malady from one foreign literature, so we were indebted for the cure to another. It is commonly assumed that our modern English poetry first evinced a disposition to imitate that of France after the Restoration. But the truth is, that the influence of French literature had begun to be felt by our own at a considerably earlier date. The court of Charles I. was far from being so thoroughly French as that of Charles II.; but the connection established between the two kingdoms through Queen Henrietta could not fail to produce a partial imitation of French models both in writing and in other things. The distinguishing characteristic of French poetry (and indeed of French art generally), neatness in the dressing of the thought, had already been carried to considerable height by Malherbe, Racan, Malleville, and others; and these writers are doubtless to be accounted the true fathers of our own Waller, Carew, Lovelace, and Suckling, who all began to write about this time, and whose verses may be said to have first exemplified in our lighter poetry what may be done by correct and natural expression, smoothness of flow, and all that lies in the *ars celare artem* — the art of making art itself seem nature. Of the four, Waller was perhaps first in the field; but he survived almost till the Revolution, and did not rise to his greatest celebrity till after the Restoration, so that he will more fitly fall to be noticed in a subsequent page. The other three all belong exclusively to the times of Charles I. and of the Commonwealth.

Thomas Carew, styled on the title-page "One of the Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, and Sewer in Ordinary to His Majesty," is the author of a small volume of poetry first printed in 1640, the year after his death. In polish and evenness of movement, combined with a diction elevated indeed in its tone, as it must needs be by the very necessities of verse, above that of mere good conversation, but yet in ease, lucidity, and directness rivalling the language of ordinary life, Carew's poetry is not inferior to Waller's; and, while his expression is as correct and natural, and his numbers as harmonious, the music of his verse is richer, and his imagination is warmer and more florid. But the texture of his composition is in general extremely slight, the substance of most of his pieces consisting merely of the elaboration of some single idea; and, if

he has more tenderness than Waller, he is far from having so much dignity, variety, or power of sustained effort. His songs beginning "He that loves a rosy cheek," and "Ask me no more where Jove bestows, when June is past, the fading rose," are in all the collections of extracts: the following is less hackneyed:—

Amongst the myrtles as I walked,
Love and my sighs thus intertalked:
"Tell me," said I, in deep distress,
"Where may I find my shepherdess?"

"Thou fool," said Love, "know'st thou not this,
In every thing that's good she is?
In yonder tulip go and seek;
There thou may'st find her lip, her cheek.

In yon enamoured pansy by;
There thou shalt have her curious eye.
In bloom of peach, in rosy bud;
There wave the streamers of her blood.

In brightest lilies that there stand,
The emblems of her whiter hand.
In yonder rising hill there smell
Such sweets as in her bosom dwell."

"'Tis true," said I: and thereupon
I went to pluck them one by one,
To make of parts a union;
But on a sudden all was gone.

With that I stopt: said Love, "These be,
Fond man, resemblances of thee;
And, as these flowers, thy joys shall die,
Even in the twinkling of an eye;
And all thy hopes of her shall wither,
Like these short sweets thus knit together."

This may seem sufficiently artificial, and no doubt is so; and, when the reader comes to the *streamers* of the fair lady's blood *waving* in the peach and the rose-bud, he may be disposed to demur to the claim of Carew to be reputed above the seductions of a striking metaphor, however violent or eccentric. But the distinc-

tion of this French school of poetry is certainly not that it altogether eschews conceits and false thoughts: on the contrary, it is decidedly addicted to what is brilliant in preference to what is true and deep, and its system of composition is essentially one of point and artifice; but all this is still to a certain extent in subordination to the principles and laws of good writing; the conceit is always reduced at least to fair rhetorical sound and shape; it is not made alone the substitute for every other attraction, the apology and compensation for every other vice of style, the prime ingredient and almost only thing needful in the composition; when the thought is false and absurd, it is not tortured into still greater absurdity and grotesqueness by the perpetration of all sorts of violence upon the words.

There is more quaintness, however, in the poetry of Lovelace than in that of Carew. The poems of Colonel Richard Lovelace are contained in two small volumes, one entitled *Lucasta*, published in 1649; the other entitled *Posthume Poems*, published by his brother in 1659, the year after the author's death.¹ They consist principally of songs and other short pieces. Lovelace's songs, which are mostly amatory, are many of them carelessly enough written, and there are very few of them not defaced by some harshness or deformity; but a few of his best pieces are as sweetly versified as Carew's, with perhaps greater variety of fancy as well as more of vital force; and a tone of chivalrous gentleness and honor gives to some of them a pathos beyond the reach of any mere poetic art. He has written nothing else, however, nearly so exquisite as his well-known lines to *Althea* from prison; and therefore, familiar as that song is likely to be to most of our readers, it would be unfair to substitute any other specimen of his poetry: —

When love with unconfined wings
 Hovers within my gates,
 And my divine *Althea* brings
 To whisper at the grates;
 When I lie tangled in her hair,
 And fettered to her eye;
 The birds² that wanton in the air
 Know no such liberty.

¹ Reprints of both have been produced by Mr. Singer; 12mo, Chiswick, 1817 and 1818.

² Misprinted "Gods" in the original edition.

When flowing cups run swiftly round,
 With no allaying Thames,
 Our careless heads with roses bound,
 Our hearts with loyal flames ;
 When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
 When healths and draughts go free,
 Fishes that tipple in the deep
 Know no such liberty.

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.

Scattered over Lovelace's poetry are a good many single expressions struck out by a true poetical feeling. Campbell has borrowed from him the line in his *Dream of the Exile*,

“The sentinel stars set their watch in the sky ;”

which in Lovelace is, in one of his addresses to Lucasta,

“Like to the sentinel stars, I watch all night.”

Lovelace's days, darkened in their close by the loss of everything except honor, were cut short at the age of forty ; his contemporary, Sir John Suckling, who moved gayly and thoughtlessly through his short life as through a dance or a merry game, died, in 1641, at that of thirty-two. Suckling, who is the author of a small collection of poems, as well as of four plays, has none of the pathos of Lovelace or Carew, but he equals them in fluency and natural grace of manner, and he has besides a sprightliness and buoyancy

which is all his own. His poetry has a more impulsive air than theirs ; and while, in reference to the greater part of what he has produced, he must be classed along with them and Waller as an adherent to the French school of propriety and precision, some of the happiest of his effusions are remarkable for a cordiality and impetuosity of manner which has nothing foreign about it, but is altogether English, although there is not much resembling it in any of his predecessors any more than of his contemporaries, unless perhaps in some of Skelton's pieces. His famous ballad of The Wedding is the very perfection of gayety and archness in verse ; and his Session of the Poets, in which he scatters about his wit and humor in a more careless style, may be considered as constituting him the founder of a species of satire, which Cleveland and Marvel and other subsequent writers carried into new applications, and which only expired among us with Swift. We cannot but give the Ballad, often as it has been printed. The subject is the marriage of Roger Boyle, Lord Broghill (afterwards Earl of Orrery), with the Lady Margaret Howard, daughter of the Earl of Suffolk ; and the reader will admire the art with which grace and even poetry of expression is preserved throughout along with the forms of speech, as well as of thought, natural to the rustic narrator : —

I tell thee, Dick, where I have been,
 Where I the rarest things have seen :
 Oh things without compare !
 Such sights again cannot be found
 In any place on English ground,
 Be it at wake or fair.

At Charing Cross, hard by the way
 Where we, thou knowest, do sell our hay,
 There is a house with stairs :¹
 And there did I see coming down
 Such folks as are not in our town,
 Vorty at least, in pairs.

Amongst the rest, one pestilent fine
 (His beard no bigger, though, than thine)

¹ The present Northumberland House, then called Suffolk House, the seat of the lady's father.

Walked on before the rest :
 Our landlord looks like nothing to him ;
 The King (God bless him) 'twould undo him
 Should he go still so drest.

At course-a-park, withouten doubt,
 He should have first been taken out
 By all the maids i' the town ;
 Though lusty Roger there had been,
 Or little George upon the Green,
 Or Vincent of the Crown.

But wot you what? The youth was going
 To make an end of all his wooing ;
 The parson for him staid ;
 Yet, by his leave, for all his haste,
 He did not so much wish all past,
 Perchance, as did the maid.

The maid — and thereby hangs a tale —
 For such a maid no Whitsun ale
 Could ever yet produce ;
 No grape that 's lusty ripe could be
 So round, so plump, so soft as she,
 Nor half so full of juice.

Her finger was so small, the ring
 Would not stay on which they did bring,
 It was too wide a peck ;
 And to say 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 oh ! she dances such a way
 No sun upon an Easter day ¹
 Is half so fine a sight.

¹ It was formerly believed that the sun danced on Easter-day. See BRANT, *Popular Antiquities* (edit. of 1841), i. 95; where the present verse is strangely quoted in illustration of this popular notion from "a rare book entitled *Recreation for Ingenious Head Pieces*, &c., 8vo, Lon. 1667."

He would have kissed her once or twice,
 But she would not, she was so nice,
 She would not do 't in sight ;
 And then she looked as who should say,
 I will do what I list to day,
 And you shall do 't at night.

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 Katharine pear,
 The side that 's next the sun.

Her lips were red, and one was thin
 Compared to that was next her chin ;
 Some bee had stung it newly.
 But, Dick, her eyes so guard her face,
 I durst no more upon them gaze
 Than on the sun in July.

Her mouth so small when she does speak.
 Thou 'dst swear her teeth her words did break
 That they might passage get :
 But she so handled still the matter,
 They came as good as ours, or better,
 And are not spent a whit.

.

Passion o' me ! how I run on !
 There 's that that would be thought upon,
 I trow, besides the bride :
 The business of the kitchen 's great,
 For it is fit that men should eat,
 Nor was it there denied.

Just in tne nick the cook knocked thrice,
 And all the waiters in a trice
 His summons did obey ;
 Each serving-man with dish in hand
 Marched boldly up, like our train-band,
 Presented and away.

When all the meat was on the table,
 What man of knife, or teeth, was able
 To stay to be entreated?
 And this the very reason was,
 Before the parson could say grace
 The company was seated.

Now hats fly off, and youths carouse ;
 Healths first go round, and then the house ;
 The bride's came thiek and thiek ;
 And, when 'twas named another's health,
 Perhaps he made it her's by stealth,
 And who could help it, Dick ?

O' the sudden up they rise and dance ;
 Then sit again and sigh and glance ;
 Then dance again and kiss :
 Thus several ways the time did pass,
 Whilst every woman wished her place,
 And every man wished his.

By this time all were stolen aside
 To counsel and undress the bride ;
 But that he must not know :
 But yet 'twas thought he guessed her *mind*,
 And did not mean to stay behind
 Above an hour or so.

When in he came, Dick, there she lay,
 Like new-fallen snow melting away :
 'Twas time, I trow, to part :
 Kisses were now the only stay,
 Which soon she gave, as who would say,
 Good bye, with all my heart.

But, just as heavens would have to cross it,
 In came the bride-maids with the posset :
 The bride-groom ate in spite ;
 For, had he left the women to 't,
 It would have cost two hours to do 't,
 Which were too much that night.

.

DENHAM.

To this date belongs a remarkable poem, the Cooper's Hill of Sir John Denham, first published in 1642. It immediately drew universal attention. Denham, however, had the year before made himself known as a poet by his tragedy of *The Sophy*, on the appearance of which Waller remarked that he had broken out like the Irish rebellion, threescore thousand strong, when nobody was aware or in the least suspected it. Cooper's Hill may be considered as belonging in point of composition to the same school with Sir John Davies's *Nosce Teipsum*; and, if it has not all the concentration of that poem, it is equally pointed, correct, and stately, with, partly owing to the subject, a warmer tone of imagination and feeling, and a fuller swell of verse. The spirit of the same classical style pervades both; and they are the two greatest poems in that style which had been produced down to the date at which we are now arrived. Denham is the author of a number of other compositions in verse, and especially of some songs and other shorter pieces, several of which are very spirited; but the fame of his principal poem has thrown everything else he has written into the shade. It is remarkable that many biographical notices of this poet make him to have survived nearly till the Revolution, and relate various stories of the miseries of his protracted old age; when the fact is, that he died in 1668, at the age of fifty-three.¹

CLEVELAND.

BUT, of all the cavalier poets, the one who did his cause the heartiest and stoutest service, and who, notwithstanding much carelessness or ruggedness of execution, possessed perhaps, even

¹ The readers of the *Mémoires de Grammont* will remember the figure he makes in that work, where he is described as "Le Chevalier Denham, comblé de richesses, aussi bien que d'années," and as having for the first time entered into the marriage state, at the age of seventy-nine, with Miss Brook, a famous court-beauty, then only eighteen. The fact is, that this was a second marriage, and that, whatever was the lady's age, Denham himself was then only about fifty. His load of riches is probably as much exaggerated by the lively historian of the *Comte de Grammont* as his load of years.

considered simply as a poet, the richest and most various faculty, was John Cleveland, the most popular verse-writer of his own day, the most neglected of all his contemporaries ever since. Among the one hundred and sixty-one poets, from Robert of Gloucester to Sir Francis Fane, whose choicest relics furnish out Ellis's three volumes of *Specimens*, the name of Cleveland does not occur. Nor is his poetry included either in Anderson's or in Chalmers's collection. Yet for nearly twenty years he was held to be the greatest among living English poets. Cleveland was the eldest son of the Rev. Thomas Cleveland, vicar of Hinckley and rector of Stoke, in Leicestershire, and he was born at Loughborough in that county in 1613. Down to the breaking out of the civil war, he resided at St. John's College, Cambridge, of which he was a Fellow, and seems to have distinguished himself principally by his Latin poetry. But, when every man took his side, with whatever weapons he could wield, for king or parliament, Anthony Wood tells us that Cleveland was the first writer who came forth as a champion of the royal cause in English verse. To that cause he adhered till its ruin; at last in 1655, after having led for some years a fugitive life, he was caught and thrown into prison at Yarmouth; but, after a detention of a few months, Cromwell, on his petition, allowed him to go at large. The transaction was honorable to both parties. Cleveland's character, which may be mistaken by those who know him only from some of his unscrupulous pasquinades or other poetry, cannot be better painted than it is by himself in his address to the Protector: "I am induced," he said, "to believe that, next to my adherence to the royal party, the cause of my confinement is the narrowness of my estate; for none stand committed whose estates can bail them. I only am the prisoner, who have no acres to be my hostage. Now, if my poverty be criminal (with reverence be it spoken), I implead your Highness, whose victorious arms have reduced me to it, as accessory to my guilt. Let it suffice, my Lord, that the calamity of the war hath made us poor: do not punish us for it." "I beseech your Highness," he goes on, "put some bounds to the overthrow, and do not pursue the chase to the other world. Can your thunder be levelled so low as to our grovelling condition? Can your towering spirit, which hath quarried upon kingdoms, make a stoop at us, who are the rubbish of these ruins? Methinks I hear your former achievements interceding with you not to sully your glories with

trampling upon the prostrate, nor clog the wheel of your chariot with so degenerate a triumph. The most renowned heroes have ever with such tenderness cherished their captives that their swords did but cut out work for their courtesies." And again: — "For the service of his Majesty, if it be objected, I am so far from excusing it, that I am ready to allege it in my vindication. I cannot conceit that my fidelity to my prince should taint me in your opinion; I should rather expect it should recommend me to your favour. . . . You see, my Lord, how much I presume upon the greatness of your spirit, that dare present my indictment with so frank a confession, especially in this, which I may so safely deny that it is almost arrogance in me to own it; for the truth is, I was not qualified enough to serve him: all I could do was to bear a part in his sufferings, and to give myself to be crushed with his fall." "My Lord," he concludes, "you see my crimes; as to my defence, you bear it about you. I shall plead nothing in my justification but your Highness's clemency, which, as it is the constant inmate of a valiant breast, if you graciously be pleased to extend it to your suppliant, in taking me out of this withering durance, your Highness will find that mercy will establish you more than power, though all the days of your life were as pregnant with victories as your twice auspicious Third of September." There is no artful flattery or coaxing in this: Cromwell would read in it something of a spirit akin to his own. But Cleveland did not long survive his release: he died in April, 1658, a few months before the Protector himself — like his brother loyalist poet Lovelace, who ended his days about the same time, snatched away just when the hated dominion that had been so fatal to his fortunes was about to break up and vanish from the land forever.

Cleveland is commonly regarded as a mere dealer in satire and invective, and as having no higher qualities than a somewhat rude force and vehemence. His prevailing fault is a straining after vigor and concentration of expression; and few of his pieces are free from a good deal of obscurity, harshness, or other disfigurement, occasioned by this habit or tendency, working in association with an alert, ingenious, and fertile fancy, a neglect of and apparently a contempt for neatness of finish, and the turn for quaintness and quibbling characteristic of the school to which he belongs — for Cleveland must be considered as essentially one of the old wit poets. Most of his poems seem to have been thrown off in haste,

and never to have been afterwards corrected or revised. There are, however, among them some that are not without vivacity and sprightliness; and others of his more solemn verses have all the dignity that might be expected from his prose letter to Cromwell.¹

The following stanzas are entitled The General Eclipse: —

Ladies, that gild the glittering noon,
 And by reflection mend his ray;
 Whose beauty makes the sprightly sun
 To dance, as upon Easter-day;²
 What are you, now the Queen's away?

Courageous eagles, who have whet
 Your eyes upon majestic light,
 And thence derived such martial heat
 That still your looks maintain the fight;
 What are you, since the King's good night?

Cavalier buds, whom nature teems
 As a reserve for England's throne;
 Spirits whose double edge redeems
 The last age, and adorns your own;
 What are you, now the Prince is gone?

¹ Many poems, it is to be noted, are found in the common editions of Cleveland's works which are known not to be his. Thus, in the edition before us, 8vo, Lon. 1687, what are entitled the Additions, from p. 200 to 265, including A Lenten Litany, Content, A Sing-song on Clarinda's Wedding, Vituperium Uxoris, and other remarkable pieces, are, it seems, copied *verbatim* from a volume entitled *Ex Otio Negotium, or Martial his Epigrams Translated, with Sundry Poems and Fancies*; by R. Fletcher. 8vo, Lon. 1656. And other pieces in the same Second Part of the Collection, entitled John Cleveland's Revived Poems, Orations, Epistles, and other of his genuine incomparable pieces, now at last published from his original copies by some of his intrusted friends, are by Denham, J. Hall, Jasper Mayne, Thomas Weaver, and others. See *A Select Collection of Poems, with Notes Biographical and Historical*, by J. Nichols, 1780-1-2; vol. vii. pp. 50 and 376. Several of Cleveland's poems are reprinted in his seventh volume by Mr. Nichols, who has there (pp. 10-13), and in vol. viii. pp. 308-311, given an account of the old poet; with whom, in the Dedication of his Collection to Dr. Percy (the editor of the Reliques), he claims a relationship, stating at the same time that Percy's grand mother by the father's side was a niece of Cleveland's. The original edition of Cleveland's works is dedicated to Francis Turner, D. D., Master of St. John's College, Cambridge (afterwards bishop first of Rochester and then of Ely), by the editors J. L. and S. D., who appear to have been John Lake, D. D., vicar of Leeds (afterwards bishop of Chichester), who had been a pupil of Cleveland's at Cambridge, and Dr. Drake, vicar of Pontefract.

² See note on Suckling's Ballad of The Wedding, *ante*, p. 30.

As an obstructed fountain's head
 Cuts the entail off from the streams,
 And brooks are disinherited ;
 Honour and beauty are mere dreams,
 Since Charles and Mary lost their beams.

Criminal valours ! who commit
 Your gallantry ;¹ whose pæan brings
 A psalm of mercy after it ;
 In this sad solstice of the king's,
 Your victory hath mewed her wings.

.

The following epitaph on Ben Jonson is the shortest and best of several tributes to the memory of that poet, with whose masculine genius that of Cleveland seems to have strongly sympathized : —

The Muses' fairest light in no dark time ;
 The wonder of a learned age ; the line
 Which none can pass ; the most proportioned wit
 To nature ; the best judge of what was fit ;
 The deepest, plainest, highest, clearest pen ;
 The voice most echoed by consenting men ;
 The soul which answered best to all well said
 By others, and which most requital made ;
 Tuned to the highest key of ancient Rome,
 Returning all her music with his own ;
 In whom with Nature Study claimed a part,
 Yet who unto himself owed all his art ;
 Here lies Ben Jonson : every age will look
 With sorrow here, with wonder on his book.

Elsewhere he thus expresses his preference for Jonson, as a dramatist, over the greatest of his contemporaries : —

Shakespeare may make griefs, merry Beaumont's style
 Ravish and melt anger into a smile ;
 In winter nights or after meals they be,
 I must confess, very good company ;
 But thou exact'st our best hours' industry ;²
 We may read them, we ought to study thee ;

¹ We still use the term *commit* only in connection with something wrong, as to commit a crime, or an error ; but it is applied much more extensively by our old writers, though also always in a bad sense.

² This may be compared with what Corbet says in describing his landlady at Warwick. See *ante*, p. 23.

Thy scenes are precepts ; every verse doth give
Counsel, and teach us, not to laugh, but live.

In a third elegy he rises to a more rapturous strain : —

What thou wert, like the hard oracles of old,
Without an ecstasy cannot be told :
We must be ravished first ; thou must infuse
Thyself into us, both the theme and muse ;
Else, though we all conspired to make thy hearse
Our works, so that it had been but one great verse ;
Though the priest had translated for that time
The Liturgy, and buried thee in rhyme ;
So that in metre we had heard it said,
Poetic dust is to poetic laid ;
And though, that dust being Shakespeare's, thou might'st have,
Not his room, but the poet for thy grave ;
So that, as thou didst prince of numbers die,
And live, so thou mightest in numbers lie ;
'Twere frail solemnity : — verses on thee,
And not like thine, would but kind libels be ;
And we, not speaking thy whole worth, should raise
Worse blots than they that envied thy praise.

Of several elegies by this poet upon Charles I. the following is perhaps the most striking : —

Charles ! — ah ! forbear, forbear, lest mortals prize
His name too dearly, and idolatrize.
His name ! our loss ! Thrice cursed and forlorn
Be that black night which ushered in this morn.

Charles our dread sovereign ! — hold ! lest outlawed sense
Bribe and seduce tame reason to dispense
With those celestial powers, and distrust
Heaven can behold such treason and prove just.

Charles our dread sovereign's murdered ! — tremble, and
View what convulsions shoulder-shake this land :
Court, city, country, nay three kingdoms run
To their last stage, and set with him, their sun.

Charles our dread sovereign's murdered at his gate !
Fell fiends ! dire hydras of a stiff-necked state !
Strange body politic, whose members spread,
And monster-like swell bigger than their head.

Charles of Great Britain! He! who was the known
King of three realms, lies murdered in his own.
He! he! who Faith's Defender lived and stood,¹
Died here to rebaptize it in his blood.

No more! no more! Fame's trump shall echo all
The rest in dreadful thunder. Such a fall
Great Christendom ne'er patterned; and 'twas strange
Earth's centre reeled not at this dismal change

The blow struck Britain blind; each well-set limb
By dislocation was lopt off in him;
And, though she yet lives, she lives but to condole
Three bleeding bodies left without a soul.

Religion puts on black; sad Loyalty
Blushes and mourns to see bright Majesty
Butchered by such assassines; nay both
'Gainst God, 'gainst Law, Allegiance, and their Oath.

Farewell, sad Isle! farewell! Thy fatal glory
Is summed, east up, and cancelled in this story.

Cleveland, however, after all, is perhaps most in his element when his chief inspiration is scorn, and *facit indignatio versum*. The most elaborate of his satires or invectives is that which he calls The Rebel Scot. It is rather too long to be given entire; and in truth a good deal of it is more furious than forcible; but we will transcribe the commencing portion, which contains the most effective passages:—

How! Providence! and yet a Scottish crew!
Then Madame Nature wears black patches too.
What! shall our nation be in bondage thus
Unto a land that truckles under us?
Ring the bells backward: I am all on fire;
Not all the buckets in a country quire
Shall quench my rage. A poet should be feared
When angry, like a comet's flaming beard.
And where's the Stoic can his wrath appease
To see his country siek of Pym's disease, —

¹ Commonly printed:—

“Who lived and Faith's defender stood.”

By Scotch invasion to be made a prey
 To such pig-widgeon myrmidons as they?
 But that there's charm in verse, I would not quote
 The name of Scot without an antidote ;
 Unless my head were red,¹ that I might brew
 Invention there that might be poison too.
 Were I a drowsy judge, whose dismal note
 Disgorgeth halts, as a juggler's throat
 Doth ribands ; could I in Sir Empiric's tone
 Speak pills in phrase, and quack destruction,
 Or roar like Marshall, that Geneva bull,
 Hell and damnation a pulpit-full ;
 Yet, to express a Scot, to play that prize,
 Not all those mouth-granados can suffice.
 Before a Scot can properly be cursed,
 I must, like Hocus, swallow daggers first.

Come, keen Iambics, with your badger's feet,
 And, badger-like, bite till your teeth do meet.
 Help, ye tart satirists, to imp my rage
 With all the scorpions that should whip this age.
 Scots are like witches ; do but whet your pen,
 Scratch till the blood come, they'll not hurt you **then**.
 Now, as the Martyrs were enforced to take
 The shapes of beasts, like hypocrites, at stake,
 I'll bait my Scot so, yet not cheat your eyes ; —
 A Scot, within a beast, is no disguise.
 No more let Ireland brag her harmless nation
 Harbours no venom, since that Scots plantation.
 Nor can our feigned antiquity obtain :
 Since they came in, England hath wolves again.
 The Scot that kept the Tower might have shown,
 Within the grate of his own breast alone,
 The leopard and the panther, and engrossed
 What all those wild collegiates had cost
 The honest high-shoes,² in their termly fees
 First to the salvage-lawyer, next to these.
 Nature herself doth Scotchmen beasts confess,
 Making their country such a wilderness ;
 A land that brings in question and suspense
 God's omnipresence, but that Charles came thence —

¹ Red hair was in the worst repute formerly, and was attributed alike to Cain, to Judas, and to the Devil

² Perhaps this should be *high-lows* -- that is, rustics.

But that Montrose and Crawford's royal band
 Atoned their sin, and christened half their land :
 Nor is it all the nation hath these spots : —
 There is a Church as well as Kirk of Scots ;
 As in a picture where the squinting paint
 Shows fiend on this side, and on that side saint.
 He that saw Hell in his melancholy dream,
 And, in the twilight of his fancy's theme,
 Scared from his sins, repented in a fright,
 Had he viewed Scotland had turned proselyte.
 A land where one may pray with cursed intent,
 O may they never suffer banishment !
 Had Cain been Scot, God would have changed his doom, —
 Not forced him wander, but confined him home.
 Like Jews they spread, and as infection fly,
 As if the Devil had ubiquity.
 Hence 'tis they live as rovers, and defy
 This or that place, rags of geography :
 They 're citizens o' the world, they 're all in all ;
 Scotland's a nation epidemical.

The poem is accompanied by a Latin version on the opposite page, which, however, is not by Cleveland, but by Thomas Gawen, a Fellow of New College, Oxford.

This may be fitly followed up by the verses headed *The Definition of a Protector* : —

What 's a Protector? He 's a stately thing
 That apes it in the non-age of a king :
 A tragic actor, Cæsar in a clown ;
 He 's a brass farthing stamped with a crown :
 A bladder blown, with other breaths puffed full ;
 Not the Perillus, but Perillus' bull :
 Æsop's proud Ass veiled in the Lion's skin ;
 An outward saint lined with a Devil within :
 An echo whence the royal sound doth come,
 But just as a barrel-head sounds like a drum :
 Fantastic image of the royal head,
 The brewer's with the king's arms quartered :
 He is a counterfeited piece, that shows
 Charles his effigies with a copper nose :
 In fine, he 's one we must Protector call ; —
 From whom the King of Kings protect us all.

And we fear the still more bitter bile of the following effusion On O. P. Sick, with which we shall conclude our extracts, must be understood to be directed against the same illustrious quarter:—

Yield, periwigged impostor, yield to fate,
 Religious whittler, mountebank of state,¹
 Down to the lowest abyss, the blackest shade,
 That night does own; that so the earth thou 'st made
 Loathsome by thousand barbarisms may be
 Delivered from heaven's vengeance, and from thee.
 The reeking steam of thy fresh villanies
 Would spot the stars, and menstruate the skies;
 Force them to break the league they've made with men,
 And with a flood rinse the foul world again.
 Thy bays are tarnished with thy cruelties,
 Rebellions, sacrilege, and perjuries.
 Descend, descend, thou veiled Devil! Fall
 Thou subtle bloodsucker, thou cannibal!
 Thy arts are catching; cozen Satan too;
 Thou hast a trick more than he ever knew;
 He ne'er was atheist yet; persuade him to 't;
 The schismatics will back thee, horse and foot.

In one of his prose pieces, *The Character of a London Diurnal*, Cleveland introduces other personal peculiarities of Cromwell besides his fiery nasal organ. "This Cromwell," he observes, "is never so valorous as when he is making speeches for the Association; which, nevertheless, he doth, somewhat ominously, with his neck awry, holding up his ear as if he expected Mahomet's pigeon to come and prompt him. He should be a bird of prey, too, by his bloody beak;" &c. It is probable enough that this attitude of one threading a needle, or trying to look round a corner, may have been customary with Cromwell in speaking at the early date to which the description refers, as it appears to have been with his sect in general: in another poem Cleveland depicts the Puritan preacher as—

With face and fashion to be known
 For one of sure election;
 With eyes all white, and many a groan;
 With neck aside, to draw in tone;
 With harp in 's nose, &c.

¹ Misprinted "fate" in the edition before us.

WITHER.

THESE last-mentioned writers — Carew, Lovelace, Suckling, Denham, and Cleveland — were all, as we have seen, cavaliers; but the cause of puritanism and the parliament had also its poets as well as that of love and loyalty. Of these the two most eminent were Marvel and Wither. Marvel's era, however, is rather after the Restoration. George Wither, who was born in 1588, covers nearly seventy years of the seventeenth century with his life, and not very far from sixty with his works: his first publication, his volume of satires entitled *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, having appeared in 1611, and some of his last pieces only a short time before his death in 1667. The entire number of his separate works, as they have been reckoned up by modern bibliographers, exceeds a hundred. Two songs or short poems of Wither's, inserted by Percy in his *Reliques*,¹ — the one beginning

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flowery meads in May;
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be?

the other entitled *The Stedfast Shepherd*, an exquisitely graceful as well as high-thoughted carol, — first recalled attention to this forgotten writer; his high merits were a few years afterwards more fully illustrated by Mr. Octavius Gilchrist in the *Gentleman's Magazine*; and he was subsequently made more widely known by the specimens of him given by Ellis, — among the rest the passage of consummate beauty (previously quoted by Gilchrist) from his *Shepherd's Hunting*, published in 1615, while he was confined in the Marshalsea, in which, breaking out into what we may call a hymn or pæan of gratitude and affection, he recounts all that Poetry and his Muse still were and had ever been to him: —

In my former days of bliss
Her divine skill taught me this, —
That from every thing I saw

¹ Vol. iii. pp. 190 and 264.

I could some invention draw,
And raise pleasure to her height
Through the meanest object's sight.
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rusteling ;
By a daisy, whose leaves spread
Shut when Titan goes to bed ;
Or a shady bush or tree,
She could more infuse in me
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man.
By her help I also now
Make this churlish place allow
Some things that may sweeten gladness
In the very gall of sadness.
The dull liveness, the black shade,
That these hanging vaults have made ;
The strange music of the waves
Beating on these hollow caves ;
This black den, which rocks emboss,
Overgrown with eldest moss ;
The rude portals, that give sight
More to terror than delight ;
This my chamber of neglect,
Walled about with disrespect ;
From all these, and this dull air,
A fit object for despair,
She hath taught me by her might
To draw comfort and delight.
Therefore, thou best earthly bliss,
I will cherish thee for this, —
Poesy ! — thou sweet'st content
That e'er heaven to mortals lent.
Though they as a trifle leave thee
Whose dull thoughts cannot conceive thee
Though thou be to them a scorn
That to nought but earth are born ;
Let my life no longer be
Than I am in love with thee.
Though our wise ones call thee madness,
Let me never taste of gladness
If I love not thy maddest fits
More than all their greatest wits.

And, though some, too seeming holy,
 Do account thy raptures folly,
 Thou dost teach me to contemn
 What makes knaves and fools of them.

One excellence for which all Wither's writings are eminent, his prose as well as his verse, is their genuine English. His unaffected diction, even now, has scarcely a stain of age upon it, — but flows on, ever fresh and transparent, like a pebbled rill. As a specimen of his clear and easy narrative style, we will transcribe a few passages from the Introduction to his *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, in which, by way of explaining the occasion of the work, he relates the history of his life to that date. After telling us that he had been well grounded at school in the Latin and Greek grammar, he proceeds to give an account of his first experience of Oxford: —

It is the spring of knowledge, that imparts
 A thousand several sciences and arts ;
 A pure clear fount, whose water is by odds
 Far sweeter than the nectar of the gods ;
 Or, for to give 't a title that befits,
 It is the very nursery of wits.
 There once arrived, 'cause my wits were raw,
 I fell to wondering at each thing I saw ;
 And, for my learning, made a month's vacation
 In noting of the place's situation ;
 The palaces and temples that were due
 Unto the wise Minerva's hallowed crew ;
 Their cloisters, walks, and groves
 But, having this experience, and withal
 Gotten some practice at the tennis ball,
 My tutor, telling me I was not sent
 To have my time there vain and idly spent,
 From childish humours gently called me in,
 And with his grave instructions did begin
 To teach ; and by his good persuasions sought
 To bring me to a love of what he taught.
 Then, after that, he laboured to impart
 The hidden secrets of the Logic art ;
 Instead of Grammar rules, he read me than
 Old Scotus, Seton, and new Keckermann.
 He showed me which the Predicables be,
 As Genus, Species, and the other three.

So, having said enough of their contents,
 Handles in order the ten Predicaments ;
 Next Postprædicamenta, with Priorum
 Perihermenias et Posteriorum,
 He, with the Topics, opens, and describes
 Elenchi, full of subtle fallacies :
 These to unfold indeed he took much pain,
 But to my dull capacity in vain ;
 For all he spake was to as little pass
 As in old time unto the vulgar was
 The Romish rite, which, whether bad or good,
 The poor unlearned never understood ;
 But of the meaning were as far to seek
 As Coriat's horse was of his master's Greek,
 When in that tongue he made a speech at length,
 To show the beast the greatness of his strength ;
 For I his meaning did no more conjecture
 Than if he had been reading Hebrew lecture.
 His Infinities, Individuities,
 Contraries, and Subcontrarities,
 Divisions, Subdivisions, and a crew
 Of terms and words such as I never knew,
 My shallow understanding so confounded,
 That I was gravelled like a ship that 's grounded ;
 And, in despair the mystery to gain,
 Neglecting all, took neither heed nor pain.
 Yea, I remained in that amazing plight
 Till Cynthia six times lost her borrowed light.
 But then, ashamed to find myself still mute,
 And other little dandiprats dispute,
 That could distinguish upon Rationale,
 Yet scarcely heard of Verbum Personale ;
 Or could by heart, like parrots, in the schools
 Stand prattling, these methought were pretty fools ;
 And therefore, in some hope to profit so,
 That I like them at least might make a show,
 I reached my books that I had cast about,
 To see if I could pick his meaning out ;
 And, prying on them with some diligence,
 At length I felt my dull intelligence
 Begin to open, and perceived more
 In half an hour than half a year before.
 And, which is strange, the things I had forgot,

And till that very day remembered not
 Since first my tutor read them, those did then
 Return into my memory again :
 So that with which I had so much to do
 A week made easy, yea, and pleasing too.

Afterwards he betook himself to court : —

But there I viewed another world, methought,
 And little hope, or none, of that I sought.
 I saw I must, if there I aught would do,
 First learn new fashions, and new language too.
 If I should have been hung, I knew not how
 To teach my body how to cringe and bow ;
 Or to embrace a fellow's hinder quarters,
 As if I meant to steal away his garters.
 When any stooped to me with congees trim,
 All I could do was stand and laugh at him.
 Bless me, thought I, what will this coxcomb do ?
 When I perceived one reaching at my shoe.
 But, when I heard him speak, why I was fully
 Possessed we learned but barbarism in Tully.
 There was not any street but had a wench
 That at once coming could have learned them French.
 Grecians had little there to do, poor souls,
 Unless to talk with beggarmen in Paul's.
 All our school Latin would not serve to draw
 An instrument adjudged good in law.
 Nay, which is more, they would have taught me fain
 To go new-learn my English tongue again ;
 As if there had been reason to suspect
 Our ancient-used Hampshire dialect.

Though still disappointed in his hopes of preferment, he continues to believe there is a happy time to come — “ Which,” he says in conclusion,

— when I have most need of comfort, shall
 Send me true joy to make amends for all.
 But say it be not ; whilst I draw this air,
 I have a heart, I hope, shall ne'er despair ;
 Because there is a God, with whom I trust
 My soul shall triumph when my body's dust.
 Yet, when I found that my endeavours still
 Fell out as they would have 't that wished me ill ;

And when I saw the world was grown so coy
 To curb me as too young them to employ,
 And that her greatness thought she did not want me,
 Or found no calling bad enough to grant me
 (And having scaped some envies, which to touch
 Unto this purpose appertains not much) ;
 Weighing both bad,¹ and therewith also this
 How great a shame and what reproach it is
 To be still idle ; and because I spied
 How glad they would be that my fate envied
 To find me so ; although the world doth scorn
 To allow me action, as if I were born
 Before my time ; yet e'en to let her see
 In spite of Fortune I'd employed be,
 Casting preferment's too much care aside,
 And leaving that to God, that can provide,
 The actions of the present time I eyed,
 And all her secret villanies descried.
 I stripped Abuse from all her colours quite,
 And laid her ugly face to open sight.
 I laboured to observe her ways, and then
 In general the state and tricks of men.
 Wherein although my labour were not seen,
 Yet, trust me, the discovery hath been
 My great content ; and I have for my pain,
 Although no outward, yet an inward gain.
 In which because I can with all my heart
 Allow my countrymen to share a part,
 And 'cause I think it may do some a pleasure,
 On opportunity I'll now take seizure,
 And summon up my Muse to make relation : —
 I may be employed ere long ; — now 's my vacation.

In all this, too, we may read the character of the man — enthusiastic and sincerely anxious to reform the world, but at once suspicious and vain to an inordinate degree, and ever ready, consequently, to take anything for granted in his own favor or against another, to change his views and his course suddenly and violently, and still, however decidedly or frequently he might have turned his back upon his former self, to continue to believe that he was in the right and every one else in the wrong. Down to the break-

¹ Considering both to be bad, — apparently, those who specially obstructed his endeavors, and the world generally, that would not avail itself of his services.

ing out of the war between the king and the parliament, Wither, although his pious poetry made him a favorite with the puritans, had always professed himself a strong church and state man; even at so late a date as in 1639, when he was above fifty, he served as a captain of horse in the expedition against the Scotch Covenanters; and when two or three years after he took arms on the other side, he had yet his new principles in a great measure to seek or make. It appears not to have been till a considerable time after this that his old admiration of the monarchy and the hierarchy became suddenly converted into the conviction that both one and other were, and had been all along, only public nuisances — the fountains of all the misrule and misery of the nation. What mainly instigated him to throw himself into the commencing contest with such eagerness seems to have been simply the notion, which possessed and tormented him all his life, that he was born with a peculiar genius for public affairs, and that things had very little chance of going right unless he were employed. With his head full of this conceit, it mattered comparatively little on which side he took his stand to begin with: he would speedily make all even and right; the one thing needful in the first instance was, that his services should be taken advantage of. Of course, Wither's opinions, like those of other men, were influenced by his position, and he was no doubt perfectly sincere in the most extreme of the new principles which he was ultimately led to profess. The defect of men of his temper is not insincerity. But they are nevertheless apt to be almost as unstable as if they had no strong convictions at all. Their convictions, in truth, however strong, do not rest so much upon reason or principle, as upon mere passion. They see everything through so thick and deeply colored an atmosphere of self, that its real shape goes for very little in their conception of it; change only the hue of the haze, or the halo, with which it is thus invested, and you altogether change to them the thing itself — making the white appear black, the bright dim, the round square, or the reverse. Wither, with all his ardor and real honesty, appears never in fact to have acquired any credit for reliability, or steadiness in the opinions he held, either from friends or opponents. He very naïvely lets out this himself in a prose pamphlet which he published in 1624, entitled *The Scholar's Purgatory*, being a vindication of himself addressed to the Bishops, in which, after stating that he had been offered more money and better entertainment if he would

have employed himself in setting forth heretical fancies than he had any chance of ever obtaining by the profession of the truth, he adds, "Yea, sometimes I have been wooed to the profession of their wild and ill-grounded opinions by the sectaries of so many several separations, that, had I liked, or rather had not God been the more merciful to me, I might have been Lieutenant, if not Captain, of some new band of such volunteers long ere this time." Overtures of this kind are, of course, only made to persons who are believed to be open to them. It is plain from his own account that Wither was thus early notorious as a speculator or trader in such securities, — as one ready, not precisely to sell himself, his opinions, and his conscience, to the highest bidder, but yet to be gained over if the offer were only made large enough to convert as well as purchase him. There is a great deal of very passable wearing and working honesty of this kind in the world.

The history of Wither's numerous publications has been elaborately investigated by the late Mr. Park in the first and second volumes of the *British Bibliographer*; many of his poems have been reprinted by Sir Egerton Brydges, and others of his admirers; and an ample account of his life and writings, drawn up with a large and intimate knowledge, as well as affectionate zeal and painstaking, which make it supersede whatever had been previously written on the subject, forms the principal article (extending over more than 130 pages) of Mr. Wilmott's *Lives of Sacred Poets* (8vo, Lon. 1834). Much injustice, however, has been done to Wither by the hasty judgment that has commonly been passed, even by his greatest admirers, upon his later political poetry, as if it consisted of mere party invective and fury, and all that he had written of any enduring value or interest was to be found in the productions of the early part of his life. Some at least of his political pieces are very remarkable for their vigor and terseness. As a specimen we will give a portion of a poem which he published without his name in 1647, under the title of "Amygdala Britannica; Almonds for Parrots; a dish of Stone-fruit, partly shelled and partly unshelled; which, if cracked, picked, and well digested, may be wholesome against those epidemic distempers of the brain now predominant, and prevent some malignant diseases likely to ensue: composed heretofore by a well-known modern author, and now published according to a copy found written with his own

hand. *Qui bene latuit bene vixit.*" This fantastic title-page (with the manufacture of which the bookseller may have had more to do than Wither himself) was suited to the popular taste of the day, but would little lead a modern reader to expect the nervous concentration and passionate earnestness of such verses as the following:—

The time draws near, and hasteth on,
 In which strange works shall be begun ;
 And prosecutions, whereon shall
 Depend much future bliss or bale.
 If to the left hand you decline,
 Assured destruction they divine ;
 But, if the right-hand course ye take,
 This island it will happy make.

A time draws nigh in which you may
 As you shall please the chess-men play ;
 Remove, confine, check, leave, or take,
 Dispose, depose, undo, or make,
 Pawn, rook, knight, bishop, queen, or king,
 And act your wills in every thing :
 But, if that time let slip you shall,
 For yesterday in vain you call.

A time draws nigh in which the sun
 Will give more light than he hath done :
 Then also you shall see the moon
 Shine brighter than the sun at noon ;
 And many stars now seeming dull
 Give shadows like the moon at full.
 Yet then shall some, who think they see,
 Wrapt in Egyptian darkness be.

A time draws nigh when with your blood
 You shall preserve the viper's brood,
 And starve your own ; yet fancy than ¹
 That you have played the pelican ;
 But, when you think the frozen snakes
 Have changed their natures for your sakes,
 They, in requital, will contrive
 Your mischief who did them revive.

¹ Then.

A time will come when they that **wake**
 Shall dream ; and sleepers undertake
 The grand affairs ; yet,¹ few men know
 Which are the dreamers of these two ;
 And fewer care by which of these
 They guided be, so they have ease :
 But an alarum shall advance
 Your drowsy spirits from that trance.

A time shall come ere long in which
 Mere beggars shall grow soonest rich ;
 The rich with wants be pinched more
 Than such as go from door to door ;
 The honourable by the base
 Shall be despited to their face ;
 The truth defamed be with lies ;
 The fool preferred before the wise ;
 And he that fighteth to be free,
 By conquering enslaved shall be.

A time will come when see you shall
 Toads fly aloft and eagles crawl ;
 Wolves walk abroad in human shapes ;
 Men turn to asses, hogs, and apes :
 But, when that cursed time is come,
 Well 's he that is both deaf and dumb ;
 That nothing speaketh, nothing hears,
 And neither hopes, desires, nor fears.

When men shall generally confess
 Their folly and their wickedness ;
 Yet act as if there neither were
 Among them conscience, wit, or fear ;
 When they shall talk as if they had
 Some brains, yet do as they were **mad** ;
 And nor by reason, nor by noise,
 By human or by heavenly voice,
 By being praised or reproved,
 By judgments or by mercies, moved
 Then look for so much sword and **fire**
 As such a temper doth require.

¹ As yet.

Ere God his wrath on Balaam wreaks,
 First by his ass to him he speaks :
 Then shows him in an angel's hand
 A sword, his courses to withstand ;
 But, seeing still he forward went,
 Quite through his heart a sword he sent.
 And God will thus, if thus they do,
 Still deal with kings, and subjects too ;
 That, where his grace despised is grown,
 He by his judgments may be known.

Neither Churchill nor Cowper ever wrote anything in the same style better than this. The modern air, too, of the whole, with the exception of a few words, is wonderful. But this, as we have said, is the character of all Wither's poetry — of his earliest as well as of his latest. It is nowhere more conspicuous than in his early religious verses, especially in his collection entitled *Songs and Hymns of the Church*, first published in 1624. There is nothing of the kind in the language more perfectly beautiful than some of these. We subjoin two of them : —

Thanksgiving for Seasonable Weather. Song 85.

Lord, should the sun, the clouds, the wind,
 The air, and seasons be
 To us so froward and unkind
 As we are false to thee ;
 All fruits would quite away be burned,
 Or lie in water drowned,
 Or blasted be or overturned,
 Or chilled on the ground.

But from our duty though we swerve,
 Thou still dost mercy show,
 And deign thy creatures to preserve,
 That men might thankful grow :
 Yea, though from day to day we sin,
 And thy displeasure gain,
 No sooner we to cry begin
 But pity we obtain.

The weather now thou changed hast
 That put us late to fear,

And when our hopes were almost past
 Then comfort did appear.
 The heaven the earth's complaints hath heard ;
 They reconciled be ;
 And thou such weather hast prepared
 As we desired of thee.

For which, with lifted hands and eyes,
 To thee we do repay
 The due and willing sacrifice
 Of giving thanks to-day ;
 Because such offerings we should not
 To render thee be slow,
 Nor let that mercy be forgot
 Which thou art pleased to show

Thanksgiving for Victory. Song 88.

We love thee, Lord, we praise thy name,
 Who, by thy great almighty arm,
 Hast kept us from the spoil and shame
 Of those that sought our causeless harm :
 Thou art our life, our triumph-song,
 The joy and comfort of our heart ;
 To thee all praises do belong,
 And thou the God of Armies art.

We must confess it is thy power
 That made us masters of the field ;
 Thou art our bulwark and our tower,
 Our rock of refuge and our shield :
 Thou taught'st our hands and arms to fight ;
 With vigour thou didst gird us round ;
 Thou mad'st our foes to take their flight,
 And thou didst beat them to the ground.

With fury came our armed foes,
 To blood and slaughter fiercely bent ;
 And perils round did us inclose,
 By whatsoever way we went ;
 That, hadst not thou our Captain been,
 To lead us on, and off again,
 We on the place had dead been seen,
 Or masked in blood and wounds had lain.

This song we therefore sing to thee,
 And pray that thou for evermore
 Would'st our Protector deign to be,
 As at this time and heretofore ;
 That thy continual favour shown
 May cause us more to thee incline,
 And make it through the world be known
 That such as are our foes are thine.

 BROWNE.

ALONG with Wither ought to be mentioned a contemporary poet of a genius, or at least of a manner, in some respects kindred to his, and whose fate it has been to experience the same long neglect, William Browne, the author of *Britannia's Pastorals*, of which the first part was published in 1613, the second in 1616, and of *The Shepherd's Pipe in Seven Eclogues*, which appeared in 1614. Browne was a native of Tavistock in Devonshire, where he was born in 1590, and he is supposed to have died in 1645. It is remarkable that, if he lived to so late a date, he should not have written more than he appears to have done : the two parts of his *Britannia's Pastorals* were reprinted together in 1625 ; and a piece called *The Inner Temple Masque*, and a few short poems, were published for the first time in an edition of his works brought out, under the care of Dr. Farmer, in 1772 ; but the last thirty years of his life would seem, in so far as regards original production, to have been a blank. Yet a remarkable characteristic of his style, as well as of Wither's, is its ease and fluency ; and it would appear, from what he says in one of the songs of his *Pastorals*, that he had written part of that work before he was twenty. His poetry certainly does not read as if its fountain would be apt soon to run dry. His facility of rhyming and command of harmonious expression are very great ; and, within their proper sphere, his invention and fancy are also extremely active and fertile. His strength, however, lies chiefly in description, not the thing for which poetry or language is best fitted, and a species of writing which cannot be carried on long without becoming tiresome ; he is also an elegant didactic declaimer ; but of passion, or indeed of

any breath of actual living humanity, his poetry has almost none. This, no doubt, was the cause of the neglect into which after a short time it was allowed to drop; and this limited quality of his genius may also very probably have been the reason why he so soon ceased to write and publish. From the time when religious and political contention began to wax high, in the latter years of King James, such poetry as Browne's had little chance of acceptance; from about that date Wither, as we have seen, who also had previously written his *Shepherd's Hunting*, and other similar pieces, took up a new strain; and Browne, if he was to continue to be listened to, must have done the same, which he either would not or could not. Yet, although without the versatility of Wither, and also with less vitality than Wither even in the kind of poetry which is common to the two, Browne rivals that writer both in the abundance of his poetic vein and the sweetness of his verse; and the English of the one has nearly all the purity, perspicuity, and unfading freshness of style which is so remarkable in the other. Here is a specimen from the reply of Remond to the love-tale of his brother-shepherd, in the first Song of the first Book of *Britannia's Pastorals*: —

— Have thy stars malign been such,
 That their predominations sway so much
 Over the rest, that with a mild aspect
 The lives and loves of shepherds do affect?
 Then do I think there is some greater hand
 Which thy endeavours still doth countermand.
 Wherefore I wish thee quench the flame thus moved,
 And never love except thou be beloved;
 For such an humour every woman seizeth,
 She loves not him that plaineth, but that pleaseth.
 When much thou lovest, most disdain comes on thee;
 And, when thou think'st to hold her, she flies from thee.
 She followed, flies; she, fled from, follows post,
 And loveth best where she is hated most.
 'Tis ever noted, both in maids and wives,
 Their hearts and tongues are never relatives; —
 Hearts full of holes (so elder shepherds sayn),
 As apter to receive than to retain.
 Whose crafts and wiles did I intend to show,
 This day would not permit me time, I know:
 The day's swift hours would their course have run,

And dived themselves within the ocean,
 Ere I should have performed half my task,
 Striving their crafty subtleties to unmask.
 And, gentle swain, some counsel take of me :
 Love not still where thou may'st ; love who loves thee ;
 Draw to the courteous ; fly thy love's abhorrer ;
 And, if she be not for thee, be not for her.
 If that she still be wavering, will away,
 Why should'st thou strive to hold what will not stay ?
 This maxim reason never can confute : —
 Better to live by loss than die by suit.

.
 Favour and pity wait on patience ;
 And hatred oft attendeth violence.
 If thou wilt get desire whence love hath pawned it,
 Believe me, take thy time, but ne'er demand it.
 Women, as well as men, retain desire,
 But can dissemble more than men their fire.
 Be never caught with looks, nor self-wrought rumour,
 Nor by a quaint disguise, nor singing humour.
 Those outside shows are toys which outwards snare ;
 But virtue, lodged within, is only fair.
 If thou hast seen the beauty of our nation,
 And find'st her have no love, have thou no passion ;
 But seek thou further : other places, sure,
 May yield a face as fair, a love more pure.
 Leave, oh then leave, fond swain, this idle course ;
 For love's a good no mortal wight can force.

And here is another short extract from the second Song, exemplifying Browne's more habitual manner, on ground where all the descriptive poets have been competitors : —

Not all the ointments brought from Delos isle,
 Nor from the confines of seven-headed Nile ;
 Nor that brought whence Phenicians have abodes ;
 Nor Cyprus' wild vine flower ; nor that of Rhodes
 Nor rose's oil from Naples, Capua ;
 Saffron confected in Cilicia ;
 Nor that of quinces, nor of marjoram,
 That ever from the isle of Coös came :
 Nor these, nor any else, though ne'er so rare,
 Could with this place for sweetest smells compare.
 There stood the elm, whose shade, so mildly dim,

Doth nourish all that groweth under him :
 Cypresses, that like pyramids run topping,
 And hurt the least of any by their dropping :
 The alder, whose fat shadow nourisheth ;—
 Each plant set near to him long flourisheth :
 The heavy-headed plane-tree, by whose shade
 The grass grows thickest, men are fresher made :
 The oak that best endures the thunder-strokes :
 The everlasting ebony, cedar, box :
 The clive, that in wainscot never cleaves :
 The amorous vine, which in the elm still weaves :
 The lotus, juniper, where worms ne'er enter :
 The pine, with whom men through the ocean venture :
 The warlike yew, by which, more than the lance,
 The strong-armed English spirits conquered France.
 Amongst the rest the tamarisk there stood,
 For housewives' besoms only known most good :
 The cold-place-loving birch and service tree ;
 The walnut loving vales, and mulberry ;
 The maple, ash, that do delight in fountains
 Which have their currents by the sides of mountains ;
 The laurel, myrtle, ivy, date, which hold
 Their leaves all winter, be it ne'er so cold ;
 The fir, that often-times doth rosin drop ;
 The beech, that scales the welkin with his top.
 All these, and thousand more, within this grove,
 By all the industry of nature, strove
 To frame an arbour, that might keep within it
 The best of beauties that the world hath in it.

PROSE WRITERS. — CHARLES I.

MOST of the prose that was written and published in England in the middle portion of the seventeenth century, or the twenty years preceding the Restoration, was political and theological, but very little of it has any claim to be considered as belonging to the national literature. A torrent of pamphlets and ephemeral polemics supplied the ravenous public appetite with a mental sustenance which answered the wants of the moment, much as the bakers'

ovens did with daily bread for the body. It was all devoured, and meant to be devoured, as fast as it was produced, — devoured in the sense of being quite used up and consumed, so far as any good was to be got out of it. It was in no respect intended for posterity any more than the linen and broadcloth then manufactured were intended for posterity. Still even this busy and excited time produced some literary performances which still retain more or less of interest.

The writings attributed to Charles I. were first collected and published at the Hague soon after his death, in a folio volume without date, under the title of *Reliquiæ Sacræ Carolinæ*, and twice afterwards in England, namely, in 1660 and 1687, with the title of ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΑ: The Works of King Charles the Martyr. If we except a number of speeches to the parliament, letters, despatches, and other political papers, the contents of this collection are all theological, consisting of prayers, arguments, and disquisitions on the controversy about church government, and the famous *Eikon Basiliké*, or, The Portraiture of his Sacred Majesty in his Solitude and Sufferings; which, having been printed under the care of Dr. Gauden (after the Restoration successively bishop of Exeter and Worcester), had been first published by itself immediately after the king's execution. It is now generally admitted that the *Eikon* was really written by Gauden, who, after the Restoration, openly claimed it as his own. Mr. Hallam, however, although he has no doubt of Gauden being the author, admits that it is, nevertheless, superior to his acknowledged writings. "A strain of majestic melancholy," he observes, "is well kept up; but the personated sovereign is rather too theatrical for real nature; the language is too rhetorical and amplified, the periods too artificially elaborated. None but scholars and practised writers employ such a style as this."¹ It is not improbable that the work may have been submitted to Charles's revisal, and that it may have received both his approval and his corrections. Charles, indeed, was more in the habit of correcting what had been written by others than of writing anything himself. "Though he was of as slow a pen as of speech," says Sir Philip Warwick, "yet both were very significant; and he had that modest esteem of his own parts, that he would usually say, he would willingly make his own despatches, but that he found 't better to be a cobbler than a shoemaker. I have been in com-

¹ Lit. of Eur. iii. 376.

pany with very learned men, when I have brought them their own papers back from him with his alterations, who ever confessed his amendments to have been very material. And I once, by his commandment, brought him a paper of my own to read, to see whether it was suitable to his directions, and he disallowed it slightly: I desired him I might call Dr. Sanderson to aid me, and that the doctor might understand his own meaning from himself; and, with his majesty's leave, I brought him whilst he was walking and taking the air; whereupon we two went back; but pleased him as little when we returned it: for, smilingly, he said, a man might have as good ware out of a chandler's shop; but afterwards he set it down with his own pen very plainly, and suitably to his own intentions." The most important of the literary productions which are admitted to be wholly Charles's own, are his papers in the controversy which he carried on at Newcastle in June and July, 1646, with Alexander Henderson, the Scotch clergyman, on the question between episcopacy and presbytery, and those on the same subject in his controversy with the parliamentary divines at Newport in October, 1648. These papers show considerable clearness of thinking and logical or argumentative talent; but it cannot be said that they are written with any force or elegance. It is not easy to understand the meaning of Horace Walpole's judgment on Charles's style, that "it was formed between a certain portion of sense, adversity, dignity, and perhaps a little insincerity."¹ What he says of a copy of verses said to have been written by his majesty during his confinement in Carisbrook Castle is more to the purpose: "The poetry is most uncouth and inharmonious; but there are strong thoughts in it, some good sense, and a strain of majestic piety." Though not very polished, indeed, or very like the production of a practised versifier, which goes so far to furnish a presumption of its authenticity, this composition, which is entitled *Majesty in Misery*, or an *Imploration to the King of Kings*, indicates poetic feeling, and an evident familiarity with the highest models. Here are a few of its more striking verses: —

Nature and law, by thy divine decree
The only sort of righteous royalty,
With this dim diadem invested me.

.

¹ Royal and Noble Authors.

The fiercest furies, that do daily tread
 Upon my grief, my gray discrowned head,
 Are those that owe my bounty for their bread.

.
 The Church of England doth all faction foster,
 The pulpit is usurped by each impostor ;
Extempore excludes the *Pater Noster*.

The Presbyter and Independent seed
 Springs with broad blades ; to make religion bleed
 Herod and Pontius Pilate are agreed.

The corner-stone's misplaced by every paviour ;
 With such a bloody method and behaviour
 Their ancestors did crucify our Saviour.

.
 With my own power my majesty they wound ;
 In the king's name the king himself's uncrowned ;
 So doth the dust destroy the diamond.



MILTON'S PROSE WORKS.

WE have already mentioned Bishop Hall, both as a poet and as a writer of prose. A part which Hall took in his old age in the grand controversy of the time brought him into collision with one with whose name in after-ages the world was to resound. John Milton, then in his thirty-third year, and recently returned from his travels in France and Italy, had already, in 1641, lent the aid of his pen to the war of the Puritans against the established church by the publication of his treatise entitled *Of Reformation, in Two Books*. The same year Hall published his *Humble Remonstrance* in favor of Episcopacy ; which immediately called forth an *Answer* by Smectymnus, — a word formed from the initial letters of the names of five Puritan ministers by whom the tract was written — Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William (or, as he was on this occasion reduced to designate himself, Uuilliam) Spurstow. The *Answer* produced a *Confutation* by Archbishop Usher ; and to this Milton replied in a treatise entitled *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*. Hall then published

a Defence of the Humble Remonstrance ; and Milton wrote Animadversions upon that. About the same time he also brought out a performance of much greater pretension, under the title of The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty, in Two Books. This is the work containing the magnificent passage in which he makes the announcement of his intention to attempt something in one of the highest kinds of poetry "in the mother-tongue," long afterwards accomplished in his great epic. Meanwhile a Confutation of the Animadversions having been published by Bishop Hall, or his son, Milton replied, in 1642, in an Apology for Smectymnuus, which was the last of his publications in this particular controversy. But, nearly all his other prose writings were given to the world within the period with which we are now engaged : — namely, his Tractate of Education, addressed to his friend Hartlib, and his noble Areopagitica, a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, in 1644 ; his Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, and his Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce, the same year ; his Tetrachordon, and Colasterion (both on the same subject) in 1645 ; his Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, his Eikonoclastes, in answer to the Eikon Basiliké, and one or two other tracts of more temporary interest, all after the execution of the king, in 1649 ; his Defence for the People of England, in answer to Salmasius (in Latin), in 1651 ; his Second Defence (also in Latin), in reply to a work by Peter du Moulin, in 1654 ; two additional Latin tracts in reply to rejoinders of Du Moulin, in 1655 ; his treatises on Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Cases, and on The Means of Removing Hirelings out of the Church, in 1659 ; his Letter concerning the Ruptures of the Commonwealth, and Brief Delineation of a Free Commonwealth, the same year ; and, finally, his Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth, and his Brief Notes upon a Sermon preached by Dr. Griffith, called The Fear of God and the King, in the spring of 1660, immediately before the king's return. Passages of great poetic splendor occur in some of these productions, and a fervid and fiery spirit breathes in all of them, though the animation is as apt to take the tone of mere coarse objurgation and abuse as of lofty and dignified scorn or of vigorous argument ; but, upon the whole, it cannot be said that Milton's English prose is a good style. It is in the first place, not perhaps in vocabulary, but certainly in genius and construction, the most Latinized of English styles ; but it does

not merit the commendation bestowed by Pope on another style which he conceived to be formed after the model of the Roman eloquence, of being "so Latin, yet so English all the while." It is both soul and body Latin, only in an English dress. Owing partly to this principle of composition upon which he deliberately proceeded, or to the adoption of which his education and tastes or habits led him, partly to the character of his mind, fervid, gorgeous, and soaring, but having little involuntary impulsiveness or self-abandonment, rich as his style often is, it never moves with any degree of rapidity or easy grace even in passages where such qualities are most required, but has at all times something of a stiff, cumbrous, oppressive air, as if every thought, the lightest and most evanescent as well as the gravest and stateliest, were attired in brocade and whalebone. There is too little relief from constant straining and striving; too little repose and variety; in short, too little nature. Many things, no doubt, are happily said; there is much strong and also some brilliant expression; but even such imbedded gems do not occur so often as might be looked for from so poetical a mind. In fine, we must admit the truth of what he has himself confessed — that he was not naturally disposed to "this manner of writing"; "wherein," he adds, "knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand."¹ With all his quick susceptibility for whatever was beautiful and bright, Milton seems to have needed the soothing influences of the regularity and music of verse fully to bring out his poetry, or to sublimate his imagination to the true poetical state. The passion which is an enlivening flame in his verse half suffocates him with its smoke in his prose.



HALES. CHILLINGWORTH.

Two other eminent names of theological controversialists belonging to this troubled age of the English Church may be mentioned together — those of John Hales and William Chillingworth. Hales, who was born in 1584, and died in 1656, the same year with Hall and Usher, published in his lifetime a few short tracts, of which

¹ Reason of Church Government, Book II.

the most important is a Discourse on Schism, which was printed in 1642, and is considered to have been one of the works that led the way in that bold revolt against the authority of the fathers, so much cried up by the preceding school of Andrews and Laud, upon which has since been founded what many hold to be the strongest defence of the Church of England against that of Rome. All Hales's writings were collected and published after his death, in 1659, in a quarto volume, bearing the title of Golden Remains of the Ever-Memorable Mr. John Hales, — a designation which has stuck to his name. The main idea of his treatise on Schism had, however, been much more elaborately worked out by his friend Chillingworth — the Immortal Chillingworth, as he is styled by his admirers — in his famous work entitled *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, published in 1637. This is one of the most closely and keenly argued polemical treatises ever written: the style in which Chillingworth presses his reasoning home is like a charge with the bayonet. He was still only in his early manhood when he produced this remarkably able work; and he died in 1644 at the age of forty-two.



JEREMY TAYLOR.

BUT the greatest name by far among the English divines of the middle of the seventeenth century is that of Jeremy Taylor. He was born in 1613, and died bishop of Down and Com or in 1667 — but most of his works were written, and many of them were also published, before the Restoration. In abundance of thought, in ingenuity of argument, in opulence of imagination, in a soul made alike for the feeling of the sublime, of the beautiful, and of the picturesque, and in a style answering in its compass, flexibility, and sweetness to the demands of all these powers, Taylor is unrivalled among the masters of English eloquence. He is the Spenser of our prose writers; and his prose is sometimes almost as musical as Spenser's verse. His *Sermons*, his *Golden Grove*, his *Holy Living*, and, still more, his *Holy Dying*, all contain many passages the beauty and splendor of which are hardly to be matched in any other English prose writer. Another of his most

remarkable works, *Theologia Eclectica*, a Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying, first published in 1647, may be placed beside Milton's *Areopagitica*, published three years before, as doing for liberty of conscience the same service which that did for the liberty of the press. Both remain the most eloquent and comprehensive defences we yet possess of these two great rights.



FULLER.

THE last of the theological writers of this era that we shall notice is Fuller. Dr. Thomas Fuller was born in 1604, and died in 1661; and in the course of his not very extended life produced a considerable number of literary works, of which his *Church History of Britain from the Birth of Jesus Christ until the Year 1648*, which appeared in 1656, and his *History of the Worthies of England*, which was not published till the year after his death, are the most important. He is a most singular writer, full of verbal quibbling and quaintness of all kinds, but by far the most amusing and engaging of all the rhetoricians of this school, inasmuch as his conceits are rarely mere elaborate feats of ingenuity, but are usually informed either by a strong spirit of very peculiar humor and drollery, or sometimes even by a warmth and depth of feeling, of which too, strange as it may appear, the oddity of his phraseology is often a not ineffective exponent. He was certainly one of the greatest and truest wits that ever lived: he is witty not by any sort of effort at all, but as it were in spite of himself, or because he cannot help it. But wit, or the faculty of looking at and presenting things in their less obvious relations, is accompanied in him, not only by humor and heart, but by a considerable endowment of the irradiating power of fancy. Accordingly, what he writes is always lively and interesting, and sometimes even eloquent and poetical, though the eccentricities of his characteristic manner are not favorable, it must be confessed, to dignity or solemnity of style when attempted to be long sustained. Fuller, and it is no wonder, was one of the most popular writers, if not the most popular, of his own day: he observes himself, in the opening chapter of his *Worthies*, that hitherto no stationer (or publisher) had

lost by him ; and what happened in regard to one of his works, his *Holy State*, is perhaps without example in the history of book-publishing : — it appeared originally in a folio volume in 1642, and is believed to have been four times reprinted before the Restoration ; but the publisher continued to describe the two last impressions on the title-page as still only the *third* edition, as if the demand had been so great that he felt (for whatever reason) unwilling that its extent should be known. It is conjectured that his motive probably was “ a desire to lull suspicion, and not to invite prohibition from the ruling powers.”¹

Hardly anything can be found in Fuller that is dull or wearisome ; and we may therefore safely indulge in a few extracts. We will begin with some passages from his *Worthies*, interesting or curious either for the manner or the matter : —

Chapter I. The Design of the ensuing Work. — England may not unfitly be compared to an House, not very great, but convenient ; and the several Shires may properly be resembled to the rooms thereof. Now, as learned Master Camden, and painful Master Speed, with others, have described the rooms themselves ; so it is our intention, God willing, to describe the furniture of those rooms ; such eminent commodities which every county doth produce, with the persons of quality bred therein, and some other observables coincident with the same subject.

Cato, that great and grave philosopher, did commonly demand, when any new project was propounded unto him, “ *Cui bono?* ” What good would ensue in case the same was effected. A question more fit to be asked than facile to be answered, in all undertakings, especially in the setting forth of new books, insomuch that they themselves who complain that they are too many already help daily to make them more.

Know, then, I propound five ends to myself in this book. First, to gain some glory to God. Secondly, to preserve the memories of the Dead. Thirdly, to present examples to the Living. Fourthly, to entertain the Reader with delight. And lastly (which I am not ashamed publicly to profess), to procure some honest profit to Myself. If not so happy to obtain all, I will be joyful to attain some ; yea, contented, and thankful too, if gaining any (especially the first) of these ends, the motives of my endeavours.

First, glory to God, which ought to be the aim of all our actions, though too often our bow starts, our hand shakes, and so our arrow misseth the mark. Yet I hope that our describing so good a land, with the various fruits and fruitful varieties therein, will engage both writer and reader in

¹ Preface by the Editor, Mr. James Nichols, to *The Holy State* 8vo, Lon. 1841.

gratitude to that God who hath been so bountiful to our nation. In order whereunto, I have not only always taken, but often sought, occasions to exhort to thankfulness; hoping the same will be interpreted no straggling from my subject, but a closing with my calling.

Secondly, to preserve the memories of the Dead. A good name is an ointment poured out, smelt where it is not seen. It hath been the lawful desire of men in all ages to perpetuate their memories, thereby in some sort revenging themselves of mortality, though few have found out effectual means to perform it. For monuments made of wood are subject to be burnt; of glass, to be broken; of soft stone, to moulder; of marble and metal (if escaping the teeth of time), to be demolished by the hand of covetousness; so that, in my apprehension, the safest way to secure a memory from oblivion is (next his own virtues) by committing the same in writing to posterity.

Thirdly, to present examples to the Living; having here precedents of all sorts and sizes; of men famous for valour, wealth, wisdom, learning, religion, and bounty to the public, on which last we most largely insist. The scholar, being taxed by his writing-master for idleness in his absence, made a fair defence when pleading that his master had neither left him paper whereon, nor copy whereby, to write. But rich men will be without excuse, if not expressing their bounty in some proportion; God having provided them paper enough ("The poor you have always with you") and set them signal examples, as in our ensuing work will plainly appear.

Fourthly, to entertain the Reader with delight. I confess the subject is but dull in itself, to tell the time and place of men's birth and death, their names, with the names and number of their books; and therefore this bare skeleton, of time, place, and person, must be fleshed with some pleasant passages. To this intent I have purposely interlaced (not as meat, but as condiment) many delightful stories, that so the Reader, if he do not arise (which I hope and desire) *religiosior* or *doctior*, with more piety or learning, at least he may depart *jucundior*, with more pleasure and lawful delight.

Lastly, to procure moderate profit to Myself, in compensation of my pains. It was a proper question which plain-dealing Jacob pertinently propounded to Laban, his father-in-law: "And now when shall I provide for mine house also?" Hitherto no stationer hath lost by me; hereafter it will be high time for me (all things considered) to save for myself.

The following passages are from the account of Middlesex:—

Leather.—This, though common to all counties, is entered under the manufactures of Middlesex, because London therein is the staple place of slaughter; and the hides of beasts there bought are generally tanned about Enfield in this county.

A word of the antiquity and usefulness of this commodity. Adam's first suit was of leaves, his second of leather. Hereof girdles, shoes, and many utensils (not to speak of whole houses of leather, I mean coaches) are made. Yea, I have read how Frederick the Second, Emperor of Germany, distressed to pay his army, made *monetam coriaceam*, coin of leather, making it current by his proclamation; and afterward, when his soldiers repaid it into his exchequer, they received so much silver in lieu thereof.

Many good laws are made (and still one wanting to enforce the keeping of them) for the making of this merchantable commodity; and yet still much unsaleable leather is sold in our markets.

The Lord Treasurer Barleigh, who always consulted artificers in their own art, was indoctrinated by a cobbler in the true tanning of leather. This cobbler, taking a slice of bread, toasted it by degrees at some distance from the fire, turning it many times till it became brown and hard on both sides. "This, my lord," saith he, "we good fellows call a tanned toast, done so well that it will last many mornings' draughts; and leather thus leisurely tanned, and turned many times in the fat [vat], will prove serviceable, which otherwise will quickly fleet and rag out." And, although that great statesman caused statutes to be made according to his instructions, complaints in this kind daily continue and increase. Surely, were all that occupation as honest as Simon the Tanner, the entertainer of Simon Peter in Joppa, they would be more conscientious in their calling. Let me add, what experience proveth true, though it be hard to assign the true cause thereof, that, when wheat is dear, leather always is cheap; and when leather is dear, then wheat is cheap.

The Buildings. — Osterly House, now Sir William Waller's, must not be forgotten, built in a park by Sir Thomas Gresham, who here magnificently entertained and lodged Queen Elizabeth. Her majesty found fault with the court of this house as too great; affirming that it would appear more handsome if divided with a wall in the middle. What doth Sir Thomas, but in the night-time sends for workmen to London (money commands all things), who so speedily and silently apply their business that the next morning discovered that court double, which the night had left single before. It is questionable whether the Queen next day was more contented with the conformity to her fancy, or more pleased with the surprise and sudden performance thereof; whilst her courtiers disported themselves with their several expressions; some avowing it was no wonder he could so soon change a building who could build a change; others (reflecting on some known differences in this knight's family) affirmed that any house is easier divided than united.

London. — It oweth its greatness, under God's divine providence, to the well-conditioned river of Thames, which doth not, as some tyrant

rivers in Europe, abuse its strength in a destructive way, but employeth its greatness in goodness, to be beneficial to commerce by the reciproca-tion of the tide therein. Hence it was that, when King James, offended with the city, threatened to remove his court to another place, the Lord Mayor (boldly enough) returned, that he might remove his court at his pleasure, but could not remove the river of Thames.

Needles. — The use hereof is right ancient, though sewing was before needles; for we read that our first parents made themselves aprons by sewing fig-leaves together, either fastening them with some glutinous matter, or with some sharp thing joining them together.

A pin is a blind needle; a needle, a pin with an eye. What nails do in solid, needles do in supple bodies, putting them together; only they remain not there formally, but virtually in the thread which they leave behind them. It is the woman's pencil; and embroidery (*vestis acu picta*) is the master-piece thereof. I say embroidery, much used in former, neglected in our age, wherein modern gallants, affecting variety of suits, desire that their clothes should be known by them, and not, as our ancestors, they by their clothes, one suit of state serving them for several solemnities.

This industrious instrument, Needle (*quasi ne idle*, as some will have it), maintaineth many millions. Yea, he who desireth a blessing on the plough and the needle (including that in the card and compass), comprehendeth most employments at home and abroad, by land and by sea.

All I will add is this: that the first fine Spanish needles in England were made in the reign of Queen Mary, in Cheapside, by a negro; but such his envy that he would teach his art to none, so that it died with him. More charitable was Elias Crowse, a German, who, coming over into England about the eighth of Queen Elizabeth, first taught us the making of Spanish needles; and since we have taught ourselves the using of them.

The following interesting passage, often referred to, is from the account of Warwickshire: —

William Shakespeare was born at Stratford on Avon in this county; in whom three eminent poets may seem in some sort to be compounded: 1. Martial, in the warlike sound of his surname (whence some may conjecture him of a military extraction), Hastivibrans, or Shakespeare. 2. Ovid, the most natural and witty of all poets; and hence it was that Queen Elizabeth, coming into a grammar-school, made this extemporary verse,

“Persius a Crabstaff, Bawdy Martial, Ovid a fine wag.”

3. Plautus, who was an exact comedian, yet never any scholar; as our Shakespeare, if alive, would confess himself. Add to all these, that, though his genius generally was jocular, and inclining him to festivity, yet

he could, when so disposed, be solemn and serious, as appears by his tragedies; so that Heraclitus himself (I mean if secret and unseen) might afford to smile at his comedies, they were so merry; and Democritus scarce forbear to sigh at his tragedies, they were so mournful.

He was an eminent instance of the truth of that rule, *Poeta non fit, sed nascitur*; one is not made, but born a poet. Indeed his learning was very little, so that, as Cornish diamonds are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed, and smoothed even, as they are taken out of the earth, so nature itself was all the art which was used upon him.

Many were the wit combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson. Which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow, in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention. He died anno Domini 16 . . . , and was buried at Stratford upon Avon, the town of his nativity.

This last paragraph calls to mind a famous passage in a poetical epistle written from the country by Francis Beaumont to Ben Jonson, very early in the century, it is said, but not published, we believe, till it appeared in Shirley's edition of the collected plays of Beaumont and Fletcher in 1647, so that it could not have suggested Fuller's description:—

Methinks the little wit I had is lost
 Since I saw you; for wit is like a rest
 Held up at tennis, which men do the best
 With the best gamesters.¹ What things have we seen
 Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
 So nimble, and so full of subtile flame,
 As if that every one from whence they came
 Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
 And had resolved to live a fool the rest
 Of his dull life; then, when there hath been thrown
 Wit able enough to justify the town
 For three days past; wit that might warrant be
 For the whole city to talk foolishly
 'Till that were cancelled; and, when that was gone,
 We left an air behind us, which alone
 Was able to make the two next companies
 Right witty; though but downright fools, mere wise.

¹ So Samuel Johnson said that he loved to converse with those who were able to send him back every ball that he threw.

We may add another Warwickshire worthy, of a different order: —

Philemon Holland, where born is to me unknown, was bred in Trinity College in Cambridge a Doctor in Physic, and fixed himself in Coventry. He was the translator general in his age, so that those books alone of his turning into English will make a country gentleman a competent library for historians; in so much that one saith,

“Holland with his translations doth so fill us,
He will not let *Suetonius* be *Tranquillus*.”

Indeed, some deery all translators as interlopers, spoiling the trade of learning, which should be driven amongst seholars alone. Such also allege that the best translations are works rather of industry than judgment, and, in easy authors, of faithfulness rather than industry; that many be but bunglers, forcing the meaning of the authors they translate, “forcing the lock when they cannot open it.”

But their opinion resents too much of envy, that such gentlemen who cannot repair to the fountain should be debarred access to the stream. Besides, it is unjust to charge all with the faults of some; and a distinction must be made amongst translators betwixt cobblers and workmen, and our Holland had the true *knack* of translating.

Many of these his books he wrote with one pen, whereon he himself thus pleasantly versified: —

“With one sole pen I writ this book,
Made of a grey goose quill;
A pen it was when it I took,
And a pen I leave it still.”

This monumental pen he solemnly kept, and showed to my reverend tutor, Doctor Samuel Ward. It seems he leaned very lightly on the neb thereof, though weightily enough in another sense, performing not slightly but solidly what he undertook.

But what commendeth him most to the praise of posterity is his translating Camden’s *Britannia*, a translation more than a translation, with many excellent additions not found in the Latin, done fifty years since in Master Camden’s lifetime, not only with his knowledge and consent, but also, no doubt, by his desire and help. Yet such additions (discoverable in the former part with asterisks in the margin) with some antiquaries obtain not equal authenticalness with the rest. This eminent translator was translated to a better life anno Domini 16 . . .

The translation of the translator took place in fact in 1636, when he had reached the venerable age of eighty-five, so that translating would seem to be not an unhealthy occupation. The above sketch

is Fuller all over, in heart as well as in head and hand, — the last touch especially, which, jest though it be, and upon a solemn subject, falls as gently and kindly as a tear on good old Philemon and his labors. The effect is as if we were told that even so gently fell the touch of death itself upon the ripe old man — even so easy, natural, and smiling, his labors over, was his leave-taking and exchange of this earth of many languages, the confusion or discord of which he had done his best to reduce, for that better world, where there is only one tongue, and translation is not needed or known. And Fuller's wit and jesting are always of this character; they have not in them a particle either of bitterness or of irreverence. No man ever (in writing at least) made so many jokes, good, bad, and indifferent; be the subject what it may, it does not matter; in season and out of season he is equally facetious; he cannot let slip an occasion of saying a good thing any more than a man who is tripped can keep himself from falling; the habit is as irresistible with him as the habit of breathing; and yet there is probably neither an ill-natured nor a profane witticism to be found in all that he has written. It is the sweetest-blooded wit that was ever infused into man or book. And how strong and weighty, as well as how gentle and beautiful, much of his writing is! The work perhaps in which he is oftenest eloquent and pathetic is that entitled *The Holy State and the Profane State*, the former great popularity of which we have already noticed. It consists in fact of a series of moral, theological, and miscellaneous essays, interspersed with narratives, the first four books being occupied with the *Holy State*, the fifth with the *Profane*, many of the papers being delineations of different characters, such as the *Good Wife*, the *Good Husband*, the *Good Physician*, the *Good Merchant*, the *Good Herald*, under the former head, — the *Witch*, the *Hypocrite*, the *Heretic*, the *Liar*, under the latter. Almost no writer whatever tells a story so well as Fuller — with so much life and point and gusto. The narratives, however, of the *Holy and Profane State* are all too long for extract; and, in selecting from that work the last specimens we can afford to give of this admirable old writer, we must confine ourselves to a few passages that admit of being more easily separated from the context. We will begin with some from his chapter entitled *The Good Soldier*: —

A soldier is one of a lawful, necessary, commendable, and honourable profession; yea, God himself may seem to be one free of the company of

soldiers, in that he styleth himself a "Man of War." Now, though many hate soldiers as the twigs of the rod war, wherewith God scourgeth wanton countries into repentance, yet is their calling so needful that, were not *some* soldiers, we must be *all* soldiers, daily employed to defend our own, the world would grow so licentious.

Maxim I. He keepeth a clear and quiet conscience in his breast, which otherwise will gnaw out the roots of all valour. — For vicious soldiers are compassed with enemies on all sides; their foes without them, and an ambush within them of fleshly lusts, which, as St. Peter saith, "fight against the soul." None fitter to go to war than those who have made their peace with God in Christ. For such a man's soul is an impregnable fort. It cannot be scaled with ladders, for it reacheth up to heaven; nor be broken with batterics, for it is walled with brass; nor undermined by pioneers, for it is founded on a rock; nor betrayed by treason, for faith itself keeps it; nor be burnt by granadoes, for he can quench the fiery darts of the devil; nor be forced by famine, for "a good conscience is a continual feast."

Maxim III. He counts his prince's lawful command to be his sufficient warrant to fight. — In a defensive war, when his country is hostilely invaded, it is pity but *his* neck should hang in suspense with his conscience, that doubts to fight. In offensive war, though the case be harder, the common soldier is not to dispute, but do, his prince's command. Otherwise princes, before they levy an army of soldiers, must first levy an army of casuists and confessors to satisfy each scrupulous soldier in point of right to the war; and the most cowardly will be the most conscientious, to multiply doubts eternally. Besides, causes of war are so complicated and perplexed, so many things falling in the prosecution, as may alter the original state thereof; and private soldiers have neither calling nor ability to dive into such mysteries. But, if the conscience of a counsellor or commander in chief remonstrates in himself the unlawfulness of this war he is bound humbly to represent to his prince his reasons against it.

Maxim IV. He esteemeth an hardship easy, through hopes of victory. — Moneys are the sinews of war;¹ yet, if these sinews should chance to be shrunk, and pay casually fall short, he takes a fit of this convulsion patiently. He is contented though in cold weather his hands must be their own fire, and warm themselves with working; though he be better armed against their enemies than the weather, and his corslet wholer than his clothes; though he hath more fasts and vigils in his almanac than the Romish church did ever enjoin. He patiently endureth drought, for desire of honour; and one thirst quencheth another. In a word, though much

¹ "Then to advise how War may, best upheld,
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold."

Milton, *Sonnet to the Younger Vane.*

indebted to his own back and belly, and unable to pay them, yet he hath credit himself, and confidently runs on ticket with himself, hoping the next victory will discharge all scores with advantage.

Along with this we will give the concluding head of the next chapter, entitled *The Good Sea Captain*, which is very characteristic:—

He daily sees and duly considers God's wonders in the deep. — Tell me, ye naturalists, who sounded the first march and retreat to the tide. “Hither halt thou come, and no further?” Why doth not the water recover his right over the earth, being higher in nature? Whence came the salt, and who first boiled it, which made so much brine? When the winds are not only wild in a storm, but even stark mad in an hurricane, who is it that restores them again to their wits, and brings them asleep in a calm? Who made the mighty whales, which swim in a sea of water, and have a sea of oil swimming in them? Who first taught the water to imitate the creatures on land, so that the sea is the stable of horse-fishes, the stall of kine-fishes, the sty of hog-fishes, the kennel of dog-fishes, and in all things the sea the ape of the land? Whence grows the ambergris in the sea? which is not so hard to find where it is as to know what it is. Was not God the first shipwright? and all vessels on the water descended from the loins (or ribs rather) of Noah's ark? or else, who durst be so bold, with a few crooked boards nailed together, a stick standing upright, and a rag tied to it, to adventure into the ocean? What loadstone first touched the loadstone? Or how first fell it in love with the North, rather affecting that cold climate than the pleasant East, or fruitful South or West? How comes that stone to know more than men, and find the way to the land in a mist? In most of these men take sanctuary at *occulta qualitas* [some hidden quality]; and complain that the room is dark, when their eyes are blind. Indeed, they are God's wonders; and that seaman the greatest wonder of all for his blockishness, who, seeing them daily, neither takes notice of them, admires at them, nor is thankful for them.

Our last extract shall be the conclusion of his eloquent sketch of the *Life of Bishop Ridley*:—

His whole life was a letter written full of learning and religion, whereof his death was the seal. . . . Old Hugh Latimer was Ridley's partner at the stake, some time Bishop of Worcester, who crawled thither after him; one who had lost more learning than many ever had who flout at his plain sermons, though his downright style was as necessary in that age as it would be ridiculous in ours. Indeed, he condescended to people's capacity and many men unjustly count those low in learning who indeed do but stoop to their auditors. Let me see any of our sharp wits do that with

the edge, which his bluntness did with the back, of the knife, and persuade so many to restitution of ill-gotten goods. Though he came after Ridley to the stake, he got before him to heaven: his body, made tinder by age, was no sooner touched by the fire, but instantly this old Simeon had his *Nunc dimittis*, and brought the news to heaven that his brother was following after. But Ridley suffered with far more pain, the fire about him being not well made; and yet one would think that age should be skilful in making such bonfires, as being much practised in them. The gunpowder that was given him did little service; and his brother-in-law, out of desire to rid him out of pain, increased it (great grief will not give men leave to be wise with it!) heaping fuel upon him to no purpose; so that neither the faggots which his enemies' anger, nor his brother's good will, cast upon him, made the fire to burn kindly.

In like manner, not much before, his dear friend Master Hooper suffered with great torment; the wind (which too often is the bellows of great fires) blowing it away from him once or twice. Of all the Martyrs in those days, these two endured most pain; it being true that each of them *Quaerebat in ignibus ignes* — And still he did desire for fire in midst of fire; — both desiring to burn, and yet both their upper parts were but Confessors when their lower parts were Martyrs and burnt to ashes. Thus God, where he hath given the stronger faith, he layeth on the stronger pain. And so we leave them going up to heaven, like Elijah, in a chariot of fire.



FELTHAM'S RESOLVES. MICROCOSMOGRAPHY.

THIS volume of Fuller's, *The Holy and the Profane State*, may be considered as belonging to a class of books the best of which seem to have been more popular than any other works, out of the region of poetry and fiction, among our ancestors of the seventeenth century. Bacon's *Essays*, for instance, which first appeared in 1597, were reprinted in 1606, in 1612, in 1613, and in 1625, during the lifetime of the author; and after his death new editions were still more rapidly called for. Another favorite volume of this kind was the *Resolves, Divine, Moral, and Political*, of Ower Feltham, the first edition of which has the date of 1628, and of which there were reimpressions in 1631, in 1634, in 1636, in 1647, in 1661, in 1670, in 1677, and in 1696. Feltham tells us himself that a portion of his book was written when he was only eighteen

and from this statement it has been conjectured that he was probably born about 1610: he is supposed to have been still alive when the 1677 edition of his *Resolves* came out. Very little more is known of his history than that he appears to have resided for the greater part of his life in the house of the Earl of Thomond — in quality of gentleman of the horse or secretary, Oldys says, on the contemporary report of Mr. William Loughton, schoolmaster in Kensington, who was related to Feltham. The later editions of the *Resolves* are dedicated to the Countess of Thomond, a daughter of Sir George Fermor (ancestor of the Earls of Pomfret); and the author in his address states that most of them were drawn up under her roof. The work is divided into two Parts or Centuries (the last being that first written and published); and consists of a hundred and forty-six short papers or essays on moral and theological subjects. Like those of Bacon, most of Feltham's essays have a practical character or object, aiming, in Bacon's own phrase, to carry home some useful truth or maxim to the business and bosoms of their readers; they are, what Bacon expressly calls his, *Counsels, Civil and Moral*; and hence no doubt in great part the acceptance they met with. The difference of the times, however, as well as of the writers, is evidenced by the more decidedly religious spirit which leavens Feltham's book. It is the spirit which was generally prevalent in England for the quarter of a century before the breaking out of the civil war — neither High Church nor Puritan, but yet decidedly a spirit of attachment both to the essential doctrines of Christianity and to the peculiar system of the Established Church. It was a state of feeling which in more excited times would be called lukewarm; but it was sincerely opposed to all licentiousness or irregularity both of conduct and opinion, and was firmly though not passionately both moral and Christian. It was in short the sort of religious feeling natural to tranquil and tolerably prosperous times; and Feltham's work is an exact representative of its character and the extent of its views. The work therefore was fortunate in hitting the reigning taste or fashion; but it was also a work of remarkable ability, — not indeed presenting the subtle inquisition and large speculation in which the *Essays* of Bacon abound, but still full of ingenious and sagacious remarks, always clearly, sometimes strikingly, expressed. Like all writers who have ever been long popular, indeed, Feltham owed half his success to his style — to a shaping of his thoughts which set their

substance off to the best advantage, or at the very least enabled what of justness or worth was in them to be most clearly and readily apprehended. There is little or nothing, however, of poetry or picturesqueness in Feltham's writing; it is clear, manly, and sufficiently expressive, but has no peculiar raciness or felicity. Another preceding work that still more resembles Fuller's is the little volume entitled *Microcosmography, or a Piece of the World Discovered, in Essays and characters*, which in recent times has been usually ascribed to Dr. John Earle, who after the Restoration was made bishop, first of Worcester and then of Salisbury, though it does not appear upon what sufficient evidence. All that we can gather upon the point from Dr. Bliss's excellent modern edition (8vo, Lon. 1811) is, that the editor of the previous edition of 1786 states himself to have lately discovered that the work was written by Bishop Earle, "from very good authority." "I regret extremely," says Dr. Bliss, in a note, "that I am unable to put the reader in possession of this very acute discoverer's name." The work, by a mistake originating with Langbaine, in his *Dramatic Poets*, had formerly been attributed to Edward Blount, its first publisher, who was a bookseller in St. Paul's Churchyard, and also a man of letters. He was, to the honor, as Dr. Bliss observes, of his taste and judgment, one of the partners in the first edition of the plays of Shakspeare. Earle is the author of a Latin version of the *Eikon Basiliké*, published at the Hague in 1649; he is said to have also translated Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* into the same language; he appears to have had in early life a high reputation both for classic learning and skill in English verse; but, with the exception of the *Microcosmography*, his only other performances that are now known to exist are three short elegies, which Dr. Bliss has printed. He died in 1665, and was probably born about the beginning of the century. The *Microcosmography* was first printed in 1628; a second edition, "much enlarged," came out in 1629, printed for Robert Alcot, the publisher of the second (1632) folio edition of Shakspeare; the next mentioned by Dr. Bliss is a sixth, also printed for Alcot, in 1633; there was a seventh in 1638; after which the demand for the book seems to have been interrupted by the national confusions; but an eighth edition of it appeared in 1650. The style of the *Microcosmography* is much more antique and peculiar than that of Feltham's *Resolves*; and the subjects are also of more temporary interest, which may

account for its having earlier dropt into comparative neglect. It is not only highly curious, however, as a record of the manners and customs of our ancestors, but is marked by strong graphic talent, and occasionally by considerable force of satire and humor. The characters are seventy-eight in all, comprising both general divisions of men, and also many of the most remarkable among the official and other social distinctions of the time. As a specimen we will transcribe that of an Alderman, which is one of the shortest : —

He is venerable in his gown, more in his beard, wherewith he sets not forth so much his own as the face of a city. You must look on him as one of the town gates, and consider him not as a body, but a corporation. His eminency above others hath made him a man of worship, for he had never been preferred but that he was worth thousands. He oversees the commonwealth as his shop, and it is an argument of his policy that he has thriven by his craft. He is a rigorous magistrate in his ward ; yet his scale of justice is suspected, lest it be like the balances in his warehouse. A ponderous man he is, and substantial, for his weight is commonly extraordinary, and in his preferment nothing rises so much as his belly. His head is of no great depth, yet well furnished ; and, when it is in conjunction with his brethren, may bring forth a city apophthegm, or some such sage matter. He is one that will not hastily run into error ; for he treads with great deliberation, and his judgment consists much in his pace. His discourse is commonly the annals of his mayoralty, and what good government there was in the days of his gold chain, though the door-posts were the only things that suffered reformation.¹ He seems most sincerely religious, especially on solemn days ; for he comes often to church, to make a show, and is a part of the quire hangings. He is the highest stair of his profession, and an example to his trade what in time they may come to. He makes very much of his authority, but more of his satin doublet, which, though of good years, bears its age very well, and looks fresh every Sunday ; but his scarlet gown is a monument, and lasts from generation to generation.

The author of the *Microcsmography* is more decidedly or undisguisedly anti-pritanical than Feltham. One of his severest sketches is that of a She precise Hypocrite, of whom, among other hard things, he says, —

¹ "It was usual for public officers to have painted or gilded posts at their doors, on which proclamations, and other documents of that description were placed, in order to be read by the populace. . . . The *reformation* means that they were, in the language of our modern church-wardens, 'repaired and beautified' during the reign of our alderman." — *Bliss*.

She is a non-conformist in a close stomacher and ruff of Geneva print,¹ and her purity consists much in her linen . . . Her devotion at the church is much in the turning up of her eye, and turning down the leaf in her book when she hears named chapter and verse. When she comes home she commends the sermon for the Scripture and two hours. She loves preaching better than praying, and, of preachers, lecturers; and thinks the week-day's exercise far more edifying than the Sunday's. Her ofttest gossipings are Sabbath-day's journeys, where (though an enemy to superstition) she will go in pilgrimage five mile to a silenced minister, when there is a better sermon in her own parish. She doubts of the Virgin Mary's salvation, but knows her own place in heaven as perfectly as the pew she has a key to. She is so taken up with faith she has no room for charity, and understands no good works but what are wrought on the sampler. . . . She rails at other women by the names of Jezebel and Delilah; and calls her own daughters Rebecca and Abigail, and not Ann but Hannah. She suffers them not to learn on the virginals, because of their affinity with organs; but is reconciled to the bells for the chimes' sake, since they were reformed to the tune of a psalm. She overflows so with Bible, that she spills it upon every occasion, and will not cudgel her maids without Scripture. It is a question whether she is more troubled with the devil, or the devil with her: she is always challenging and daring him, and her weapon is *The Practice of Piety*. Nothing angers her so much as that women cannot preach, and in this point only [she] thinks the Brownists erroneous; but what she cannot at the church she does at the table, where she prattles more than any against sense and Antichrist, till a capon's wing silence her. She expounds the priests of Baal reading ministers, and thinks the salvation of that parish as desperate as the Turks'. She is a main derider, to her capacity, of those that are not her preachers, and censures all sermons but bad ones. . . .

Many other books of characters were published in the seven teenth century. Dr. Bliss, in an Appendix to his edition of the

¹ "Strict devotees were, I believe, noted for the smallness and precision of their ruffs, which were termed *in print*, from the exactness of the folds. . . . The term of *Geneva print* probably arose from the minuteness of the type used at Geneva. . . . It is, I think, clear that a *ruff of Geneva print* means a *small, closely-folded ruff*, which was the distinction of a non-conformist." — Bliss. The small Geneva print referred to, we apprehend, was the type used in the common copies of the Geneva translation of the Bible (Coverdale's second version, first published in 1560), which were adapted for the pocket, and were of smaller size than any other edition. This was the favorite Bible of the Puritans: and these small copies were the "little pocket Bibles, with gilt leaves," their quotations from which Selden used to hint to his brethren of the Westminster Assembly might not *always* be found exactly conformable to the original Greek or Hebrew.

Microcosmography, has enumerated and given an account of fifty-six that appeared between 1600 and 1700, besides one, Harman's Caveat for Common Cursitors, which has been reprinted in our own day, and which was first published in 1567.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

ANOTHER of the most original and peculiar writers of the middle portion of the seventeenth century is Sir Thomas Browne, the celebrated author of the *Religio Medici*, published in 1642; the *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, or *Inquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors*, in 1646; and the *Hydriotaphia, Urn Burial, or a Discourse on the Sepulchral Urns found in Norfolk*; and *The Garden of Cyrus, or the Quincuncial Lozenge, or Network Plantations of the Ancients, Artificially, Naturally, Mystically Considered*, which appeared together in 1658. Browne died in 1682, at the age of seventy-seven; but he published nothing after the Restoration, though some additional tracts found among his papers were given to the world after his death. The writer of a well-known review of Browne's literary productions, and of the characteristics of his singular genius, has sketched the history of his successive acts of authorship in a lively and striking passage: — "He had no sympathy with the great business of men. In that awful year when Charles I. went in person to seize five members of the Commons' House, — when the streets resounded with shouts of 'Privilege of Parliament,' and the king's coach was assailed by the prophetic cry, 'To your tents, O Israel,' — in that year, in fact, when the civil war first broke out, and when most men of literary power were drawn by the excitement of the crisis into patriotic controversy on either side, — appeared the calm and meditative reveries of the *Religio Medici*. The war raged on. It was a struggle between all the elements of government. England was torn by convulsion and red with blood. But Browne was tranquilly preparing his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*; as if errors about basilisks and griffins were the paramount and fatal epidemic of the time; and it was published in due order in that year when the cause which the author advocated, as far as he could advocate anything political, lay

at its last gasp. The king dies on the scaffold. The Protectorate succeeds. Men are again fighting on paper the solemn cause already decided in the field. Drawn from visions more sublime, — forsaking studies more intricate and vast than those of the poetical Sage of Norwich, — diverging from a career bounded by the most splendid goal, — foremost in the ranks shines the flaming sword of Milton: Sir Thomas Browne is lost in the quineux of the ancient gardens; and the year 1658 beheld the death of Oliver Cromwell, and the publication of the *Hydriotaphia*.”¹ The writings of Sir Thomas Browne, to be relished or rightly appreciated, must of course be read in the spirit suited to the species of literature to which they belong. If we look for matter-of-fact information in a poem, we are likely to be disappointed; and so are we likewise, if we go for the passionate or pictured style of poetry to an encyclopædia. Browne’s works, with all their varied learning, contain very little positive information that can now be accounted of much value; very little even of direct moral or economical counsel by which any person could greatly profit; very little, in short, of anything that will either put money in a man’s pocket, or actual knowledge in his head. Assuredly the interest with which they were perused, and the charm that was found to belong to them, could not at any time have been due, except in very small part indeed, to the estimation in which their readers held such pieces of intelligence as that the phœnix is but a fable of the poets, and that the griffin exists only in the zoölogy of the heralds. It would fare ill with Browne if the worth of his books were to be tried by the amount of what they contain of this kind of information, or, indeed, of any other kind of what is commonly called useful knowledge; for, in truth, he has done his best to diffuse a good many vulgar errors as monstrous as any he had corrected. For that matter, if his readers were to continue to believe with him in astrology and witchcraft, we shall all agree that it was of very little consequence what faith they may hold touching the phœnix and the griffin. Mr. Hallam, we think, has, in a manner which is not usual with him, fallen somewhat into this error of applying a false test in the judgment he has passed upon Browne. It is, no doubt, quite true that the *Inquiry into Vulgar Errors* “scarcely raises a high notion of Browne himself as a philosopher, or of the state of

¹ Article in *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1836; No. 129, p. 34. (Understood to be by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.)

physical knowledge in England ;”¹ that the *Religio Medici* shows its author to have been “far removed from real philosophy, both by his turn of mind and by the nature of his erudition ;” and likewise that “he seldom reasons,” that “his thoughts are desultory,” that “sometimes he appears sceptical or paradoxical,” but that “credulity and deference to authority prevail” in his habits of thinking.² Understanding *philosophy* in the sense in which the term is here used, that is to say, as meaning the sifting and separation of fact from fiction, it may be admitted that there is not much of that in Sir Thomas Browne ; his works are all rather marked by a very curious and piquant intermixture of the two. Of course, such being the case, what he writes is not to be considered solely or even principally with reference to its absolute truth or falsehood, but rather with reference to its relative truth and significance as an expression of some feeling or notion or other idiosyncrasy of the very singular and interesting mind from which it has proceeded. Read in this spirit, the works of Sir Thomas Browne, more especially his *Religio Medici*, and his *Urn Burial*, will be found among the richest in our literature — full of uncommon thoughts, and trains of meditation leading far away into the dimmest inner chambers of life and death — and also of an eloquence, sometimes fantastic, but always striking, not seldom pathetic, and in its greatest passages gorgeous with the emblazonry of a warm imagination. Out of such a writer the rightly attuned and sympathizing mind will draw many things more precious than any mere facts.



SIR JAMES HARRINGTON.

WE can merely mention Sir James Harrington’s political romance entitled *Oceana*, which was published in 1656. Harrington’s leading principles are, that the natural element of power in states is property ; and that, of all kinds of property, that in land is the most important, possessing, indeed, certain characteristics which distinguish it, in its natural and political action, from all other property. “In general,” observes Mr. Hallam, “it may be said of Harrington that he is prolix, dull, pedantic, yet seldom

¹ Lit. of Eur. iii. 461.

² Id. iii. 153.

profound ; but sometimes redeems himself by just observations.”¹ This is true in so far as respects the style of the *Oceana* ; but it hardly does justice to the ingenuity, the truth, and the importance of certain of Harrington’s views and deductions in the philosophy of politics. If he has not the merit of absolute originality in his main propositions, they had at least never been so clearly expounded and demonstrated by any preceding writer.

NEWSPAPERS.

It has now been satisfactorily shown that the three newspapers, entitled *The English Mercurie*, Nos. 50, 51, and 54, preserved among Dr. Birch’s historical collections in the British Museum, professing to be “published by authority, for the contradiction of false reports,” at the time of the attack of the Spanish Armada, on the credit of which the invention of newspapers used to be attributed to Lord Burleigh, are modern forgeries, — *jeux d’esprit*, in fact, of the reverend Doctor.² Occasional pamphlets, containing foreign news, began to be published in England towards the close of the reign of James I. The earliest that has been met with is entitled *News out of Holland*, dated 1619 ; and other similar papers of news from different foreign countries are extant which appeared in 1620, 1621, and 1622. The first of these news-pamphlets which came out at regular intervals appears to have been that entitled *The News of the Present Week*, edited by Nathaniel Butler, which was started in 1622, in the early days of the Thirty Years’ War, and was continued, in conformity with its title, as a weekly publication. But the proper era of English newspapers, at least of those containing domestic intelligence, commences with the Long Parliament. The earliest that has been discovered is a quarto pamphlet of a few leaves, entitled *The Diurnal Occurrences, or Daily Proceedings of Both Houses*, in this great and happy parliament, from the 3d of November, 1640, to the 3d of November, 1641 ; London, printed for William Cooke, and are to be sold at his shop at Furnival’s Inn Gate, in

¹ *Lit. of Eur.* iv. 200.

² See *A Letter to Antonio Panizzi, Esq.* By Thomas Watts, of the British Museum. 8vo, Lond. 1839.

Holborn, 1641.¹ More than a hundred newspapers, with different titles, appear to have been published between this date and the death of the king, and upwards of eighty others between that event and the Restoration.² "When hostilities commenced," says the writer from whom we derive this information, "every event, during a most eventful period, had its own historian, who communicated *News from Hull, Truths from York, Warranted Tidings from Ireland,* and *Special Passages from several places.* These were all occasional papers. Impatient, however, as a distracted people were for information, the news were never distributed daily. The various newspapers were published weekly at first; but in the progress of events, and the ardor of curiosity, they were distributed twice or thrice in every week.³ Such were the French Intelligencer, the Dutch Spy, the Irish Mercury, and the Scots Dove, the Parliament Kite, and the Secret Owl. *Mercurius Acheronticus* brought them hebdomadal *News from Hell*; *Mercurius Democritus* communicated wonderful news from the World in the Moon; the *Laughing Mercury* gave perfect news from the Antipodes; and *Mercurius Mastix* faithfully lashed all Scouts, Mercuries, Posts, Spies, and other Intelligencers."⁴ Besides the newspapers, also, the great political and religious questions of the time were debated, as already mentioned, in a prodigious multitude of separate pamphlets, which appear to have been read quite as universally and as eagerly. Of such pamphlets printed in the twenty years from the meeting of the Long Parliament to the Restoration there are still preserved in the British Museum, forming the collection called the King's Pamphlets, no fewer than thirty thousand, which would give a rate of four or five new ones every day.

Where our modern newspapers begin, the series of our old chroniclers closes with Sir Richard Baker's Chronicle of the Kings of England, written while its author was confined for debt in the Fleet Prison, where he died in 1645, and first published in a folio volume in 1641. It was several times reprinted, and was a great favorite with our ancestors for two or three succeeding generations,

¹ See Chronological List of Newspapers from the Epoch of the Civil Wars, in Chalmers's Life of Ruddiman, pp. 404-442.

² See Chalmers's Life of Ruddiman, p. 114.

³ In December, 1642, however, Spalding, the Aberdeen annalist, in a passage which Mr. Chalmers has quoted, tells us that "now printed papers daily came from London, called *Diurnal Occurrences*, declaring what is done in parliament." — Vol. i p. 336

⁴ Chalmers, p. 116.

but it has now lost all interest, except for a few passages relating to the author's own time. Baker, however, himself declares it to be compiled "with so great care and diligence, that, if all others were lost, this only will be sufficient to inform posterity of all passages memorable or worthy to be known." Sir Richard and his Chronicle are now popularly remembered principally as the trusted historical guides and authorities of Addison's incomparable *Sir Roger de Coverley*.¹

CLASSICAL LEARNING.

ALMOST the only great work in the department of ancient scholarship that appeared in England in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. was the magnificent edition of Chrysostom, in eight volumes folio, by Sir Henry Savile, printed at Eton, where Savile was Provost of the College, in 1612. "The Greek language, however," observes Mr. Hallam, "was now much studied; the age of James and Charles was truly learned; our writers are prodigal of an abundant erudition, which embraces a far wider range of authors than are now read; the philosophers of every class, the poets, the historians, and orators of Greece, to whom few comparatively had paid regard in the days of Elizabeth, seem as familiar to the miscellaneous writers of her next successors as the fathers of the church are to the theologians. A few, like Jeremy Taylor, are equally copious in their libations from both streams. But, though thus deeply read in ancient learning, our old scholars are not very critical in philology."² The glory of English erudition in the days of the Commonwealth, though of erudition formed in the preceding age, and by men all attached to the cause upon the ruin of which the Commonwealth was reared, is the Polyglott Bible, commonly called the London Polyglott, edited by Brian Walton, in six volumes folio, the first of which appeared in 1654, the second in 1655, the third in 1656, and the three last in 1657. In this great work, which, taken altogether, including the *Lexicon Heptaglotton* of Dr. Edmund Castell, added, in two volumes folio, in 1669, still remains without a rival, the Scriptures are given, entirely or partially, in nine different languages, namely, Hebrew,

¹ See *Spectator*, No. 329.

² *Lit. of Eur.* ii. 376.

Chaldee, Samaritan, Syrian, Arabic, Persian, Ethiopic, Greek, and Latin. Walton was, upon the Restoration, made Bishop of Chester, but he died in 1661. To the works written by English men in the Latin language before the Restoration are also to be added, besides the splendid *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* and *Defensio Secunda* of Milton, which have been already mentioned, the *De Primordiis Ecclesiarum Britannicarum* (afterwards entitled *Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates*), 1639, and the *Annales Utriusque Testamenti*, 1650 and 1654, of the learned Archbishop Usher.



RETROSPECT OF THE COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE.

IT thus appears that the age of the Civil War and the Commonwealth does not present an absolute blank in the history of our highest literature; but, unless we are to except the *Areopagitica* of Milton, the *Liberty of Prophesying*, and a few other controversial or theological treatises of Jeremy Taylor, some publications by Fuller, and the successive apocalypses of the imperturbable dreamer of Norwich, no work of genius of the first class appeared in England in the twenty years from the meeting of the Long Parliament to the Restoration; and the literary productions having any enduring life in them at all, that are to be assigned to that space, make but a very scanty sprinkling. It was a time when men wrote and thought, as they acted, merely for the passing moment. The unprinted plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, indeed, were now sent to the press, as well as other dramatic works written in the last age; the theatres, by which they used to be published in another way, being shut up, — a significant intimation, rather than anything else, that the great age of the drama was at an end. A new play continued to drop occasionally from the commonplace pen of Shirley — almost the solitary successor of the Shakspeares, the Fletchers, the Jonsons, the Massingers, the Fords, and the rest of that bright throng. All other poetry, as well as dramatic poetry, was nearly silent, — hushed partly by the din of arms and of theological and political strife, more by the frown of triumphant puritanism, boasting to itself that it had put down all the other fine arts as well as poetry, never again to lift their heads in England.

It is observable that even the confusion of the contest that lasted till after the king's death did not so completely banish the muses or drown their voice, as did the grim tranquillity under the sway of the parliament that followed. The time of the war, besides the treatises just alluded to of Milton, Taylor, Fuller, and Browne, produced the Cooper's Hill, and some other poetical pieces, by Denham, and the republication of the *Comus* and other early poems of Milton; the collection of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, and Cowley's volume entitled *The Mistress*, appeared in 1647, in the short interval of doubtful quiet between the first and the second war; the volume of Herrick's poetry was published the next year, while the second war was still raging, or immediately after its close; Lovelace's first volume, in 1649, probably before the execution of the king. Hobbes's *Leviathan*, and one or two other treatises of his, all written some time before, were printed at London in 1650 and 1651, while the author was resident in Paris. For some years from this date the blank is nearly absolute. Then, when the more liberal despotism of Cromwell had displaced the Presbyterian moroseness of the parliament, we have Fuller's *Church History*, printed in 1655; Harrington's *Oceana*, and the collection of Cowley's poetry, in 1656; Browne's *Hydriothaphia* and *Garden of Cyrus*, in 1658; Lovelace's second volume, and Hales's *Remains*, in 1659; together with two or three philosophical publications by Hobbes, and a few short pieces in verse by Waller, of which the most famous is his *Panegyric on Oliver Cromwell*, written after the Protector's death, an occasion which also afforded its first considerable theme to the ripening genius of Dryden. It is to be noted, moreover, that, with one illustrious exception, none of the writers that have been named belonged to the prevailing faction. If Waller and Dryden took that side in their verses for a moment, it must be admitted that they both amply made up for their brief conformity; Denham, Browne, Taylor, Herrick, Lovelace, Fuller, Hales, Hobbes, Cowley, were all consistent, most of them ardent, royalists; Harrington was a theoretical republican, but even he was a royalist by personal attachments; Milton alone was in life and heart a Commonwealth-man and a Cromwellian.

POETRY OF MILTON.

FROM the appearance of his minor poems, in 1645, Milton had published no poetry, with the exception of a sonnet to Henry Lawes, the musician, prefixed to a collection of Psalm tunes by that composer in 1648, till he gave to the world his *Paradise Lost*, in Ten Books, in 1667. In 1671 appeared his *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*; in 1673 a new edition of his minor poems, with nine new sonnets and other additions; and in 1674, what is properly the second edition of the *Paradise Lost*, now distributed (by the bisection of the seventh and tenth) into twelve books. He died on Sunday the 8th of November, in that year, when within about a month of completing the sixty-sixth year of his age. His prose writings have been already noticed. Verse, however, was the form in which his genius had earliest expressed itself, and also that in which he had first come forth as an author. Passing over his paraphrases of one or two Psalms, done at a still earlier age, we have abundant promise of the future great poet in his lines *On the Death of a Fair Infant*, beginning,

O fairest flower, no sooner blown but blasted,

written in his seventeenth year; and still more in the *College Exercise*, written in his nineteenth year. A portion of this latter is almost as prophetic as it is beautiful; and, as the verses have not been much noticed,¹ we will here give a few of them:—

Hail, native Language, that by sinews weak
 Didst move my first endeavouring tongue to speak,
 And mad'st imperfect words with childish trips,
 Half-unpronounced, slide through my infant lips:

.

I have some naked thoughts that rove about,
 And loudly knock to have their passage out;
 And, weary of their place, do only stay
 Till thou hast deck'd them in their best array.

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¹ Mr. Hallam, in his work on the *Literature of Europe* (iii. 269), inadvertently assumes that we have no English verse of Milton's written before his twenty-second year.

Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,
 Thy service in some graver subject use,
 Such as may make thee search thy coffers round,
 Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound ;
 Such where the deep transported mind may soar
 Above the wheeling poles, and at heaven's door
 Look in, and see each blissful deity
 How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
 Listening to what unshorn Apollo sings
 To the touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings
 Immortal nectar to her kingly sire :
 Then, passing through the spheres of watchful fire,
 And misty regions of wide air next under,
 And hills of snow, and lofts of piled thunder,
 May tell at length how green-eyed Neptune raves,
 In heaven's defiance mustering all his waves ;
 Then sing of secret things that came to pass
 When beldame Nature in her cradle was ;
 And last of kings, and queens, and heroes old,
 Such as the wise Demodocus once told
 In solemn songs at King Alcinous' feast,
 While sad Ulysses' soul and all the rest
 Are held with his melodious harmony
 In willing chains and sweet captivity.

This was written in 1627. Fourteen years later, after his return from Italy, where some of his juvenile Latin compositions, and some others in the same language, which, as he tells us, he "had shifted in scarcity of books and conveniences to patch up amongst them, were received with written encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps ;" and when assenting in so far to these commendations, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon him, he had ventured to indulge the hope that, by labor and study, — "which I take," he nobly says, "to be my portion in this life," — joined with the strong propensity of nature, he "might perhaps leave something so written in after-times as they should not willingly let it die," — he continued still inclined to fix all the industry and art he could unite to the adorning of his native tongue, — or, as he goes on to say, "to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things among mine own citizens, throughout this island, in the mother-dialect ; — that what the greatest and choicest wits of

Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above of being a Christian, might do for mine; not caring to be once named abroad, though perhaps I could attain to that, but content with these British islands as my world;" and he again, more distinctly than before, though still only in general expressions, announced the great design, "of highest hope and hardest attempting," which he proposed to himself one day to accomplish, — whether in the epic form, as exemplified by Homer, Virgil, and Tasso, or after the dramatic, "wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign," — or in the style of "those magnificent odes and hymns" of Pindarus and Callimachus; not forgetting that of all these kinds of writing the highest models are to be found in the Holy Scriptures — in the Book of Job, in the Song of Solomon and the Apocalypse of St. John, in the frequent songs interspersed throughout the Law and the Prophets. "The thing which I had to say," concluded this remarkable announcement, "and those intentions which have lived within me ever since I could conceive myself anything worth to my country, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath plucked from me by an abortive and foredated discovery. And the accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above man's to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend; and that the land had once enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of prelaty, under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical duncery no free and splendid wit can flourish. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted; as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame Memory and her Siren daughters; but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs. Till which in some measure be accom

plished, at mine own peril and cost I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard as much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them.”¹

Before this, there had appeared in print of Milton's poetry only his *Comus* and *Lycidas*; the former in 1637, the latter with some other Cambridge verses on the same occasion, — the loss at sea of his friend Edward King, in 1638; but, besides some of his sonnets and other minor pieces, he had also written the fragment entitled *Arcades*, and the two companion poems the *L'Allegro* and the *Il Penseroso*. These productions already attested the worthy successor of the greatest writers of English verse in the preceding age. — recalling the fancy and the melody of the minor poems of Spenser and Shakspeare, and of the *Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher. The *Comus*, indeed, might be considered as an avowed imitation of the last-mentioned production. The resemblance in poetical character between the two sylvan dramas of Fletcher and Milton is very close; and they may be said to stand apart from all else in our literature, — for Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd* is not for a moment to be compared with either, and in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakspeare, ever creative, passionate, and dramatic beyond all other writers, has soared so high above both, whether we look to the supernatural part of his fable or to its scenes of human interest, that we are little reminded of his peopled woodlands, his fairies, his lovers, or his glorious “rude mechanicals,” either by the *Faithful Shepherdess* or the *Comus*. Of these two compositions, Milton's must be admitted to have the higher moral inspiration, and it is also the more elaborate and exact as a piece of writing; but in all that goes to make up dramatic effect, in the involvement and conduct of the story, and in the eloquence of natural feeling, Fletcher's is decidedly superior. It has been remarked that even in Shakspeare's early narrative poems — his *Venus and Adonis*, and his *Tarquin and Lucrece* — we may discern the future great dramatist by the full and unwithholding abandonment with which he there projects himself into whatever character he brings forward, and the power of vivid conception with which he realizes the visionary scene, and brings it around him almost in the distinctness of broad daylight, as shown by a peculiar directness and life of expression evidently coming everywhere unsought, and

¹ The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty (published in 1641).

escaping from his pen, one might almost say without his own consciousness, — without apparently any feeling, at least, of either art exercised or feat achieved.¹ In the case of Milton, on the contrary, his first published poem and earliest poetical attempt of any considerable extent, although in the dramatic form, affords abundant evidence that his genius was not dramatic. *Comus* is an exquisitely beautiful poem, but nearly destitute of everything we more especially look for in a drama — of passion, of character, of story, of action or movement of any kind. It flows on in a continued stream of eloquence, fancy, and most melodious versification; but there is no dialogue, properly so called, no replication of diverse emotions or natures; it is Milton alone who sings or declaims all the while, sometimes of course on one side of the argument, sometimes on the other, and not, it may be, without changing his attitude and the tone of his voice, but still speaking only from one head, from one heart, from one ever-present and ever-dominant constitution of being. And from this imprisonment within himself Milton never escapes, either in his dramatic or in his other poetry; it is the characteristic which distinguishes him not only from our great dramatists, but also from other great epic and narrative poets. His poetry has been sometimes described as to an unusual degree wanting in the expression of his own personal feelings; and, notwithstanding some remarkable instances of exception, not only in his minor pieces, but in his great epic, the remark is true in a certain sense. He is no habitual brooder over his own emotions, no self-dissector, no systematic resorter for inspiration to the accidents of his own personal history. His subject in some degree forbade this; his proud and lofty nature still more withheld him from it. But, although disdaining thus to picture himself at full length either for our pity or admiration, he has yet impressed the stamp of his own individuality — of his own character, moral as well as intellectual — as deep on all he has written as if his theme had been ever so directly himself. Compare him in this respect with Homer. We scarcely conceive of the old Greek poet as having a sentient existence at all, any more than we do of the sea or the breezes of heaven, whose music his continuous, undulating verse, ever various, ever the same, resembles. Who in the delineation of the wrath of Achilles finds a trace of the temper or character of the delineator? Who in Milton's Satan does not recognize

¹ See this illustrated in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, vol. ii.

much of Milton himself? But, although the spirit of his poetry is thus essentially egotistic, the range of his poetic power is not thereby confined within narrow limits. He had not the "myriad-minded" nature of Shakspeare — the all-penetrating sympathy by which the greatest of dramatists could transform himself for the time into any one of the other existences around him, no matter how high, no matter how low: conceive the haughty genius of Milton employed in the task of developing such a character as Justice Shallow, or Bottom the weaver, or a score of others to be found in the long, various, brilliant procession headed by Falstaff and ending with Dogberry! Anything of this kind he could scarcely have performed much better than the most ordinarily gifted of the sons of men; he had no more the wit or humor requisite for it than he had the power of intense and universal sympathy. But his proper region was still a vast one; and there, his vision, though always tinged with the color of his own passions and opinions, was, notwithstanding, both as far-reaching and as searching as any poet's ever was. In its style or form his poetry may be considered to belong rudimentally to the same Italian school with that of the greatest of his predecessors, — of Spenser and of Shakspeare, if not also of Chaucer. But, as of these others, so it is true of him, that the inspiration of his Italian models is most perceptible in his earlier and minor verses, and that in his more mature and higher efforts he enriched this original basis of his poetic manner with so much of a different character, partly derived from other foreign sources, partly peculiar to himself, that the mode of conception and expression which he ultimately thus worked out is most correctly described by calling it his own. Conversant as he was with the language and literature of Italy, his poetry probably acquired what it has of Italian in its character principally through the medium of the elder poets of his own country; and it is, accordingly, still more English than Italian. Much of its inner spirit, and something also of its outward fashion, is of Hebrew derivation: it may be affirmed that from the fountain of no other foreign literature did Milton drink with so much eagerness as from this, and that by no other was his genius so much nourished and strengthened. Not a little, also, one so accomplished in the lore of classic antiquity must needs have acquired from that source; the tones of the poetry of Greece and Rome are heard more or less audibly everywhere in that of the great epic poet of England. But do we go too far in

holding that in what he has actually achieved in his proper domain the modern writer rises high "above all Greek, above all Roman fame?" Where in the poetry of the ancient world shall we find anything which approaches the richness and beauty, still less the sublimity, of the most triumphant passages in *Paradise Lost*? The First Book of that poem is probably the most splendid and perfect of human compositions, — the one, that is to say, which unites these two qualities in the highest degree; and the Fourth is as unsurpassed for grace and luxuriance as that is for magnificence of imagination. And, though these are perhaps the two greatest books in the poem, taken each as a whole, there are passages in every one of the other books equal or almost equal to the finest in these. And worthy of the thoughts that breathe are the words that burn. A tide of gorgeous eloquence rolls on from beginning to end, like a river of molten gold: outblazing, we may surely say, everything of the kind in any other poetry. Finally, Milton's blank verse, both for its rich and varied music and its exquisite adaptation, would in itself almost deserve to be styled poetry, without the words; alone of all our poets, before or since, he has brought out the full capabilities of the language in that form of composition. Indeed, out of the drama, he is still our only great blank verse writer. Compared to his, the blank verse of no other of our narrative or didactic poets, unless we are to except a few of the happiest attempts at the direct imitation of his pauses and cadences, reads like anything else than a sort of muffled rhyme — rhyme spoiled by the ends being blunted or broken off. Who remembers, who can repeat, any narrative blank verse but his? In whose ear does any other linger? What other has the true organ tone which makes the music of this form of verse — either the grandeur or the sweetness?

It is natural, in comparing, or contrasting, Milton's *Paradise Lost* with his *Paradise Regained*, to think of the two great Homeric epics: the *Iliad* commonly believed by antiquity to have proceeded from the inspired poet in the vigor and glow of his manhood or middle age, the *Odyssey* to reflect the milder radiance of his imagination in the afternoon or evening of his life. It has been common accordingly to apply to the case of the English poet also the famous similitude of Longinus, and to say that in the *Paradise Regained* we have the sun on his descent, the same indeed as ever in majesty (τὸ μέγεθός), but deprived of his overpow-

ering ardor (δίχα τῆς σφοδρότητος). Some have gone farther, not claiming for the *Paradise Regained* the honor of being sunshine at all, but only holding it worthy of being applauded in the spirit and after the fashion in which Pope has eulogized the gracious though not dazzling qualities of his friend Martha Blount:—

So, when the sun's broad beam has tired the sight,
All mild ascends the moon's more sober light;
Serene in virgin modesty she shines,
And unobserved the glaring orb declines.

An ingenious theory has been put forth by one of the editors of the *Paradise Regained*, Mr. Charles Dunster; he conceives that Milton designed this poem for an example of what he has himself in the remarkable passage of his *Reason of Church Government*, to which we have already had occasion to refer, spoken of as the *brief epic*, and distinguished from the *great and diffuse epic*, such as those of Homer and of Virgil, and his own *Paradise Lost*. Milton's words in full are:—“Time serves not now, and, perhaps, I might seem too profuse, to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting; whether that epic form, whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso, are a diffuse, and the book of Job a brief, model.” Dunster accordingly thinks that we may suppose the model which Milton set before him in his *Paradise Regained* to have been in a great measure the book of Job.¹

But surely the comparison which the companionship or sequence of the two Miltonic epics most forcibly suggests to a true feeling of both their resemblance and their difference, and of the prevailing spirit that animates each, is that of the Old and the New Testament. The one is distinctively Hebrew, the other as distinctively Christian. With much in common, they have also, like the two religions, and the two collections of sacred books, much in which they are unlike, and in a certain sense opposed to one another, both in manner and in sentiment. The poetry of the *Paradise Lost*, all life and movement, is to that of the *Paradise Regained* what a conflagration is to a sunlit landscape. In the one we have the grandeur of the old worship, in the other the simplicity of the

¹ *Paradise Regained*; with notes. By Charles Dunster, M. A. 4to, Lond. 1795 p. 2.

new. The one addresses itself more to the sense, the other to the understanding. In respect either of force or of variety, either of intense and burning passion or of imaginative power mingling and blending all the wonders of brightness and gloom, there can be no comparison between them. There is the same poetic art, it is true, in both poems; they are more unmistakably products of the same mind, perhaps, than are the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; and yet the difference between them in tone and character is greater than that between the two Greek epics. It is in some respects like the difference between an oil-painting and a painting in water-colors. The mere brevity of the one as compared with the other would stamp it as a work of inferior pretension, and it is still more limited in subject or scope than it is in dimensions. The *Paradise Regained* must be considered, in fact, as only an appendage to the *Paradise Lost*. Yet, comparatively short as it is, the thread of the narrative is felt to be spun out and over-much attenuated. It contains some highly finished and exquisite passages; but perhaps the only poetical quality in which it can be held to match, if it does not sometimes even surpass, the *Paradise Lost*, is picturesqueness. In that it more resembles the *L'Allegro* and the *Il Penseroso* than it does its companion epic. Even the argumentative eloquence, of which it is chiefly made up, brilliant as it is, is far from being equal to the best of that in the *Paradise Lost*. It has the same ingenuity and logic, with as much, or perhaps even more, concentration in the expression; but, unavoidably, it may be, from the circumstances of the case, it has not either the same glow and splendor or even the same tone of real feeling. The fallen spirits thronging Pandemonium, or stretched on the burning lake before that gorgeous pile "rose like an exhalation," consult and debate, in their misery and anxious perplexity, with an accent of human earnestness which it was impossible to give either to the conscious sophistry of their chief in that other scene or to the wisdom more than human by which he is refuted and repelled.

It is commonly said that Milton himself professed to prefer the *Paradise Regained* to the *Paradise Lost*. The probability is that, if he asserted the former to be the better poem of the two, it was only in a qualified sense, or with reference to something else than its poetical merits, and in the same feeling with which he explained the general prevalence of the opposite opinion by attributing it to most people having a much stronger feeling of regret for the loss

of Paradise than desire for the recovery of it, or at least inclination for the only way in which it was to be recovered. It was very characteristic of him, however, to be best pleased with what he had last produced, as well as to be only confirmed in his partiality by having the general voice against him and by his contempt for what of extravagance and injustice there was in the popular depreciation of the new poem. He was in all things by temper and mental constitution essentially a partisan; seeing clearly, indeed, all that was to be said on both sides of any question, but never for all that remaining in suspense between them, or hesitating to make up his mind and to take his place distinctly on one side. This is shown by the whole course of his life. Nor is it less expressively proclaimed not only by the whole tone and manner of his poetry, everywhere so ardent, impetuous, and dogmatical, and so free from the faintest breath either of suspicion or of any kind of self-distrust, but even in that argumentative eloquence which is one of its most remarkable characteristics. For one of the chief necessary conditions of the existence of oratorical or debating power, and, indeed, of every kind of fighting ability, is that it should, at one and the same time, both feel passionately in favor of its own side of the question and discern clearly the strength of the adverse position. Whatever may be the fact as to his alleged preference of the *Paradise Regained* to the *Paradise Lost*, Milton has, at any rate, pronounced judgment in a sufficiently decisive and uncompromising way upon another point in regard to which both these works stand contrasted with much of his earlier poetry. We refer to his vehement denunciation, in a notice prefixed to the *Paradise Lost*,¹ of rhyme as being, in all circumstances, for he makes no exception, "a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight," and as having no claim to be regarded as anything else than the barbarous invention of a barbarous age, and a mere jingle and life-repressing bondage. We certainly rejoice that the *Paradise Lost* is not written in rhyme; but we are very glad that these strong views were not taken up by the great poet till after he had produced his *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, his *Lycidas* and his *Sonnets*.

¹ This notice, commonly headed *The Verse* in modern editions of the poem, is found in three of the five various forms of the first edition (1667, 1668, and 1669), and there bears the superscription *The Printer to the Reader*; but there can be no doubt that it is Milton's own.

COWLEY.

THE poetry of Milton, though principally produced after the Restoration, belongs in everything but in date to the preceding age; and this is also nearly as true of that of Cowley. Abraham Cowley, born in London in 1618, published his first volume of verse, under the title of *Poetic Blossoms*, in 1633, when he was yet only a boy of fifteen: one piece contained in this publication, indeed, — *The Tragical History of Pyramus and Thisbe*, — was written when he was only in his tenth year. The four books of his unfinished epic entitled *Davideis* were mostly written while he was a student at Trinity College, Cambridge. His pastoral drama of *Love's Riddle*, and his Latin comedy called *Naufragium Jocularis*, were both published in 1638. In 1647 appeared his collection of amatory poems entitled *The Mistress*, and in 1653 his comedy of *The Guardian*, afterwards altered, and republished as *The Cutter of Coleman Street*. After the Restoration he collected such of his pieces as he thought worth preserving, and republished them, together with some additional productions, of which the most important were his *Davideis*, and his *Pindarique Odes*.

Few poets have been more popular, or more praised, in their own time than Cowley. Milton is said to have declared that the three greatest English poets were Spenser, Shakspeare, and Cowley; though it does not follow that he held all three to be equally great. Sir John Denham, in some verses on Cowley's Death and Burial amongst the Ancient Poets in Westminster Abbey, sets him above all the English poets that had gone before him, and prophecies that posterity will hold him to have been equalled by Virgil alone among those of antiquity. For a long time, too, his works appear to have been more generally read than those of any other English poet, if a judgment may be formed from the frequency with which they were reprinted, and the numerous copies of them in various forms that still exist.¹ This popular favor they seem to have shared with those of Donne, whose legitimate successor Cowley was considered to be; or, rather, when the poetry of Donne became obsolete or unfashionable, that of Cowley took its place in

¹ A twelfth edition of the collection formed by Cowley himself was published by Tonson in 1721.

the reading and admiration of the poetical part of the public. Cowley, indeed, is in the main a mere modernization and dilution of Donne. With the same general characteristics of manner, he is somewhat less forced and fantastical, a good deal less daring in every way, but unfortunately also infinitely less poetical. Everything about him, in short, is less deep, strong, and genuine. His imagination is tinsel, or mere surface gilding, compared to Donne's solid gold; his wit little better than word-catching, to the profound meditative quaintness of the elder poet; and of passion, with which all Donne's finest lines are tremulous, Cowley has none. Considerable grace and dignity occasionally distinguish his Pindaric Odes (which, however, are Pindaric only in name); and he has shown much elegant playfulness of style and fancy in his translations from and imitations of Anacreon, and in some other verses written in the same manner. As for what he intends for love-verses, some of them are pretty enough frost-work; but the only sort of love there is in them is the love of point and sparkle.



BUTLER.

THIS manner of writing is more fitly applied by another celebrated poet of the same date, Samuel Butler, the immortal author of *Hudibras*. Butler, born in 1612, is said to have written most of his great poem during the interregnum; but the first part of it was not published till 1663. The poetry of Butler has been very happily designated as merely the comedy of that style of composition which Donne and Cowley practised in its more serious form, — the difference between the two modes of writing being much the same with that which is presented by a countenance of a peculiar cast of features when solemnized by deep reflection, and the same countenance when lighted up by cheerfulness or distorted by mirth.¹ And it may be added, that the gayer and more animated expression is here, upon the whole, the more natural. The quantity of explosive matter of all kinds which Butler has contrived to pack up in his verses is amazing; it is crack upon crack, flash upon flash, from the first line of his long poem to the last. Much of

¹ Scott, in *Life of Dryden*.

this incessant bedazzlement is, of course, merely verbal, or otherwise of the humblest species of wit ; but an infinite number of the happiest things are also thrown out. And Hudibras is far from being all mere broad farce. Butler's power of arguing in verse, in his own way, may almost be put on a par with Dryden's in his ; and, perseveringly as he devotes himself upon system to the exhibition of the ludicrous and grotesque, he sometimes surprises us with a sudden gleam of the truest beauty of thought and expression breaking out from the midst of the usual rattling fire of smartnesses and conundrums, — as when in one place he exclaims of a thin cloud drawn over the moon —

Mysterious veil ; of brightness made,
At once her lustre and her shade !

He must also be allowed to tell his story and to draw his characters well, independently of his criticisms.



WALLER.

THE most celebrated among the minor poets of the period between the Restoration and the Revolution was Waller. Edmund Waller, born in 1605, had, as already noticed, announced himself as a writer of verse before the close of the reign of James I., by his lines on the escape of Prince Charles at the port of San Andero, in the Bay of Biscay, on his return from Spain, in September, 1623 ; and he continued to write till after the accession of James II., in whose reign he died, in the year 1687. His last production was the little poem concluding with one of his happiest, one of his most characteristic, and one of his best-known passages : —

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.

Fenton, his editor, tells us that a number of poems on religious

subjects, to which these verses refer, were mostly written when he was about [above] eighty years old ; and he has himself intimated that his bodily faculties were now almost gone : —

When we for age could neither read nor write,
The subject made us able to indite.

Waller, therefore, as well as Milton, Cowley, and Butler, may be considered to have formed his manner in the last age ; but his poetry does not belong to the old English school even so much as that of either Butler or Cowley. The contemporaries of the earlier portion of his long career were Carew and Lovelace ; and with them he is properly to be classed in respect of poetical style and manner. Both Lovelace and Carew, however, as has been already intimated, have more passion than Waller, who, with all his taste and elegance, was incapable of either expressing or feeling anything very lofty or generous, — being, in truth, poet as he was, a very mean-souled description of person, as his despicable political course sufficiently evinced.¹ His poetry accordingly is beyond the reach of critical animadversion on the score of such extravagance as is sometimes prompted by strong emotion. Waller is always perfectly master of himself, and idolizes his mistress with quite as much coolness and self-possession as he flatters his prince. But, although cold and unaffecting at all times, he occasionally rises to much dignity of thought and manner. His panegyric on Cromwell, the offering of his gratitude to the Protector for the permission granted to him of returning to England after ten years' exile, is one of the most graceful pieces of adulation ever offered by poetry to power ; and the poet is here probably more sincere than in most of his effusions, for the occasion was one on which he was likely to be moved to more than usual earnestness of feeling.

¹ The story of what was called Waller's plot, which exploded in May, 1643, is well known. Some of those concerned were executed, and others were punished by long imprisonments ; but Waller, who appears to have been the most guilty, is understood to have made his peace by the reckless frankness of his confessions, and was let off with a fine and a license "to go travel abroad." He left the country accordingly, "and, travelling into France," says Kennet, "improved himself in good letters ; and for the rest of his life, which was very long, he chose rather to be admired for a poet than to be envied for a politician." They print among his works some of his speeches in parliament, — among the rest his address on Tuesday, July 4th, 1643, when he "was brought to the bar, and had leave given him by the Speaker to say what he could for himself before they proceeded to expel him [from] the House," which is throughout one of the most abject prostrations ever made by anything in the shape of a man.

A few years after he welcomed Charles II. on his restoration to the throne of his ancestors in another poem, which has been generally considered a much less spirited composition: Fenton accounts for the falling off by the author's advance in the mean while from his forty-ninth to his fifty-fifth year, — "from which time," he observes, "his genius began to decline apace from its meridian"; but the poet himself assigned another reason: — when Charles frankly told him that he thought his own panegyric much inferior to Cromwell's, "Sir," replied Waller, "we poets never succeed so well in writing truth as in fiction." Perhaps the true reason, after all, might be that his majesty's return to England was not quite so exciting a subject to Mr. Waller's muse as his own return had been. One thing must be admitted in regard to Waller's poetry: it is free from all mere verbiage and empty sound; if he rarely or never strikes a very powerful note, there is at least always something for the fancy or the understanding, as well as for the ear, in what he writes. He abounds also in ingenious thoughts, which he dresses to the best advantage, and exhibits with great transparency of style. Eminent, however, as he is in his class, he must be reckoned among that subordinate class of poets who think and express themselves chiefly in similitudes, not among those who conceive and write passionately and metaphorically. He had a decorative and illuminating, but not a transforming imagination.



MARVEL.

THE chief writer of verse on the popular side after the Restoration was Andrew Marvel, the noble-minded member for Hull, the friend of Milton, and, in that age of brilliant profligacy, renowned alike as the first of patriots and of wits. Marvel, the son of the Rev. Andrew Marvel, master of the grammar-school of Hull, was born there in 1620, and died in 1678. His poetical genius has scarcely had justice done to it. He is the author of a number of satires in verse, in which a rich vein of vigorous, though often coarse, humor runs through a careless, extemporaneous style, and which did prodigious execution in the party warfare of the day; but some of his other poetry, mostly perhaps written in the earlier

part of his life, is eminent both for the delicate bloom of the sentiment and for grace of form. His *Song of the Exiles*, beginning "Where the remote Bermudas ride," is a gem of melody, picturesqueness, and sentiment, nearly without a flaw, and is familiar to every lover of poetry. Not of such purity of execution throughout are the lines entitled *To his Coy Mistress*; but still there are few short poems in the language so remarkable for the union of grace and force, and the easy and flowing transition from a light and playful tone to solemnity, passion, and grandeur. How elegant, and even deferential, is the gay extravagance of the commencement:—

Had we but world enough and time,
 This coyness, lady, were no crime.
 We would sit down, and think which way
 To walk, and pass our long love's day.
 Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
 Should'st rubies find: I by the tide
 Of Humber would complain. I would
 Love you ten years before the flood;
 And you should, if you please, refuse
 Till the conversion of the Jews.
 My vegetable love should grow
 Vaster than empires, and more slow.
 An hundred years should go to praise
 Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
 Two hundred to adore each breast;
 But thirty thousand to the rest:
 An age at least to every part;
 And the last age should show your heart.
 For, lady, you deserve this state;
 Nor would I love at lower rate.

And then how skilfully managed is the rise from this badinage of courtesy and compliment to the strain almost of the ode or the hymn! and how harmonious, notwithstanding its suddenness, is the contrast between the sparkling levity of the prelude and the solemn pathos that follows!—

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. . . .

Till, at the end, the pent-up accumulation of passion bursts its floodgates in the noble lines :—

Let us roll all our strength, and all
 Our sweetness, up into one ball ;
 And tear our pleasures with rough strife
 Thorough the iron gates of life.

The following verses, which are less known, are exquisitely elegant and tuneful. They are entitled *The Picture of T. C. in a Prospect of Flowers* :—

See with what simplicity
 This nymph begins her golden days !
 In the green grass she loves to lie,
 And there with her fair aspect tames
 The wilder flowers, and gives them names ;
 But only with the roses plays,
 And them does tell
 What colour best becomes them, and what smell.

Who can foretell for what high cause
 This darling of the gods was born ?
 See this is she whose chaster laws
 The wanton Love shall one day fear,
 And, under her command severe,
 See his bow broke and ensigns torn.
 Happy who can
 Appease this virtuous enemy of man !

O then let me in time compound,
 And parley with those conquering eyes ;
 Ere they have tried their force to wound,
 Ere with their glancing wheels they drive
 In triumph over hearts that strive,
 And them that yield but more despise.
 Let me be laid
 Where I may see the glory from some shade.

Meantime, whilst every verdant thing
 Itself does at thy beauty charm,¹

¹ *Charm itself*, that is, delight itself.

Reform the errors of the spring :
 Make that the tulips may have share
 Of sweetness, seeing they are fair ;
 And roses of their thorns disarm :
 But most procure
 That violets may a longer age endure.

But oh, young beauty of the woods,
 Whom nature courts with fruits and flowers
 Gather the flowers, but spare the buds ;¹
 Lest Flora, angry at thy crime
 To kill her infants in their prime,
 Should quickly make the example yours ;
 And, ere we see,
 Nip in the blossom all our hopes in thee.

Certainly neither Carew, nor Waller, nor any other court poet of that day, has produced anything in the same style finer than these lines. But Marvel's more elaborate poetry is not confined to love-songs and other such light exercises of an ingenious and elegant fancy. Witness his verses on Milton's *Paradise Lost*, — "When I beheld the poet blind, yet bold," — which have throughout almost the dignity, and in parts more than the strength, of Waller. But, instead of transcribing these, which are printed in most editions of Milton, we will give as a specimen of his more serious vein a portion of his longer poem on the Death of the Lord Protector : —

That Providence, which had so long the care
 Of Cromwell's head, and numbered every hair,
 Now in itself, the glass where all appears,
 Had seen the period of his golden years ;
 And thenceforth only did intend to trace
 What death might least so fair a life deface.

.
 To love and grief the fatal writ was signed
 (Those nobler weaknesses of human kind,
 From which those powers that issued the decree,

¹ This may remind the reader of Wordsworth of that poet's

"Here are Daisies, take your fill ;
 Pansies, and the Cuckow-flower :
 Of the lofty Daffodil
 Make your bed, and make your bower ;
 Fill your lap, and fill your bosom ;
 Only spare the Strawberry-blossom."

Although immortal, found they were not free) ;
 That they, to whom his breast still open lies,
 In gentle passions should his death disguise,
 And leave succeeding ages cause to mourn
 As long as grief shall weep, or love shall burn.¹

Straight does a slow and languishing disease
 Eliza,² nature's and his darling, seize.

Like polished mirrors, so his steely breast
 Had every figure of her woes expressed ;
 And, with the damp of her last gasps obscured,
 Had drawn such stains as were not to be cured.
 Fate could not either reach with single stroke,
 But, the dear image fled, the mirror broke.

He without noise still travelled to his end,
 As silent suns to meet the night descend :
 The stars, that for him fought, had only power
 Left to determine now his fatal hour ;
 Which since they might not hinder, yet they cast
 To choose it worthy of his glories past.
 No part of time but bare his mark away
 Of honour ; all the year was Cromwell's day ;
 But this, of all the most auspicious found,
 Twice had in open field him victor crowned ;
 When up the armed mountains of Dunbar
 He marched, and through deep Severn, ending war.
 What day should him eternize, but the same
 That had before immortalized his name ?
 That so, whoe'er would at his death have joyed
 In their own griefs might find themselves employed.
 But those that sadly his departure grieved
 Yet joyed, remembering what he once achieved ;
 And the last minute his victorious ghost
 Gave chase to Ligny on the Belgic coast.
 Here ended all his mortal toils ; he laid,³
 And slept in peace under the laurel shade.

¹ Misprinted "or love shall mourn."

² That is, Cromwell's second and favorite daughter. Elizabeth, the wife of John Claypole, Esq., who died about a month before her father.

³ This form was not the vulgarism in the seventeenth century that it is now. It is frequent in Marvel and several of his contemporaries.

O Cromwell! heaven's favourite, to none
 Have such high honours from above been shown;
 For whom the elements we mourners see,
 And heaven itself would the great herald be;
 Which with more care set forth his obsequies
 Than those of Moses, hid from human eyes:
 As jealous only here, lest all be less
 Than we could to his memory express.

Since him away the dismal tempest rent,
 Who once more joined us to the continent;
 Who planted England on the Flandric shore,
 And stretched our frontier to the Indian ore;
 Whose greater truths obscure the fables old,
 Whether of British saints or worthies told;
 And, in a valour lessening Arthur's deeds,
 For holiness the Confessor exceeds.

He first put arms into religion's hand,
 And, timorous conscience unto courage manned,
 The soldier taught that inward mail to wear,
 And, fearing God, how they should nothing fear:¹
 Those strokes, he said, will strike through all below,
 Where those that strike from heaven fetch their blow
 Astonished armies did their flight prepare,
 And cities strong were stormed by his prayer:
 Of that for ever Preston's field shall tell
 The story, and impregnable Clonmell.

Valour, religion, friendship, prudence, died
 At once with him, and all that's good beside;
 And we, death's refuse, nature's dregs, confined
 To loathsome life, alas! are left behind:
 Where we (so once we used) shall now no more,
 To fetch day, press about his chamber door;
 From which he issued with that awful state,
 It seemed Mars broke through Janus' double gate;
 Yet always tempered with an air so mild,

¹ Is this, then, the true origin of Cowper's verse, —

“Who fears his God, and knows no other fear”?

Racine's *Athalie*, in which occurs the famous line,

“Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai point d'autre crainte,”

was not written till many years after Marvel's poem.

No April suns that e'er so gently smiled :
 No more shall hear that powerful language charm,
 Whose force oft spared the labour of his arm :
 No more shall follow where he spent the days
 In war, in counsel, or in prayer and praise ;
 Whose meanest acts he would himself' advance,
 As ungirt David to the ark did dance.
 All, all is gone of ours or his delight
 In horses fierce, wild deer, or armour bright :
 Francisca fair¹ can nothing now but weep,
 Nor with soft notes shall sing his cares asleep.

I saw him dead : a leaden slumber lies,
 And mortal sleep, over those wakeful eyes :
 Those gentle rays under the lids were fled,
 Which through his looks that piercing sweetness shed ;
 That port, which so majestic was and strong,
 Loose and deprived of vigour stretched along ;
 All withered, all discoloured, pale and wan ;
 How much another thing ! no more that man !
 Oh human glory ! vain ! oh death ! oh wings !
 Oh worthless world ! oh transitory things !
 Yet dwelt that greatness in his shape decayed
 That still, though dead, greater than death he laid,
 And in his altered face you something feign
 That threatens death he yet will live again.
 Not much unlike the sacred oak which shoots
 To heaven its branches, and through earth its roots ;
 Whose spacious boughs are hung with trophies round,
 And honoured wreaths have oft the victor crowned ;
 When angry Jove darts lightning through the air
 At mortals' sins, nor his own plant will spare,
 It groans, and bruises all below, that stood
 So many years the shelter of the wood ;
 The tree, ere while fore-shortened to our view,
 When fallen shows taller yet than as it grew :
 So shall his praise to after times increase,
 When truth shall be allowed and faction cease.

¹ The Lady Frances Cromwell, the Protector's fourth and youngest daughter, at this time the wife of Sir John Russell, Bart., having been previously married to Robert Rich, Esq., grandson and heir of Robert Earl of Warwick. She is said to have been at one time sought in marriage by Charles Stuart. Lady Russell survived all her brothers and sisters, dying, at the age of eighty-four, in 1721.

Thee many ages hence in martial verse
 Shall the English soldier, ere he charge, rehearse ;
 Singing of thee, inflame themselves to fight,
 And with the name of Cromwell armies fright.
 As long as rivers to the seas shall run,
 As long as Cynthia shall relieve the sun ;
 While stags shall fly unto the forests thick,
 While sheep delight the grassy downs to pick ;
 As long as future time succeeds the past,
 Always thy honour, praise, and name shall last.

This poem was written very soon after Cromwell's death, in the brief reign of Richard, and most probably at its commencement ; for all good and high things are anticipated of that worthy successor of his great father. "He, as his father," we are told —

————— long was kept from sight
 In private, to be viewed by better light ;
 But, opened once, what splendour does he throw !
 A Cromwell in an hour a prince will grow.
 How he becomes that seal ! how strongly strains,
 How gently winds at once, the ruling reins !

We must add a sample or two of Marvel's more reckless verse — that rough and ready satire in which he was unmatched in the latter part of his life. It is impossible to present any of his effusions in this line without curtailment ; and the portions of the humor that must be abstracted are frequently the most pungent of the whole ; but the following lines, entitled *Royal Resolutions*, may, even with the necessary omissions, convey some notion of the wit and drollery with which Marvel used to turn the court and government into ridicule : —

When plate was at pawn, and fob at an ebb,
 And spider might weave in bowels its web,
 And stomach as empty as brain ;
 Then Charles without acre
 Did swear by his Maker,
 If e'er I see England again,

I'll have a religion all of my own,
 Whether Popish or Protestant shall not be known
 And, if it prove troublesome, I will have none.

I'll have a long parliament always to friend,
 And furnish my treasure as fast as I spend ;
 And, if they will not, they shall have an end.

I'll have a council that sit always still,
 And give me a licence to do what I will ;
 And two secretaries

My insolent brother shall bear all the sway :
 If parliaments murmur, I'll send him away,
 And call him again as soon as I may.

I'll have a rare son, in marrying though marred,
 Shall govern, if not my kingdom, my guard,
 And shall be successor to me or Gerrard.

I'll have a new London instead of the old,
 With wide streets and uniform to my own mould ;
 But, if they build too fast, I'll bid 'em hold.

The ancient nobility I will lay by,
 And new ones create, their rooms to supply ;
 And they shall raise fortunes for my own fry.

Some one I'll advance from a common descent
 So high that he shall hector the parliament,
 And all wholesome laws for the public prevent.

And I will assert him to such a degree,
 That all his foul treasons, though daring and high,
 Under my hand and seal shall have indemnity.

.
 I'll wholly abandon all public affairs,
 And pass all my time with buffoons and players,
 And saunter to Nelly when I should be at prayers.
 I'll have a fine pond with a pretty decoy,
 Where many strange fowl shall feed and enjoy,
 And still, in their language, quack Vive le Roy.

To this we wil. add part of a Ballad on the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen presenting the King and the Duke of York each with a copy of his freedom, A. D. 1674:—

The Londoners Gent
 To the King do present
 In a box the city maggot:
 'Tis a thing full of weight
 That requires all the might
 Of whole Guildhall team to drag it.

Whilst their churches are unbuilt,
 And their houses undwelt,
 And their orphans want bread to feed 'em,
 Themselves they've bereft
 Of the little wealth they'd left,
 To make an offering of their freedom.

O, ye addlebrained cits!
 Who henceforth, in their wits,
 Would trust their youth to your heeding?
 When in diamonds and gold
 Ye have *him* thus enrolled?
 Ye knew both his friends and his breeding!

Beyond sea he began,
 Where such a riot he ran
 That every one there did leave him;
 And now he's come o'er
 Ten times worse than before,
 When none but such fools would receive him.

He ne'er knew, not he,
 How to serve or be free,
 Though he has passed through so many adventures;
 But e'er since he was bound
 (That is, since he was crowned)
 He has every day broke his indentures.

.
 Throughout Lombard Street,
 Each man he did meet
 He would run on the score with and borrow
 When they asked for their own
 He was broke and was gone,
 And his creditors all left to sorrow.

Though oft bound to the peace,
 Yet he never would cease
 To vex his poor neighbours with quarrels;
 And, when he was beat,
 He still made his retreat
 To his Clevelands, his Nells, and his Carwells.

.

His word or his oath
 Cannot bind him to troth,
 And he values not credit or history;
 And, though he has served through
 Two prenticeships now,
 He knows not his trade nor his mystery.

Then, London, rejoice
 In thy fortunate choice,
 To have him made free of thy spices
 And do not mistrust
 He may once grow more just
 When he's worn off his follies and vices.

And what little thing
 Is that which you bring
 To the Duke, the kingdom's darling?
 Ye hug it, and draw
 Like ants at a straw,
 Though too small for the gristle of starling.

Is it a box of pills
 To cure the Duke's ills?
 He is too far gone to begin it!
 Or does your fine show
 In processioning go,
 With the pix, and the host within it?

The very first head
 Of the oath you have read
 Shows you all how fit he's to govern,
 When in heart you all knew
 He ne'er was nor will be true
 To his country or to his sovereign.

.

And now, worshipful sirs,
 Go fold up your furs,
 And Viners turn again, turn again:
 I see, whoe'er's freed,
 You for slaves are decreed,
 Until you burn again, burn again.

A hot pulse of scorn and indignant feeling often beats under Marvel's raillery, as may be perceived from these verses; and the generality of his pasquinades are much more caustic and scourging, as well as in every way more daring and unscrupulous.

 OTHER MINOR POETS.

OF the other minor poets of this date we can only mention the names of a few of the most distinguished. Sir Charles Sedley is the Suckling of the time of Charles II., with less impulsiveness and more insinuation, but a kindred gayety and sprightliness of fancy, and an answering liveliness and at the same time courtly ease and elegance of diction. King Charles, a good judge of such matters, was accustomed to say that Sedley's style, either in writing or discourse, would be the standard of the English tongue; and his contemporary, the Duke of Buckingham (Villiers) used to call his exquisite art of expression *Sedley's witchcraft*. Sedley's genius early ripened and bore fruit: he was born only two or three years before the breaking out of the Civil War; and he was in high reputation as a poet and a wit within six or seven years after the Restoration. He survived both the Revolution and the century, dying in the year 1701. Sedley's fellow-debauchee, the celebrated Earl of Rochester (Wilmot), — although the brutal grossness of the greater part of his verse has deservedly made it and its author infamous, — was perhaps a still greater genius. There is immense strength and pregnancy of expression in some of the best of his compositions, careless and unfinished as they are. Rochester had not completed his thirty-third year when he died, in July 1680. Of the poetical productions of the other court-wits of Charles's reign the principal are, the Duke of Buck-

ingham's satirical comedy of the *Rehearsal*, which was very effective when first produced, and still enjoys a great reputation, though it would probably be thought but a heavy joke now by most readers not carried away by the prejudice in its favor; the Earl of Roscommon's very commonplace *Essay on Translated Verse*; and the Earl of Dorset's lively and well-known song, "To all you ladies now on land," written at sea the night before the engagement with the Dutch on the 3d of June, 1665, or rather professing to have been then written, for the asserted poetic tranquillity of the noble author in expectation of the morrow's fight has been disputed. The Marquis of Halifax and Lord Godolphin were also writers of verse at this date; but neither of them has left anything worth remembering. Among the minor poets of the time, however, we ought not to forget Charles Cotton, best known for his humorous, though somewhat coarse, travesties of Virgil and Lucian, and for his continuation of Izaak Walton's *Treatise on Angling*, and his fine idiomatic translation of Montaigne's *Essays*, but also the author of some short original pieces in verse, of much fancy and liveliness. One entitled an *Ode to Winter*, in particular, has been highly praised by Wordsworth.¹ We need scarcely mention Sir William Davenant's long and languid heroic poem of *Gondibert*, though Hobbes, equally eminent in poetry and the mathematics, has declared that he "never yet saw poem that had so much shape of art, health of morality, and vigour and beauty of expression"; and has prophesied that, were it not for the mutability of modern tongues, "it would last as long as either the *Æneid* or *Iliad*."² The English of the reign of Charles II. is not yet obsolete, nor likely to become so; Homer and Virgil are also still read and admired; but men have forgotten *Gondibert*, almost as much as they have Hobbes's own *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

¹ See Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, 1815.

² Answer to Davenant's Preface to *Gondibert*.

DRYDEN.

By far the most illustrious name among the English poets of the latter half of the seventeenth century — if we exclude Milton as belonging properly to the preceding age — is that of John Dryden. Born in 1632, Dryden produced his first known composition in verse in 1649, his lines on the death of Lord Hastings, a young nobleman of great promise, who was suddenly cut off by small-pox, on the eve of his intended marriage, in that year. This earliest of Dryden's poems is in the most ambitious style of the school of Donne and Cowley: Donne himself, indeed, has scarcely penned anything quite so extravagant as one passage, in which the fancy of the young poet runs riot among the phenomena of the loathsome disease to which Lord Hastings had fallen a victim: —

So many spots, like naeves on Venus' soil,
One jewel set off with so many a foil:
Blisters with pride swell'd, which through 's flesh did sprout
Like rose-buds stuck i' the lily skin about.
Each little pimple had a tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit: —

and so forth. Almost the only feature of the future Dryden which this production discloses is his deficiency in sensibility or heart; exciting as the occasion was, it does not contain an affecting line. Perhaps, on comparing his imitation with Donne's own poetry, so instinct with tenderness and passion, Dryden may have seen or felt that his own wanted the very quality which was the light and life of that of his master; at any rate, wiser than Cowley, who had the same reason for shunning a competition with Donne, he abandoned this style with his first attempt, and, indeed, for anything that appears, gave up the writing of poetry for some years altogether. His next verses of any consequence are dated nine years later, — his Heroic Stanzas on the death of Oliver Cromwell, — and, destitute as they are of the vigorous conception and full and easy flow of versification which he afterwards attained, they are free from any trace of the elaborate and grotesque absurdity of the Elegy on Lord Hastings. His *Astræa Redux*, or poem on the return of the king, produced two years after, evinces a growing freedom and command of style. But it is in his *Annus Mirabilis*, written in 1666, that his genius breaks forth for the first time with any

promise of that full effulgence at which it ultimately arrived; here, in spite of the incumbrance of a stanza (the quatrain of alternately rhyming heroics) which he afterwards wisely exchanged for a more manageable kind of verse, we have much both of the nervous diction and the fervid fancy which characterize his latest and best works. From this date to the end of his days Dryden's life was one long literary labor: eight original poems of considerable length, many shorter pieces, twenty-eight dramas, and several volumes of poetical translation from Chaucer, Boccaccio, Ovid, Theocritus, Lucretius, Horace, Juvenal, Persius, and Virgil, together with numerous discourses in prose, some of them very long and elaborate, attest the industry as well as the fertility of a mind which so much toil and so many draughts upon its resources were so far from exhausting, that its powers continued not only to exert themselves with unimpaired elasticity, but to grow stronger and brighter to the last. The genius of Dryden certainly did not, as that of Waller is said to have done, begin "to decline apace from its meridian" after he had reached his fifty-fifth year. His famous *Alexander's Feast* and his *Fables*, which are among his happiest performances, were the last he produced, and were published together in the year 1700, only a few months before his death, at the age of sixty-eight.¹

¹ The modern editors have blundered strangely in regard to one of Dryden's gayest and most graceful compositions, his *Dedication*, which stands at the head of the *Fables*, of the poem of *Palamon and Arcite*, or *The Knight's Tale*, modernized from Chaucer, to the *Duchess of Ormond*. He there observes of his great predecessor, that, no doubt, in drawing his heroine,

"The fairest nymph before his eyes he set,
And then the fairest was *Plantagenet*;
Who three contending princes made her prize,
And ruled the rival nations with her eyes;
Who left immortal trophies of her fame,
And to the noblest order gave the name."

And then he proceeds to compliment his own patroness: —

"Thus, after length of ages, she returns,
Restored in you, and the same place adorns;
Or you perform her office in the sphere,
Born of her blood, and make a new platonian year."

Upon which Sir Walter Scott, in the standard edition of the poet's works, 18 vols. 8vo, Lond. 1808, thus comments (vol. xi. p. 216): — "The first patroness of Chaucer was *Blanche*, first wife of John, Duke of Gaunt [*sic*], whose death he has celebrated in *The Boke of the Duchesse*. She was the second daughter of Henry Duke of Lancaster, grandson of Edmund, surnamed *Crouchback*, brother of Ed

Dryden has commonly been considered to have founded a new school of English poetry; but perhaps it would be more strictly correct to regard him as having only carried to higher perfection — perhaps to the highest to which it has yet been brought — a style of poetry which had been cultivated long before his day. The satires of Hall and of Marston, and also the *Nosce Teipsum* of Sir John Davies, all published before the end of the sixteenth century, not to refer to other less eminent examples, may be classed as of the same school with his poetry. It is a school very distinguishable from that to which Milton and the greatest of our elder poets belong, deriving its spirit and character, as it does, chiefly from the ancient Roman classic poetry, whereas the other is mainly the offspring of the middle ages, of Gothic manners and feelings and the Romance or Provençal literature. The one therefore may be called, with sufficient propriety, the classic, the other the romantic school of poetry. But it seems to be a mistake to assume that the former first arose in England after the Restoration, under the influence of the imitation of the French, which then became fashionable; the most that can be said is, that the French taste which then became prevalent among us may have encouraged its revival; for undoubtedly what has been called the classic school of poetry had been cultivated by English writers at a much earlier date; nor is there any reason to suppose that the example of the modern poetry of France had had any share in originally turning our own into that channel. Marston and Hall, and Sackville in his *Ferrex* and *Porrex*, and Ben Jonson in his comedies and tragedies, and the other early writers of English poetry in the classic

ward I. But I do not know how the Duchess of Ormond could be said to be born of her blood, since she was descended of John of Gaunt by his third, not his first, wife. Dryden, however, might not know, or might disregard, these minutiae of genealogy." Even by this showing the two ladies would be of the same blood; Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, and Mary, second wife of James, second Duke of Ormond, who was a Somerset, daughter of the Duke of Beaufort, were both Plantagenets. But the explanation leaves the principal part of the passage entirely unexplained. Chaucer's Plantagenet here is clearly not the Duchess Blanche, but Joan, daughter of Edmund of Woodstock, Earl of Kent, second son of Edward I. by his second wife, Margaret of France, famous as the Fair Maid of Kent, married for the third and last time to Edward the Black Prince, by whom she was the mother of Richard II., having been previously the wife, first (it is understood) of Thomas Holland, son of the Lord Holland, secondly, of William Montague, Earl of Salisbury (making the "three contending princes"), and commonly believed to be the Countess of Salisbury from whom the Order of the Garter, according to the well-known story, derived its name.

vein, appear not to have imitated any French poets, but to have gone to the fountain-head, and sought in the productions of the Roman poets themselves—in the plays of Terence and Seneca, and the satires of Juvenal and Persius—for examples and models. Nay, even Dryden, at a later period, probably formed himself almost exclusively upon the same originals and upon the works of these his predecessors among his own countrymen, and was little, if at all, indebted to or influenced by any French pattern. His poetry, unlike as it is to that of Milton or Spenser, has still a thoroughly English character—an English force and heartiness, and, with all its classicality, not a little even of the freedom and luxuriance of the more genuine English style. Smooth Waller, who preceded him, may have learned something from the modern French poets; and so may Pope, who came after him; but Dryden's fiery energy and "full-resounding line" have nothing in common with them in spirit or manner. Without either creative imagination or any power of pathos, he is in argument, in satire, and in declamatory magnificence, the greatest of our poets. His poetry, indeed, is not the highest kind of poetry, but in that kind he stands unrivalled and unapproached. Pope, his great disciple, who, in correctness, in neatness, and in the brilliancy of epigrammatic point, has outshone his master, has not come near him in easy flexible vigor, in indignant vehemence, in narrative rapidity, any more than he has in sweep and variety of versification. Dryden never writes coldly, or timidly, or drowsily. The movement of verse always sets him on fire, and whatever he produces is a coinage hot from the brain, not slowly scraped or pinched into shape, but struck out as from a die with a few stout blows or a single wrench of the screw. It is this fervor especially which gives to his personal sketches their wonderful life and force: his Absalom and Achitophel is the noblest portrait-gallery in poetry.

It is chiefly as a dramatic writer that Dryden can be charged with the imitation of French models. Of his plays, nearly thirty in number, the comedies for the most part in prose, the tragedies in rhyme, few have much merit considered as entire works, although there are brilliant passages and spirited scenes in most of them. Of the whole number, he has told us that his tragedy of All for Love, or the World well Lost (founded on the story of Antony and Cleopatra), was the only play he wrote for himself. The rest, he admits, were sacrifices to the vitiated taste of the age.

His *Almanzor, or the Conquest of Granada* (in two parts), although extravagant, is also full of genius. Of his comedies, the *Spanish Friar* is perhaps the best; it has some most effective scenes.



DRAMATISTS.

MANY others of the poets of this age whose names have been already noticed were also dramatists. Milton's *Comus* was never acted publicly, nor his *Samson Agonistes* at all. Cowley's *Love's Riddle* and *Cutter of Coleman Street* were neither of them originally written for the stage; but the latter was brought out in one of the London theatres after the Restoration, and was also revived about the middle of the last century. Waller altered the fifth act of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*, making his additions to the blank verse of the old dramatists in rhyme, as he states in a prologue:—

In this old play what's new we have expressed
 In rhyming verse distinguish'd from the rest;
 That, as the Rhone its hasty way does make
 (Not mingling waters) through Geneva's lake,
 So, having here the different styles in view,
 You may compare the former with the new.

Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, besides his *Rehearsal*, wrote a farce entitled the *Battle of Sedgmoor*, and also altered Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of *The Chances*. The tragedy of *Valentinian* of the same writers was altered by the Earl of Rochester. Sedley wrote three comedies, mostly in prose, and three tragedies, one in rhyme and two in blank verse. And Davenant is the author of twenty-five tragedies, comedies, and masques, produced between 1629 and his death, in 1668. But the most eminent dramatic names of this era are those of Thomas Otway, Nathaniel Lee, John Crowne, Sir George Etherege, William Wycherley, and Thomas Southerne. Of six tragedies and four comedies written by Otway, his tragedies of the *Orphan* and *Venice Preserved* still sustain his fame and popularity as the most pathetic and tear-drawing of all our dramatists. Their licentiousness has necessarily

banished his comedies from the stage, with most of those of his contemporaries. Lee has also great tenderness, with much more fire and imagination than Otway; of his pieces, eleven in number, — all tragedies, — his *Theodosius*, or the *Force of Love*, and his *Rival Queens*, or *Alexander the Great*, are the most celebrated. Crowne, though several of his plays were highly successful when first produced, was almost forgotten, till Mr. Lamb reprinted some of his scenes in his *Dramatic Specimens*, and showed that no dramatist of that age had written finer things. Of seventeen pieces produced by Crowne between 1671 and 1698, his tragedy of *Thyestes* and his comedy of *Sir Courtley Nice* are in particular of eminent merit, the first for its poetry, the second for plot and character. Etherege is the author of only three comedies, the *Comical Revenge* (1664), *She Would if She Could* (1668), and the *Man of Mode*, or *Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676): all remarkable for the polish and fluency of the dialogue, and entitled to be regarded as having first set the example of that modern style of comedy which was afterwards cultivated by Wycherley, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, and Congreve. Wycherley, who was born in 1640, and lived till 1715, produced his only four plays, *Love in a Wood*, *The Gentleman Dancing Master*, *The Country Wife*, and *The Plain Dealer*, all comedies, between the years 1672 and 1677. The two last of these pieces are written with more elaboration than anything of Etherege's, and both contain some bold delineation of character and strong satiric writing, reminding us at times of Ben Jonson: but, like him, too, Wycherley is deficient in ease and nature. Southerne, who was only born in the year of the Restoration, and lived till 1746, had produced no more than his two first plays before the Revolution of 1688, — his tragedy of the *Loyal Brother* in 1682, and his comedy of the *Disappointment* in 1684. Of ten dramatic pieces of which he is the author, five are comedies, and are of little value; but his tragedies of *The Fatal Marriage* (1692), *Oroonoko* (1696), and *The Spartan Dame* (1719), are interesting and affecting.

It is hardly worth while to mention, under the head of the literature of the age, the seventeen plays of King William's poet-laureate, Thomas Shadwell, better remembered by Dryden's immortal nickname of *Mac Flecknoe*; or the equally numerous brood of the muse of Elkanah Settle, the city poet, Dryden's

Doeg, whom God for mankind's mirth has made;

or the nine of Shadwell's successor in the laureateship, Nahum Tate, the author of the worst alterations of Shakspeare, the worst version of the Psalms of David, and the worst continuation of a great poem (his second part of the Absalom and Achitophel), extant; or, lastly, although she had more talent than any of these, the seventeen pieces of the notorious Mrs. Aphra Behn — Pope's *Astraea*,

Who fairly puts all characters to bed.

This Mrs. Behn, besides her plays, was the authoress of a number of novels and tales, which, amid great impetuosity and turbulence of style, contain some ingeniously contrived incidents and some rather effective painting of the passions.



PROSE WRITERS. — CLARENDON.

EMINENT as he is among the poets of his age, Dryden is also one of the greatest of its prose writers. In ease, flexibility, and variety, indeed, his English prose has scarcely ever been excelled. Cowley, too, is a charming writer of prose: the natural, pure, and flowing eloquence of his *Essays* is better than anything in his poetry. Waller, Suckling, and Sedley, also, wrote all well in prose; and Marvel's literary reputation is founded more upon his prose than upon his verse. Of writers exclusively in prose belonging to the space between the Restoration and the Revolution, Clarendon may be first mentioned, although his great work, his *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars*, was not published till the year 1702, nor his *Life and Continuation of his History*, before 1759. His style cannot be commended for its correctness; the manner in which he constructs his sentences, indeed, often sets at defiance all the rules of syntax; but yet he is never unintelligible or obscure — with such admirable expository skill is the matter arranged and spread out, even where the mere verbal sentence-making is the most negligent and entangled. The style, in fact, is that proper to speaking rather than to writing, and had, no doubt, been acquired by Clarendon, not so much from books as from his practice in speaking at the bar and in parliament; for, with great

natural abilities, he does not seem to have had much acquaintance with literature, or much acquired knowledge of any kind resulting from study. But his writing possesses the quality that interests above all the graces or artifices of rhetoric — the impress of a mind informed by its subject, and having a complete mastery over it; while the broad full stream in which it flows makes the reader feel as if he were borne along on its tide. The abundance, in particular, with which he pours out his stores of language and illustration in his characters of the eminent persons engaged on both sides of the great contest seems inexhaustible. The historical value of his history, however, is not very considerable; it has not preserved very many facts which are not to be found elsewhere; and, whatever may be thought of its general bias, the inaccuracy of its details is so great throughout, as demonstrated by the authentic evidences of the time, that there is scarcely any other contemporary history which is so little trustworthy as an authority with regard to minute particulars. Clarendon, in truth, was far from being placed in the most favorable circumstances for giving a perfectly correct account of many of the events he has undertaken to record: he was not, except for a very short time, in the midst of the busy scene: looking to it, as he did, from a distance, while the mighty drama was still only in progress, he was exposed to some chances of misconception to which even those removed from it by a long interval of time are not liable; and, without imputing to him any further intention to deceive than is implied in the purpose which we may suppose he chiefly had in view in writing his work, the vindication of his own side of the question, his position as a partisan, intimately mixed up with the affairs and interests of one of the two contending factions, could not fail both to bias his own judgment, and even in some measure to distort or color the reports made to him by others. On the whole, therefore, this celebrated work is rather a great literary performance than a very valuable historical monument.



HOBBS.

ANOTHER royalist history of the same times and events to which Clarendon's work is dedicated, the Behemoth of Thomas Hobbes

of Malnesbury, introduces one of the most distinguished names both in English literature and in modern metaphysical, ethical, and political philosophy. Hobbes, born in 1588, commenced author in 1628, at the age of forty, by publishing his translation of Thucydides, but did not produce his first original work, his Latin treatise entitled *De Cive*, till 1642. This was followed by his treatises entitled *Human Nature* and *De Corpore Politico*, in 1650; his *Leviathan*, in 1651; his translations in verse of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in 1675; and his *Behemoth, or History of the Causes of the Civil Wars of England, and of the counsels and artifices by which they were carried on, from the year 1640 to the year 1660*, a few months after his death, at the age of ninety-two, in 1679. Regarded merely as a writer of English, there can be little difference of opinion about the high rank to be assigned to Hobbes. He has been described as our first uniformly careful and correct writer;¹ and he may be admitted to have at least set the first conspicuous and influential example in what may be called our existing English (for Roger Ascham, Sir Thomas Elyot, and one or two other early writers, seem to have aimed at the same thing in a preceding stage of the language), of that regularity of style which has since his time been generally attended to. This, however, is his least merit. No writer has succeeded in making language a more perfect exponent of thought than it is as employed by Hobbes. His style is not poetical or glowingly eloquent, because his mind was not poetical, and the subjects about which he wrote would have rejected the exaggerations of imaginative or passionate expression if he had been capable of supplying such. But in the prime qualities of precision and perspicuity, and also in economy and succinctness, in force and in terseness, it is the very perfection of a merely expository style. Without any affectation of point, also, it often shapes itself easily and naturally into the happiest aphoristic and epigrammatic forms. Hobbes's clearness and aptness of expression, the effect of which is like that of reading a book with a good light, never forsake him — not even in that most singular performance, his version of Homer, where there is scarcely a trace of ability of any other kind. There are said to be only two lines in that work in which he is positively poetical; those which describe the infant Astyanax in the scene of the parting of Hector and Andromache, in the Sixth Book of the *Iliad*: —

¹ Hallam, *Lit. of Eur.* iv. 316.

Now Hector met her with her little boy,
 That in the nurse's arms was carried ;
And like a star upon her bosom lay
His beautiful and shining golden head.

But there are other passages in which by dint of mere directness and transparency of style he has rendered a line or two happily enough, — as, for instance, in the description of the descent of Apollo at the prayer of Chryses. in the beginning of the poem : —

His prayer was granted by the deity,
 Who, with his silver bow and arrows keen,
 Descended from Olympus silently,
 In likeness of the sable night unseen.

As if expressly to proclaim and demonstrate, however, that this momentary success was merely accidental, immediately upon the back of this stanza comes the following : —

His bow and quiver both behind him hang,
 The arrows chink as often as he jogs,
 And as he shot the bow was heard to twang,
 And first his arrows flew at mules and dogs.

For the most part, indeed, Hobbes's Iliad and Odyssey are no better than travesties of Homer's, the more ludicrous as being undesigned and unconscious. Never was there a more signal revenge than that which Hobbes afforded to imagination and poetry over his own unbelieving and scoffing philosophism by the publication of this work. It was almost as if the man born blind, who had all his lifetime been attempting to prove that the sense which he himself wanted was no sense at all, and that that thing, color, which it professed peculiarly to discern, was a mere delusion, should have himself at last taken the painter's brush and pallet in hand, and attempted, in confirmation of his theory, to produce a picture by the mere senses of touch, taste, smell, and hearing.¹

The great subject of the merits or demerits, the truth or falsehood, of Hobbes's system of metaphysical, ethical, and political philosophy, of course cannot be entered upon here. His works

¹ It is right, however, to state that Coleridge, in a note to the second (1819) edition of the *Friend*, *Introd. Essay iv.*, admits that in the original edition of that work he had spoken too contemptuously of Hobbes's Odyssey, which when he so wrote of it he had not seen. "It is doubtless," he adds, "as much too ballad-like as the later versions are too epic; but still, on the whole, it leaves a much truer impression of the original."

certainly gave a greater impulse to speculation in that field than those of any other English writer had ever before done ; even the startling paradoxes with which they abound, and their arrogant and contemptuous tone, coöperated with their eminent merits of a formal kind to arouse attention, and to provoke the investigation and discussion of the subjects of which they treat. It must also be admitted that scarcely any writings of their class contain so many striking remarks ; so much acute and ingenious, if not profound and comprehensive, thinking ; so much that, if not absolutely novel, has still about it that undefinable charm which even an old truth or theory receives from being born anew in an original mind. Such a mind Hobbes had, if any man ever had. Moreover, it is not necessary to deny that, however hollow or insufficient may have been the bases of his philosophy, he may have been successful in explaining some particular intellectual phenomena, or placing in a clearer light some important truths both in metaphysics and in morals. But as for what is properly to be called his system of philosophy, — and it is to be observed that, in his own writings, his views in metaphysics, in morals, and in politics are all bound and built up together into one consistent whole, — the question of the truth or falsehood of that seems to be completely settled. Nobody now professes more than a partial Hobbism. If so much of the creed of the philosopher of Malmesbury as affirms the non-existence of any essential distinction between right and wrong, the non-existence of conscience or the moral sense, the non-existence of anything beyond mere sensation in either emotion or intelligence, and other similar negations of his moral and metaphysical doctrine, has still its satisfied disciples, who is now a Hobbist either in politics or in mathematics ? Yet, certainly, it is in these latter departments that we must look for the greater part of what is absolutely original and peculiar in the notions of this teacher. Hobbes's philosophy of human nature is not amiss as a philosophy of Hobbes's own human nature. Without passions or imagination himself, and steering his own course through life by the mere calculations of an enlightened selfishness, one half of the broad map of humanity was to him nothing better than a blank. The consequence is, that, even when he reasons most acutely, he is constantly deducing his conclusions from insufficient premises. Then, like most men of ingenious rather than capacious minds, having once adopted his hypothesis or system, he was too apt to make

facts bend to that rather than that to facts: a tendency which in his case was strengthened by another part of his character which has left its impression upon all his writings, — a much greater love of victory than of truth.

NEVILLE.

THE most remarkable treatise on political philosophy which appeared in the interval between the Restoration and the Revolution is Henry Nevile's *Plato Redivivus*, or a Dialogue concerning Government; which was first published in 1681, and went through at least a second edition the same year. Nevile, who was born in 1620, and survived till 1694, had in the earlier part of his life been closely connected with Harrington, the author of the *Oceana*, and also with the founders of the Commonwealth, and he is commonly reckoned a republican writer; but the present work professes to advocate a monarchical form of government. Its leading principle is the same as that on which Harrington's work is founded, the necessity of all stable government being based upon property; but, in a Preface, in the form of an Address from the Publisher to the Reader, pains are taken to show that the author's application of this principle is different from Harrington's. It is observed, in the first place, that the principle in question is not exclusively or originally Harrington's; it had been discoursed upon and maintained in very many treatises and pamphlets before ever the *Oceana* came out; in particular in *A Letter from an Officer in Ireland to His Highness the Lord Protector*, printed in 1653, "which was more than three years before *Oceana* was written." Besides, continues the writer, who is evidently Nevile himself, "*Oceana* was written (it being thought lawful so to do in those times) to evince out of these principles that England was not capable of any other government than a democracy. And this author, out of the same maxims or aphorisms of politics, endeavours to prove that they may be applied, naturally and fitly, to the redressing and supporting one of the best monarchies in the world, which is that of England." The tenor of the work is throughout in conformity with this declaration.

Although the *Plato Redivivus* has been reprinted in modern

times (by Mr. Thomas Hollis), it is but little known ; and it is both very well written, and contains some curious illustrations of the state of opinion, and of other matters, in that day. The argument is carried on in the form of a dialogue, continued through three days or morning meetings, between a Venetian nobleman travelling in England, an English physician, under whose care he is recovering from an attack of illness, and an English gentleman, who is the chief speaker, and may be understood to represent Nevile himself. It is commonly said that the physician, or doctor, is intended for the famous Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation ; but this, we think, may be doubted. The conversations are supposed to have taken place only a short time before their publication ; and Harvey had died, at a great age, in 1658. In one place (p. 81), in reference to an observation by the doctor about the property of land in Padua being wholly in the possession of the nobility of Venice, the Venetian nobleman remarks, " I perceive, doctor, by this question, that you have studied at Padua ; " to which the doctor replies, " No, really, sir, the small learning I have was acquired in our own university of Oxford, nor was I ever out of this island." This may be meant for a blind, though why anything of the kind should be had recourse to is not apparent ; but the fact is that Harvey was abroad when a young man, and did actually study at Padua. There is no allusion anywhere in the book to Harvey's great discovery. Yet the doctor is described as of the first eminence in his profession, and also as a person of great literary reputation both in his own and other countries : — " an eminent physician of our nation, as renowned for his skill and cures at home as for his writings both here and abroad ; and who, besides his profound knowledge in all learning, as well in other professions as his own, had particularly arrived at so exact and perfect a discovery of the formerly hidden parts of human bodies, that every one who can but understand Latin may by his means, know more of anatomy than either Hippocrates or any of the ancients or moderns did or do perceive : and, if he had lived in the days of Solomon, that great philosopher would never have said *Cor hominis inscrutabile* [the heart of man is past finding out]." This points, no doubt, to some great anatomist and writer on anatomy, and the description is sufficiently applicable to suggest Harvey in the first instance ; but it seems scarcely specific enough to fix the character upon him, without further evidence.

We may note, by the by, that at this time, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, it was the custom with physicians in London to pay their professional visits the first thing in the morning, and then to come home to receive patients at their own houses. About the middle of the Second Day's Dialogue, which extends altogether (in the original edition) over 166 pages, the English Gentleman observes that he must hasten through his discourse. "for," says he, "the time runs away, and I know the Doctor must be at home by noon, where he gives daily charitable advice to an infinity of poor people, who have need of his help, and who send or come for it, not having the confidence to send for him, since they have nothing to give him; though he be very liberal too of his visits to such, where he has any knowledge of them." The three friends met at nine in the morning; but the Doctor also paid another visit to his patient in the evening. It is at that evening visit that the first of the three dialogues, which is very short and merely introductory, is represented as having taken place: at parting, the Venetian nobleman says, "It begins to be darkish: — Boy, light your torch, and wait on these gentlemen down."

One of the most remarkable of Nevile's positions is that, upon his principles, there must some time or other ensue a revolution in France. In one place (p. 34) he observes: —

Eng. Gent. The modern despotical powers have been acquired by one of these two ways; either by pretending by the first founder thereof that he had a divine mission, and so gaining not only followers, but even easy access in some places without force to empire, and afterwards dilating their power by great conquests (thus Mahomet and Cingis Can began and established the Saracen and Tartarian kingdoms); or by a long series of wisdom in a prince, or chief magistrate of a mixed monarchy, and his council, who, by reason of the sleepiness and inadvertency of the people, have been able to extinguish the great nobility, or render them inconsiderable; and, so by degrees taking away from the people their protectors, render them slaves. So the monarchies of France and some other countries have grown to what they are at this day; there being left but a shadow of the three States in any of these monarchies, and so no bounds remaining to the regal power. But, since property remains still to the subjects, these governments may be said to be changed, but not founded or established; for there is no maxim more infallible and holding in any science than this in politics, That empire is founded in property. Force or fraud may alter a government; but it is property that must found and eternise it. Upon this undeniable aphorism we are to build most of our subsequent reason

ing : in the mean time we may suppose that hereafter the great power of the King of France may diminish much, when his enraged and oppressed subjects come to be commanded by a prince of less courage, wisdom, and military virtue, when it will be very hard for any such king to govern tyrannically a country which is not entirely his own.

Doctor. Pray, Sir, give me leave to ask you, by the way, what is the reason that here in our country, where the peerage is lessened sufficiently, the king has not gotten as great an addition of power as accrues to the crown in France ?

Eng. Gent. You will understand that, Doctor, before I have finished this discourse ; but, to stay your stomach till then, you may please to know that in France the greatness of the nobility, which has been lately taken from them, did not consist in vast riches and revenues, but in great privileges and jurisdictions, which obliged the people to obey them ; whereas our great peers in former times had not only the same great dependences, but very considerable revenues besides, in demesnes and otherwise. This vassalage over the people, which the peers of France had, being abolished, the power over those tenants, which before was in their lords, fell naturally, and of course, into the crown, although the lands and possessions, divested of those dependences, did and do still remain to the owners ; whereas here in England, though the services are for the most part worn out and insignificant, yet, for want of providence and policy in former kings, who could not foresee the danger afar off, entails have been suffered to be cut off ; and so two parts in ten of all those vast estates, as well manors as demesnes, by the luxury and folly of the owners, have been within these two hundred years purchased by the lesser gentry and the commons ; which has been so far from advantaging the crown, that it has made the country scarce governable by monarchy.

Afterwards (p. 147) we have the following further explanation on the same subject :—

Doctor. You are pleased to talk of the oppression of the people under the King of France, and for that reason call it a violent government, when, if I remember, you did once to-day extol the monarchy of the Turks for well-founded and natural : are not the people in that empire as much oppressed as in France ?

Eng. Gent. By no means ; unless you will call it oppression for the Grand Signior to feed all his people out of the produce of his own lands. And, though they serve him for it, yet that does not alter the case ; for, if you set poor men to work and pay them for it, are you a tyrant, or rather are you not a good commonwealths-man by helping those to live who have no other way of doing it but by their labour ? But the King of France, knowing that his people have, and ought to have, property, and that he

has no right to their possessions, yet takes what he pleases from them, without their consent, and contrary to law: so that, when he sets them on work, he pays them what he pleases, and that he levies out of their own estates. I do not affirm that there is no government in the world but where rule is founded in property; but I say there is no natural, fixed government but where it is so; and, when it is otherwise, the people are perpetually complaining, and the king in perpetual anxiety, always in fear of his subjects, and seeking new ways to secure himself; God having been so merciful to mankind that he has made nothing safe for princes but what is just and honest.

Noble Ven. But you were saying just now that this present constitution in France will fall when the props fail: we in Italy, who live in perpetual fear of the greatness of that kingdom, would be glad to hear something of the decaying of those props; what are they, I beseech you?

Eng. Gent. The first is the greatness of the present king, whose heroic actions and wisdom have extinguished envy in all his neighbour princes, and kindled fear, and brought him to be above all possibility of control at home: not only because his subjects fear his courage, but because they have his virtue in admiration, and, amidst all their miseries, cannot choose but have something of rejoicing to see how high he hath mounted the empire and honour of their nation. The next prop is the change of their ancient constitution, in the time of Charles the Seventh, by consent: for about that time, the country being so wasted by the invasion and excursions of the English, the States then assembled petitioned the King that he would give them leave to go home, and dispose of affairs himself and order the government for the future as he thought fit. Upon this his successor, Lewis the Eleventh, being a crafty prince, took an occasion to call the States no more, but to supply them with an *Assemblée des Notables*, which were certain men of his own nomination, like Barbones' parliament here, but that they were of better quality. These in succeeding reigns (being the best men of the kingdom) grew troublesome and intractable; so that for some years the edicts have been verified (that is, in our language, bills have been passed) in the Grand Chamber of the Parliament at Paris, commonly called the *Chambre d'Audience*, who lately, and since the imprisonment of President Brousselles and others during this king's minority, have never refused or scrupled any edicts whatsoever. Now, whenever this great king dies, and the States of the kingdom are restored, these two great props of arbitrary power are taken away. Besides these two, the constitution of the government of France itself is somewhat better fitted than ours to permit extraordinary power in the prince; for the whole people there possessing lands are gentlemen, that is, infinitely the greater part; which was the reason why in their Assembly of Estates the deputies of the provinces (which we call here knights of the shire)

were chosen by and out of the gentry, and sat with the peers in the same chamber, as representing the gentry only, called *petite noblesse*. Whereas our knights here (whatever their blood is) are chosen by commoners, and are commoners; our laws and government taking no notice of any nobility but the persons of the peers, whose sons are likewise commoners, even their eldest, whilst their father lives. Now gentry are ever more tractable by a prince than a wealthy and numerous commonalty; out of which our gentry (at least those we call so) are raised from time to time; for whenever either a merchant, lawyer, tradesman, grazier, farmer, or any other, gets such an estate as that he or his son can live upon his lands, without exercising of any other calling, he becomes a gentleman. I do not say but that we have men very nobly descended amongst these; but they have no pre-eminence or distinction by the laws or government. Besides this, the gentry in France are very needy and very numerous; the reason of which is, that the elder brother, in most parts of that kingdom, hath no more share in the division of the paternal estates than the cadets or younger brothers, excepting the principal house with the orchards and gardens about it, which they call *Vol de chapon*, as who should say, As far as a capon can fly at once. This house gives him the title his father had, who was called Seigneur, or Baron, or Count of that place; which if he sells, he parts with his baronship, and, for aught I know, becomes in time *roturier*, or ignoble. This practice divides the land into so many small parcels that the possessors of them, being noble, and having little to maintain their nobility, are fain to seek their fortune, which they can find nowhere so well as at the court, and so become the king's servants and soldiers, for they are generally courageous, bold, and of a good mien. None of these can ever advance themselves but by their desert, which makes them hazard themselves very desperately, by which means great numbers of them are killed, and the rest come in time to be great officers, and live splendidly upon the king's purse, who is likewise very liberal to them, and, according to their respective merits, gives them often, in the beginning of a campaign, a considerable sum to furnish out their equipage. These are a great prop to the regal power, it being their interest to support it, lest their gain should cease, and they be reduced to be poor *provinciaux*, that is country gentlemen, again. Whereas, if they had such estates as our country gentry have, they would desire to be at home at their ease; whilst these (having ten times as much from the king as their own estate can yield them, which supply must fail if the king's revenue were reduced) are perpetually engaged to make good all exorbitances.

Doctor. This is a kind of governing by property too; and it puts me in mind of a gentleman of good estate in our country, who took a tenant's son of his to be his servant, whose father not long after dying left him a living of about ten pound a-year: the young man's friends came to him, and

asked him why he would serve now he had an estate of his own able to maintain him. His answer was, that his own lands would yield him but a third part of what his service was worth to him in all; besides, that he lived a pleasant life, wore good clothes, kept good company, and had the conversation of very pretty maids that were his fellow servants, which made him very well digest the name of being a servant.

Eng. Gent. This is the very case. But yet service (in both these cases) is no inheritance; and, when there comes a peaceable king in France, who will let his neighbours be quiet, or one that is covetous, these fine gentlemen will lose their employments, and their king this prop; and the rather because these gentlemen do not depend (as was said before) in any kind upon the great lords (whose standing interest is at court), and so cannot in a change be by them carried over to advance the court designs against their own good and that of their country. And thus much is sufficient to be said concerning France.



OTHER PROSE WRITERS. — CUDWORTH. MORE. BARROW.
BUNYAN; ETC.

THE most illustrious antagonist of metaphysical Hobbism, when first promulgated, was Dr. Ralph Cudworth, the First Part of whose True Intellectual System of the Universe, wherein all the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Confuted, was first published in 1678. As a vast storehouse of learning, and also as a display of wonderful powers of subtle and far-reaching speculation, this celebrated work is almost unrivalled in our literature; and it is also written in a style of elastic strength and compass which places its author in a high rank among our prose classics. Along with Cudworth may be mentioned his friend and brother-Platonist, Dr. Henry More, the author of numerous theological and philosophical works, and remarkable for the union of some of the most mystic notions with the clearest style, and of the most singular credulity with powers of reasoning of the highest order. Other two great theological writers of this age were the voluminous Richard Baxter and the learned and eloquent Dr. Robert Leighton, Archbishop of Glasgow. "Baxter," says Bishop Burnet, "was a man of great piety; and, if he had not meddled in too many things, would have been esteemed one of the learned men of the

age. He writ near two hundred books; of these three are large folios: he had a very moving and pathetic way of writing, and was his whole life long a man of great zeal and much simplicity, but was most unhappily subtle and metaphysical in everything.”¹ Of Leighton, whom he knew intimately, the same writer has given a much more copious account, a few sentences of which we will transcribe: — “His preaching had a sublimity both of thought and expression in it. The grace and gravity of his pronunciation was such that few heard him without a very sensible emotion. . . . It was so different from all others, and indeed from everything that one could hope to rise up to, that it gave a man an indignation at himself and all others. . . . His style was rather too fine; but there was a majesty and beauty in it that left so deep an impression that I cannot yet forget the sermons I heard him preach thirty years ago.”² The writings of Archbishop Leighton that have come down to us have been held by some of the highest minds of our own day — Coleridge for one — to bear out Burnet’s affectionate panegyric. But perhaps the greatest genius among the theological writers of this age was the famous Dr. Isaac Barrow, popularly known chiefly by his admirable Sermons, but renowned also in the history of modern science as, next to Newton himself, the greatest mathematician of his time. “As a writer,” the late Professor Dugald Stewart has well said of Barrow, “he is equally distinguished by the redundancy of his matter and by the pregnant brevity of his expression; but what more peculiarly characterizes his manner is a certain air of powerful and of conscious facility in the execution of whatever he undertakes. Whether the subject be mathematical, metaphysical, or theological, he seems always to bring to it a mind which feels itself superior to the occasion, and which, in contending with the greatest difficulties, puts forth but half its strength. He has somewhere spoken of his *Lectiones Mathematicæ* (which it may, in passing, be remarked, display *metaphysical* talents of the highest order) as extemporaneous effusions of his pen; and I have no doubt that the same epithet is still more literally applicable to his pulpit discourses. It is, indeed, only thus that we can account for the variety and extent of his voluminous remains, when we recollect that the author died at the age of forty-six.”³ But the name that in popular celebrity transcends all

¹ Own Time, i. 180.

² Ibid. i. 135.

³ Dissertation on the Progress of Philosophy, p. 45.

others, among the theological writers of this age, is that of John Bunyan, the author of various religious works, and especially of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. One critic has in our time had the courage to confess in print, that to him this famous allegory appeared "mean, jejune, and wearisome." Our late brilliant essayist, Lord Macaulay, on the other hand, in a paper published in 1830, has written: — "We are not afraid to say, that, though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two minds which possessed the imaginative faculty in a very eminent degree. One of those minds produced the *Paradise Lost*, the other the *Pilgrim's Progress*." And, to the end of his life, we find him faithful to the same enthusiasm.¹ He conceives it to be the characteristic peculiarity of the *Pilgrim's Progress* "that it is the only work of its kind which possesses a strong human interest." The pilgrimage of the great Italian poet through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise is of course regarded as not properly an allegory. But high poetry is treated somewhat unceremoniously throughout this paper. Of the *Fairy Queen* it is said: — "Of the persons who read the first canto, not one in ten reaches the end of the first book, and not one in a hundred perseveres to the end of the poem. Very few and very weary are those who are in at the death of the Blatant Beast. If the last six books, which are said to have been destroyed in Ireland, had been preserved, we doubt whether any heart less stout than that of a commentator would have held out to the end." It must be admitted that, as a story, the *Pilgrim's Progress* is a great deal more interesting than the *Fairy Queen*. And we suspect that, if we are to take the verdict of the most numerous class of readers, it will carry off the palm quite as decidedly from the *Paradise Lost*. Very few, comparatively, and very weary, we apprehend, are the readers of that great poem, too, who have made their way steadily through it from the beginning of the First Book to the end of the Twelfth. Still, although Bunyan had undoubtedly an ingenious, shaping, and vivid imagination, and his work, partly from its execution, partly from its subject, takes a strong hold, as Macaulay has well pointed out, of minds of very various kinds, commanding the admiration of the most fastidious critics, such, for instance, as Doctor Johnson, while it is loved by those who are too simple to

¹ See the Paper on Ranke's History of the Popes (1840); and again the lively though slight, sketch of Bunyan's history in the Biographies.

admire it, we must make a great distinction between the power by which such general attraction as this is produced and what we have in the poetry of Milton and Spenser. The difference is something of the same kind with that which exists between any fine old popular ballad and a tragedy of Sophocles or of Shakspeare. Bunyan could rhyme too, when he chose; but he has plenty of poetry without that, and we cannot agree with the opinion expressed by good Adam Clarke, "that the Pilgrim's Progress would be more generally read, and more abundantly useful to a particular class of readers, were it turned into decent rhyme." We suspect the ingenious gentleman, who, in the early part of the last century, published an edition of Paradise Lost turned into prose, had a more correct notion of what would be most useful, and also most agreeable, to a pretty numerous class of readers.

What Lord Macaulay says of Bunyan's English, though his estimate is, perhaps, a little high-pitched, is worth quoting: — "The style of Bunyan is delightful to every reader, and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. The vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. There is not an expression, if we except a few technical terms of theology; which would puzzle the rudest peasant. We have observed several pages which do not contain a single word of more than two syllables. Yet no writer has said more exactly what he meant to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this homely dialect, the dialect of plain working-men, was perfectly sufficient. There is no book in our literature on which we would so readily stake the fame of the old unpolluted English language, no book which shows so well how rich that language is in its own proper wealth, and how little it has been improved by all that it has borrowed."

To the names that have been mentioned may be added those of Izaak Walton, the mild-tempered angler and biographer; Sir William Temple, the lively, agreeable, and well-informed essayist and memoirist; and many others that might be enumerated if it were our object to compile a catalogue instead of noticing only the principal lights of our literature.

PROGRESS OF SCIENCE IN ENGLAND BEFORE THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

A FEW far separated names, and a still smaller number of distinct facts, make up the history of the Mathematical and Physical Sciences in England to the latter part of the fifteenth century. Nor from that date to the age of Bacon, or throughout the era of the Tudors, have we perhaps so many as a dozen English names of any note to show in this department. Yet before the end of the sixteenth century scientific speculation and experiment were busy in all the principal countries of continental Europe, and the first steps in the march of discovery had already been taken in various directions. In pure science, Trigonometry, of which the foundations had been laid in the middle ages by the Arabian geometers, had been brought almost to the state in which it still remains by Purbach and his much more illustrious pupil John Müller (Regiomontanus); Müller had also created a new arithmetic by the invention of Decimal Fractions: Algebra, known in its elements since the beginning of the thirteenth century, had been carried to the length of cubic equations by Ferreo, Tartalea, and Cardan, and of biquadratic by Cardan's pupil, Ludovico Ferrari, and had acquired all the generalization of expression it yet possesses in the hands first of Stifel and soon after of Vieta. The true System of the Universe had been revealed by Copernicus; and Tycho Brahe, although rejecting the hypothesis of his predecessor, as well as clinging to the old superstitions of astrology, both had wonderfully improved the instruments and the art of observation, and had greatly enlarged our knowledge of the heavens. The Variation of the Compass had been observed by Columbus; in Mechanics, the theory of the inclined plane had been investigated by Cardan, the pulley had been explained by Ubaldi, and some cases of the composition of forces, and other propositions in statics, had been solved by Stevinus; in Optics, the use of spectacles, which can be traced back to the early part of the fourteenth century, had been followed by the discovery of the crystalline lens of the eye by Maurolico, and the invention of the camera obscura by Baptista della Porta. The purely physical sciences had also made considerable advances. Mondino of Bologna, who has been called the father of modern Anatomy, had set the example of the practice of dissection so

early as the year 1315; and the knowledge of the structure of the human body, and of its functions, had been prosecuted since his time with great success both in Italy and France by Achillini, Berenger (Carpi), Jacques Dubois (Silvius), Charles Etienne (Stephanus), and especially by Vesalius, Fallopius, and Eustachius, whose celebrated Anatomical Tables, completed in 1552, were still the most perfect that had yet been produced when they were first published more than a century and a half after the author's death. In Medicine, the Hippocratic method, revived by Nicholas Leonicensus before the end of the fifteenth century, had been cultivated and advanced by Cop, Ruel, Gonthier, Fuchs, and others; and considerable progress had even been made in emancipating the art from authority, and founding a new school on the basis of experience and common sense, or at least independent speculation, by Fernel, Argentier of Turin, and, above all, by the original and enterprising, though unregulated, genius of Paracelsus. Conrad Gesner, Rondelet, and Aldrovandus, by the large additions they had made to the facts collected by Aristotle, Pliny, Ælian, and other ancient writers, and by their attempts at classification and system, had more than laid the foundations of modern Zoölogy. In Botany, Otto Brunfels of Strasburg had published his magnificent *Herbarum Eicones*, which has been regarded as leading the way in the restoration of the science; the route opened by him had been farther explored by Ruel and Fuchs already mentioned (the latter the name commemorated in the well-known *Fuchsia*), by Matthioli, and others; Conrad Gesner had, about the middle of the sixteenth century, not only collected and arranged all the knowledge of his predecessors, but had given a new form to the science by his own discoveries; many accessions to his lists had been contributed by Dodens (Dodonæus), Cæsalpinus, John and Caspar Bauhin, and especially by l'Ecluse (Clusius); and before the end of the century the first natural system of plants had been devised and published by Lobel. Finally, Chemistry, in which numerous facts had been long ascertained by Roger Bacon, Geber and the other Arabian physicians, Raymond Lully and the other alchemists, had been cultivated in later times by Basil Valentine (the discoverer of antimony), George Agricola (who first mentions bismuth), and Paracelsus (in whose writings we find the first notice of zinc), and in the hands of Dornæus, Crolius, and Bartholetus had begun to assume the rudiments of a scientific form: and the

remarkable work of Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, first published in 1546, followed as it was, before the end of the century, by the writings and researches of Ercher, Fuchs, and Palissy (the great improver of the manufacture of enamelled pottery), may be said to have already established the science of Mineralogy, and also to have furnished some indications of that of Geology.

In England, meanwhile, much of this progress that had been made in other countries probably remained unknown. We have most to boast of in the physical sciences; medicine was both practised and taught on the revived principles of the ancient physicians, in the early part of the sixteenth century, by the learned Linacre, the translator of Galen, the founder of the medical lectureships at Oxford and Cambridge, and the first president of the College of Physicians, which was incorporated by Henry VIII. in 1518; some valuable works on botany and zoölogy were published in the latter half of the century by William Turner, particularly the earliest English Herbal, the first part of which appeared at London in 1551, the second and third at Cologne in 1562 and 1568;¹ the north and south poles of the magnet are described by Robert Norman, a writer on navigation, in 1581; and at the head of the modern sciences of navigation and electricity stands the name of Dr. William Gilbert, whose treatise *De Magnete*, published in 1600, afforded one of the most remarkable specimens that had then appeared both of ingenious experimenting and of sound inductive reasoning. To Gilbert is assigned the invention of artificial magnets. In the pure sciences, and those more immediately dependent upon mathematics, we did very little during this period. Cuthbert Tunstall, or Tunstall, Bishop of London, and afterwards of Durham, published a Latin Treatise on Arithmetic (*De Arte Supputandi*) at London in 1522, which was frequently reprinted abroad in the course of the century. This performance, so far from containing anything new, scarcely attempts even to explain the principles of the old rules and processes which it details and exemplifies; but it has the merit of a simplicity and a freedom from extraneous matter which were very rare in that age.² From what Tunstall

¹ Lobel, also, already mentioned, though a Fleming by birth, spent the latter years of his life in England where James I. gave him the appointment of royal botanist.

² Notices of English Mathematical and Astronomical writers between the Norman Conquest and the year 1600, in *Companion to the Almanac for 1837*, p. 30.

says in the dedication of his book to his friend Sir Thomas More, it would appear that, like almost every other nation in Europe, we were already possessed of arithmetical manuals in the vernacular tongue, though of a very low order. Of much greater importance were various works produced about the same date, or a little later, by William Recorde, the physician. "He was the first," says the authority to which we have just referred, "who wrote on arithmetic in English (that is, anything of a higher cast than the works mentioned by Tonstall); the first who wrote on geometry in English; the first who introduced algebra into England; the first who wrote on astronomy and the doctrine of the sphere in English; and finally, the first Englishman (in all probability) who adopted the system of Copernicus."¹ Recorde's *Ground of Arts*, a treatise on arithmetic, first published in 1551, was many times reprinted, and kept its ground as a common schoolbook till the end of the seventeenth century. His *Pathway to Knowledge*, also first printed in 1551, is a treatise of practical geometry, but containing also an account of the theorems in the first four books of Euclid, though without the demonstrations. His *Castle of Knowledge*, published in 1556, is a treatise on astronomy, both theoretical and practical; and it is in this work that Recorde shows himself, in the words of the writer before us, "as much of a Copernican as any reasonable man could well be at the time; at least as much so (in profession) as was Copernicus himself, who makes no decided declaration of belief in his own system, but says, it is by no means necessary that hypotheses should be true, or even probable, — it suffices that they make calculation and observation agree."² Recorde's *Whetstone of Wit*, first published in 1553, is a treatise of algebra, although the author does not use that name except in calling the application of indeterminate numbers to the solution of equations "the rule of Algeber." "In this treatise," says the writer of the Notices, "he appears to have compounded, for the first time, the rule for extracting the square roots of multi-nominal algebraical quantities, and also to have first used the sign =. In other respects he follows Scheubel, whom he cites, and Stifel, whom he does not cite. There is nothing on cubic equations, nor does he appear to have known anything of the

¹ Companion to the Almanac for 1837. An interesting account of Recorde's various works follows, pp. 30-37.

² Companion to the Almanac for 1837, p. 36.

Italian algebraists. . . . Recorde was one of the first who had a distinct perception of the difference between an algebraical operation and its numerical interpretation, to the extent of seeing that the one is independent of the other; and also he appears to have broken out of the consideration of integer numbers to a much greater extent than his contemporaries." In his perception of general results connected with the fundamental notation of algebra, this writer conceives Recorde to show himself superior even to Vieta himself, though of course immeasurably below the Italian in the invention of means of expression. "All his writings considered together," it is added, "Recorde was no common man. It is evident that he did not write very freely at first in English, but his style improves as he goes on. His writings continued to the end of the century to be those in common use on the subjects on which he wrote, though we must gather this more from the adoption of ideas and notation than from absolute citation."¹ Another English Copernican of this early date was John Field, the author of an Ephemeris for 1557, published in the preceding year. In the earliest English work on cosmography, nevertheless, *The Cosmographical Glass*, compiled by William Cunningham, London, 1559, the system taught is that of Ptolemy, nor is the least hint of that of Copernicus to be found in the book.² In 1573 was published the first English translation of Euclid, professedly by the famous John Dee, the astrologer and *soi-disant* magician, but commonly believed to have been actually the performance of Sir Henry Billingsley, whom, however, the writer of the Notices before us supposes to have been a pupil of Dee, who only executed the more mechanical part of the undertaking, working under his master's general, if not special, instructions. The first Latin translation of the Elements of Euclid, that of Campanus, had appeared at Venice in 1482 (the original Greek not having been printed till 1530); and the only translations into any modern European tongues which preceded that of Dee were, that of Tartalea into Italian, Venice, 1543; those of Scheubel of the 7th, 8th, and 9th books, and of Holtzmann of the preceding six, into German, Augsburg, 1562 and 1565; and that of Henrion into French, Paris, 1565 (as is supposed). Dee's translation appears either to have been made from the original, or at least to have been corrected by the Greek text. "It contains," says the

¹ Companion to the Almanac for 1837, p. 37.

² Ibid. pp. 35 and 37.

writer before us, "the whole of the fifteen books commonly considered as making up the Elements of Euclid, and forms the first body of complete mathematical demonstration which appears in our language. For, though the works of Recorde were much less dogmatical than the elementary schoolbooks of the eighteenth, and (for the most part) of the present century, yet they partake of the character which they tended perhaps to perpetuate, and in many instances teach rules without demonstration, or with at most a rough kind of illustration. . . . The appearance of Euclid in an English form probably saved the credit of the exact sciences, and in this point of view Dee and Billingsley have exercised a material and beneficial influence upon their favorite pursuits."¹ Of Dee's scientific works the greater number still remain in manuscript; among those that have been published are a Latin treatise on Parallax, and a preface to Field's Ephemeris for 1557 (mentioned above), from which latter it appears that Dee also was a Copernican. Contemporary with this mathematician was Leonard Digges, who died in 1574, after having published various works, most of which were republished, with additions, by his son, Thomas Digges, who lived till 1595. The writings of both father and son relate for the most part to mensuration and the art of war, and are characterized by the application of arithmetical geometry in these departments. One, a work of Thomas Digges, entitled *Alae sive Scalae Mathematicae*, 1573, being a tract upon parallaxes, undertaken at the suggestion of Lord Burleigh, in consequence of the appearance of the remarkable new star discovered the preceding year by Tycho Brahe in the constellation Cassiopeia, "is," says the author of the Notices, "the first work of an English writer in which we have noticed anything on spherical trigonometry, and the writings of Copernicus are more than once referred to as the source of the subject." From some passages, Thomas Digges appears, this writer thinks, "to have been a believer in the real motion of the earth, and not merely an admirer of the system of Copernicus as an explanatory hypothesis."² On the whole it may be said that nearly the whole history of the advancement of English mathematical science in the sixteenth century is connected with the names of Recorde, Dee, and Digges. If a judgment might be formed from some works published between 1580 and 1600, the author of the Notices is inclined to suppose that, instead

¹ Companion to the Almanac for 1837, p. 39.

² Ibid. pp. 40, 41.

of making any progress, science rather declined among us in that interval. "The writers," he observes, "seem to have abandoned what had been newly introduced, and to have betaken themselves to older authors and other notions." Among the productions in question are, the *Mathematical Jewel*, by John Blagrave, of Reading, 1585, a treatise on a new mathematical instrument, apparently a projection of the sphere, for the construction of problems in astronomy, which proceeds upon the Ptolemaic system of the world, and does not contain a hint of the Copernican, although Copernicus is several times alluded to as an observer; a work on the projection of the sphere, described as "very poor and insufficient," published in 1590, by Thomas Hood, the inventor of an astronomical instrument called Hood's Staff; M. Blundevile's *Exercises*, containing six treatises on arithmetic, cosmography, &c., 1594, in which is found a set of tables of sines, tangents, and seconds, being the first printed in England, but the author of which expressly denounces the Copernican system of the world as a "false supposition," although he admits that by help of it Copernicus had "made truer demonstrations of the motions and revolutions of the celestial spheres than ever were made before"; and various works by a Thomas Hill, one of which, *The School of Skill*, London, 1599, is described as "an account of the heavens and the surface of the earth, replete with those notions on astrology and physics which are not very common in the works of *Recorde* or *Blundevile*." ¹ Hill notices the scheme of Pythagoras and Copernicus, by which, as he expresses it, they "took the earth from the middle of the world, and placed it in a peculiar orb." "But," he adds, "overpassing such reasons, lest by the newness of the arguments they may offend or trouble young students in the art, we therefore (by true knowledge of the wise) do attribute the middle seat of the world to the earth, and appoint it the centre of the whole."

¹ Companion to the Almanac for 1837, p. 43.

ENGLISH SCIENCE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.—
BACON. NAPIER.

BUT the daylight that had already arisen on the continent of Europe was soon to visit our island. The next age, in which Galileo, and Kepler, and Descartes, and Torricelli, and Pascal, and Huygens, revolutionized the entire structure and character of the mathematical and mathematico-physical sciences abroad, was ushered in among us by the bold speculations of Bacon and the brilliant inventions of Napier. Of what has been called the Baconian philosophy, and the amount of the effect it may be supposed to have had in impelling and directing the progress of science, we have already spoken. The writings of Bacon probably did more service by exciting and diffusing the spirit of scientific observation and research, than by any new light they afforded for its guidance, which in truth was no more than it must have furnished to itself as soon as it was fairly awakened and engaged in operating. At all events, neither the pure sciences of figure and number, nor even those of the mixed sciences that have been chiefly advanced by the aid of mathematics and calculation, among which are astronomy, mechanics, and all the principal branches of what is commonly called natural philosophy, can well have received either impulse or direction from Bacon, who was not only entirely unacquainted with geometry and algebra, but evidently insensible even of their value or their use. Of those mathematical and analytical investigations which are the chief glory of the science of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there is not the slightest anticipation in Bacon, nor any direction or suggestion by which they could have been at all promoted. Napier's great invention of logarithms, on the contrary, has from his own day to the present hour been one of the most active and efficient servants of all the sciences dependent upon calculation; nor could those of them in which the most splendid triumphs have been achieved have possibly been carried to the height they have reached without its assistance. The *Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Descriptio* was published by Napier at Edinburgh in a small quarto volume in the year 1614; and logarithms received their improved form, or that in which we now possess them, from their inventor and his friend Henry Briggs, in the same or the following year, although they

were partially published in that form only in 1618, after the death of Napier, by Briggs, by whom the calculations had been performed. "Many inventions," says a late distinguished historian of science, "have been eclipsed or obscured by new discoveries, or they have been so altered by subsequent improvements that their original form can hardly be recognized, and, in some instances, has been entirely forgotten. This has almost always happened to the discoveries made at an early period in the progress of science, and before their principles were fully unfolded. It has been quite otherwise with the invention of logarithms, which came out of the hands of the author so perfect that it has never yet received but one material improvement — that which it derived, as has just been said, from the ingenuity of his friend in conjunction with his own. Subsequent improvements in science, instead of offering anything that could supplant this invention, have only enlarged the circle to which its utility extended. Logarithms have been applied to numberless purposes which were not thought of at the time of their first construction. Even the sagacity of the author did not see the immense fertility of the principle he had discovered: he calculated his tables merely to facilitate arithmetical, and chiefly trigonometrical computation; and little imagined that he was at the same time constructing a scale whereon to measure the density of the strata of the atmosphere and the heights of mountains, that he was actually computing the areas and the lengths of innumerable curves, and was preparing for a calculus which was yet to be discovered many of the most refined and most valuable of its resources. Of Napier, therefore, if of any man, it may safely be pronounced, that his name will never be eclipsed by any one more conspicuous, or his invention be superseded by anything more valuable."¹ In the same volume with his logarithms Napier gave to the world the two very elegant and useful trigonometrical theorems known by his name.

¹ Playfair's *Dissertation on the Progress of Mechanical and Physical Science* (in *Encyclopædia Britannica*), p. 448.

OTHER ENGLISH MATHEMATICIANS OF THE EARLIER PART OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

OF the other English mathematicians of this age, Harriot, Briggs, and Horrocks may be mentioned as the most famous. Thomas Harriot, who died in 1621, is the author of a work on algebra (*Artis Analyticæ Praxis*), not published till ten years after his death, which makes an epoch in the history of that science, explaining in their full extent certain views first partially propounded by Vieta, and greatly simplifying some of the operations. To Harriot we also owe the convenient improvement of the substitution of small for the capital letters which had been used up to this time. It appears, too, from his unpublished papers preserved at Petworth (formerly the seat of his patron the Earl of Northumberland), that he is entitled to a high place among the astronomers of his day, having, among other things, discovered the solar spots before any announcement of them was made by Galileo, and observed the satellites of Jupiter within a very few days after Galileo had first seen them.¹ Henry Briggs, besides the share he had, as mentioned above, in the improvement of logarithms, is entitled to the honor of having made a first step towards what is called the binomial theorem in algebra, finally discovered by Newton. He died in 1630. His *Trigonometria Britannica*, or tables of the logarithms of sines, &c. (in the preface to which is his distant view of the binomial theorem), was published in 1633, by his friend Henry Gellibrand, who had been for some time associated with him in the calculation of the logarithms. Samuel Horrocks, or Horrox, a native of Toxteth, near Liverpool, was an astronomer of remarkable genius, who died in 1641, at the early age of twenty-two. He was the first person who saw the planet Venus on the body of the sun: his account of this observation (made 24th November, 1639) was printed by Hevelius at the end of his *Mercurius in Sole Visus*, published at Dantzic in 1662. But Horrocks is principally famous in the history of astronomy as having anticipated, hypothetically, the view of the lunar motions which Newton afterwards showed to be a necessary consequence of the theory of gravitation. This discovery was given to the world by Dr. Wallis, in a collec-

¹ These facts, ascertained from the examination of Harriot's papers, then in possession of the Earl of Egremont, were first stated by Zach in the *Astronomical Ephemeris* of the Berlin Royal Society of Sciences for 1788.

tion of Horrocks's posthumous papers which he published at London in 1672. It had been originally communicated by Horrocks in a letter (which has also been preserved, and is to be found in some copies of Wallis's publication) to his friend William Crabtree, whose fate, as well as genius, was singularly similar to his own. Crabtree was a clothier at Broughton, near Manchester, and had made many valuable astronomical observations (a portion of which have been preserved and printed) when he was cut off only a few months after his friend Horrocks, and about the same early age. Another member of this remarkable cluster of friends, whom a common devotion to science united at a time when the fiercest political heats were occupying and distracting most of their countrymen, was William Gascoigne, of Middleton, in Yorkshire, who also died very young, having been killed, about two years after the decease of Horrocks and Crabtree, fighting on the royalist side, at the battle of Marston Moor. He appears to have first used two convex glasses in the telescope, and to have been the original inventor of the wire micrometer and of its application to the telescope, and also of the application of the telescope to the quadrant. A fourth of these associated cultivators of science in the north of England was William Milbourne, who was curate of Brancepeth, near Durham, and who is stated to have made his way by himself to certain of the algebraic discoveries first published in Harriot's work, and likewise to have, by his own observations, detected the errors in the astronomical tables of Lansberg, and verified those of Kepler. The names of several other astronomical observers of less eminent merit who existed at this time in England have also been preserved; among which may be particularized that of Jeremiah Shackerly, the author of a work entitled *Tabulæ Britannicæ*, published at London in 1653, which is stated to have been compiled mostly from papers left by Horrocks that were afterwards destroyed in the great fire of 1666.¹ Nor ought we to pass over Edmund Gunter, the inventor of the useful wooden logarithmic scale still known by his name, and also of the sector and of the common surveyor's chain, and the author of several works, one of which, his *Canon Triangulorum*, first published at London in 1620, is the earliest printed table of logarithmic sines, &c., constructed on the improved or common system of logarithms.

¹ See a notice of these English astronomers of the earlier half of the seventeenth century, in an article on Horrocks in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, xii. 305.

Briggs's tables, as has been stated above, were not printed till 1633. Gunter also appears to have been the author of the convenient terms cosine, cotangent, &c., for sine, tangent, &c., of the complement. "Whatever, in short," as has been observed, "could be done by a well-informed and ready-witted person to make the new theory of logarithms more immediately available in practice to those who were not skilful mathematicians, was done by Gunter."¹ He has moreover the credit of having been the first observer of the important fact of the variation of the compass itself varying. Another eminent English mathematician of this age was John Greaves, the author of the first good account of the Pyramids of Egypt, which he visited in 1638, and of various learned works relating to the Oriental astronomy and geography, and the weights and measures of the ancients. He died in 1652. Briggs, Gunter, Gellibrand, and Greaves were all at one time or other professors in the new establishment of Gresham College, London, which may be regarded as having considerably assisted the promotion of science in England in the early part of the seventeenth century. Its founder, as is well known, was the eminent London merchant Sir Thomas Gresham, who died in 1579, and left his house in Bishopsgate Street for the proposed seminary, although the reserved interest of his widow prevented his intentions from being carried into effect till after her decease in 1596. The seven branches of learning and science for which professorships were instituted were divinity, astronomy, music, geometry, law, physic, and rhetoric; the first four under the patronage of the corporation of the City of London, the three last under that of the Mercers' Company. The chair of geometry, in which Briggs and Greaves had sat, was occupied in a later age by Barrow and Hooke; and that of astronomy, in which Gellibrand had succeeded Gunter, was afterwards filled by Wren. Another Gresham professorship that has to boast of at least two distinguished names in the seventeenth century is that of music, which was first held by the famous Dr. John Bull, and afterwards by Sir William Petty.

¹ *Penny Cyclopædia*, xi. 497.

HARVEY.--THE CIRCULATION OF THE BLOOD; ANATOMY
AND NATURAL HISTORY.

IN the physical sciences, the event most glorious to England in this age is the discovery of the circulation of the blood by Dr. William Harvey. To our illustrious countryman at least is indisputably due the demonstration and complete establishment of this fact, or what alone in a scientific sense is to be called its discovery, even if we admit all the importance that ever has been or can be claimed for the conjectures and partial anticipations of preceding speculators. Even Aristotle speaks of the blood flowing from the heart to all parts of the body; and Galen infers, from the valves in the pulmonary artery, its true course in passing through that vessel. After the revival of anatomy, Mondino and his successor Berenger taught nearly the same doctrine with regard to the passage of the blood from the right side of the heart to the lungs. Much nearer approaches were made to Harvey's discovery in the latter half of the sixteenth century. The famous Michael Servetus (put to death at Geneva for his anti-trinitarian heresies), in a work printed in 1553, distinctly describes the passage of the blood from the right to the left side of the heart, telling us that it does not take place, as commonly supposed, through the middle partition of the heart (the *septum*, which in fact is impervious), but in a highly artificial manner through the lungs, where it is changed to a bright color; adding, that, after it has thus been transferred from the arterial vein (that is, the pulmonary artery) to the venous artery (that is, the pulmonary vein), it is then diffused from the left ventricle of the heart throughout the arteries (or blood-vessels) of the whole body.¹ A few years after, in 1559, the pulmonary, or small circulation, as it is called, was again brought forward as an original discovery of his own by Realdus Columbus, in his work *De Re*

¹ This remarkable passage is often erroneously quoted from the Fifth Book of Servetus's first publication, entitled *De Trinitatis Erroribus*, which was printed, probably at Basle, in 1531. It occurs, in fact, in the Fifth Book of the First Part of quite another work, his *Christianismi Restitutio*, published at Vienne in 1553. Of this work only one copy is known to be in existence, which has been minutely described by De Bure, who calls it the rarest of all books. See his *Bibliographie Instructive*, i. 418-422, where the passage relating to the circulation of the blood is extracted at length. It is remarkable, however, that what is believed to be the original manuscript, in the author's own handwriting, of the First Part of the *Christianismi Restitutio* also still survives. See De Bure, i. 423, 424.

Anatomica, published at Venice in that year. And, in 1571, Cæsalpinus of Arezzo, in his *Quæstiones Peripateticæ*, also published at Venice, inferred from the swelling of veins *below* ligatures that the blood must flow *from* these vessels *to* the heart. So far had the investigation of the subject, or rather speculation respecting it, proceeded when it was taken up by Harvey. From Fabricius ab Aquapendente, under whom he studied at Padua about the year 1600, Harvey, then in his twenty-second or twenty-third year, learned the fact of the existence of valves in many of the veins, which were evidently so constructed as to prevent the flow of blood in these vessels *from* the heart, and at the same time not to impede its motion in the opposite direction. According to Harvey's own account, given in a conversation with Boyle, which the latter has reported in his treatise on Final Causes, it was the existence of these valves in the veins that first suggested to him the idea of his general theory of the circulation. Having satisfied himself by much consideration of the subject, and by many dissections and other careful experiments both on dead and living bodies, that his views were at least in the highest degree probable, he is supposed to have first announced the doctrine of the complete circulation of the blood from the left ventricle of the heart through the whole system back to the right by means of the arteries and veins, in his delivery of the Lumleian lectures on anatomy and surgery before the College of Physicians in 1615. But it was not till the year 1619 that he came before the world with the full demonstration of his theory in his treatise entitled *Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis in Animalibus*. The best proof of the novelty of the views propounded in this work is furnished by the general incredulity with which they were received by the profession in every part of Europe. It is said that there was scarcely an instance known of the doctrine of the circulation being accepted on its first promulgation by any anatomist or medical man who had passed his fortieth year. It is probable, indeed, that even the small circulation, or the passage of the blood from the right to the left ventricle of the heart through the lungs, which was really all that had been hitherto discovered, was as yet but little known, or generally looked upon rather as at most an ingenious supposition than a well-established fact. At all events there can be no doubt that, beyond this point, all was darkness and error,—that, notwithstanding some vague, inaccurate generalizations that had been thrown

cut by Servetus, Columbus, and one or two other writers, the circulation of the blood through the whole course of the arteries and veins, so far from being believed in, had scarcely been heard of or dreamed of by anybody before it was demonstrated by Harvey. The notion, we may say, universally entertained still was, as in the earliest times, that the veins were merely sacks of stagnant or at least unprogressive blood, and the arteries nothing more than air-tubes. Harvey himself, in proceeding to propound his theory, expresses his apprehension lest the opposition of the views he is about to state to those hitherto entertained might make all men his enemies; and it appears that he encountered as much popular as professional opposition and odium by his book, which was looked upon as a daring attack at once upon antiquity, common sense, and Nature herself. It was indeed the beginning and proclamation of a complete revolution in medical science. If the circulation of the blood was true, the greater part of all that had been hitherto taught and believed on the subjects of anatomy and physiology was false. As has been strikingly observed by a writer of our own day, "a person who tries to imagine what the science of medicine could have been while it took no account of this fact, on which, as a basis, all certain reasoning about the phenomena of life must rest, is prepared for what old medical books exhibit of the writhings of human reason in attempts to explain and to form theories while a fatal error was mixed with every supposition."¹

Harvey, whose life was extended to the year 1658, contributed to the improvement of anatomical and physiological knowledge by various subsequent publications; and the progress of discovery in this department was also aided by others of our countrymen, particularly by Dr. Nathaniel Highmore (who has given his name to that cavity in the upper jaw called the Antrum Highmorianum), Dr. Francis Glisson (the discoverer of what is called the capsule of Glisson, lying between the liver and the stomach), Dr. Jolyffe, Dr. Thomas Wharton, and Drs. Thomas Willis and Richard Lower, celebrated as the first accurate anatomists of the brain and nerves. Some of the most important publications of the three last mentioned, however, were not produced till after the Restoration. In natural history little was done in England in the earlier half of the seventeenth century. The great authority in botany was still the *Herbal, or General History of Plants*, of John Gerard, origi-

¹ Arnott's *Elements of Physics*, 4th edit. i. 519.

ally published in 1597, which was for the most part merely a hasty and inartificial compilation from Dodonæus, and nearly as destitute of scientific as of literary merit.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

BUT even in the mathematico-physical sciences, and the other branches of what is commonly called natural philosophy, it is wonderful how little general effect appears to have been produced in this country either by the example or by the actual discoveries of Kepler, Galileo, Torricelli, Pascal, Descartes, and their associates and immediate successors abroad, and of Napier, Briggs, Horrocks, and the few others among ourselves whose names have a place in this period of the history of science beside those of their illustrious continental contemporaries, — how little of the general darkness they had dispersed, — how little acceptance, or even attention, either their doctrines or the spirit of their philosophy seem to have met with from the common herd of our English speculators and professional men.

Some notion of the barbarous state in which physical science still remained among us after the middle of the seventeenth century may be obtained from a curious volume entitled *Archologia Nova*, or *New Principles of Philosophy*, which was published in the year 1663 by a Dr. Gideon Harvey, who had held the high office of physician to the forces in Flanders, and may be therefore regarded as having stood nearly at the head of his profession. Besides an introduction on philosophy in general, Dr. Harvey's work treats of metaphysics and of natural theology, as well as of natural philosophy or physics; but the last-mentioned subject occupies the greater portion of the book. The author makes an apology in his preface for some deficiency of polish in his style; the learned tongues, he would have us understand, apparently, had occupied his whole time to the exclusion of the vernacular. "It was never my fortune," he says, "to read two sheets of any English book in my life, or even to have had the view of so much as the title-leaf of an English grammar." His English certainly is not always very classical; but the language of his explanations and reasonings would usually be intelligible enough if the matter were equally so

The work, as we have seen, professes to be a *new* system of philosophy; and it does contain, certainly, various new crotchets; but the author's views are founded, nevertheless, in the main upon the old Aristotelian and mediæval notions, and one of his principal aims throughout is to refute the recent innovators who in so many departments had been questioning or denying these long universally admitted *dicta*. Thus, in an early chapter, he falls with great violence upon Van Helmont for his dissent from the authority of Hippocrates, Galen, and Aristotle in various points of physical doctrine, and especially for his rejection of the four elements. Afterwards he attacks Descartes, whom he charges with no fewer than seventeen serious errors; amongst which are, "that the moon and the other planets borrow their light from the sun," — "that the earth is nothing different from a planet, and consequently that the other planets are inhabitable," — "that the moon is illuminated by the earth," — and "that he assumes most of the erroneous opinions of Copernicus." Harvey, however, professes to be quite a common-sense philosopher. "The only instruments," he says in his preface, "that I have employed in the sounding of the nature of things are the external senses, assuming nothing, or concluding no inference, without their advice and undoubted assent, whether in metaphysics, theology, or natural philosophy. Those terms or notions that only give a confused testimony of their being to the understanding, escaping the evidence of external sense, we have declined, as rocks whereon any one might otherwise easily make shipwreck of his sensible knowledge." His practice, however, does not always exactly square with these professions. Take for example a portion of his demonstration of the existence of atoms, or, as he chooses to call them, *minimas*. "Is not time composed out of instants united, and motion out of spurts joined to one another? That there are instants and spurts the operations of angels do confirm to us." This is hardly keeping within the province of the senses. Nor is what follows in the most matter-of-fact style; — in grinding any substance, if you continue the operation beyond a certain point, "you shall sooner," says our author, "grind it into clods and bigger pieces than lesser; the reason is, because nature is irritated by the violence and heat of grinding to call the air to its assistance, which glueth its body again together."¹ The historical deduction of the created universe from

¹ Arch. Philos. Nova, Part ii. p. 29.

the original chaos, and much argumentation that follows touching the essential qualities and forms of things, may be passed over. But we may abridge a speculation about the phenomena of drowning, which occurs in one of the chapters.

The true reason, we are told, had never before been laid down by any, why "a man yet living, or any other creature when alive, is much heavier than when he is dead." That such is the fact, in the first place, is assumed from a living man sinking at first when he falls into the water, and rising again to the top after he has been dead for some time. "The reason is," proceeds our philosopher, "because, through the great heat which was inherent in that man, the heavy and terrestrial parts were the more detained from the centre; they, again, being thus detained, moved stronger towards the centre, and therefore make the body heavier during their violent detention, through the great heat which was in the said man when alive; so that, through this great weight, the alive body sinks down to the bottom. Now, when a man is suffocated, and the heat squeezed out of him by the thick compressing parts of the water, then he is rendered less heavy, and immediately leaves the inferior parts of water, as being less weighty than the said profound parts." So that we see one principle of Dr. Gideon Harvey's philosophy is, that weight is partly occasioned by heat, — that the same substance is heavier or lighter according as it is hotter or colder. The further explanation, in the like strain, of the reasons that nevertheless detain the body below for a considerable time after it may be supposed to have become as cold as the pressure of the water can well make it, need not be quoted at length: — there still remain, it seems, certain "airy and fiery parts," after the vital flame has been extinguished, which it requires in most cases some days to overcome. A strong, compact, well-set man will be eight or nine days in ascending to the top, "because his heat was deeper, and in greater quantity impacted into his body"; and for the same reason, it is affirmed, such a man will sink sooner to the bottom, vanishing under water in the twinkling of an eye. "On the contrary," continues our author, "we hear how that weak and tender women have fallen into the river, and have swam upon the water until watermen have rowed to them, and have taken them up; and many weakly women, that were suspected to be witches, being cast into the water for a trial, have been wickedly and wrongfully adjudged to be witches because they were long in

sinking; and, alas, it is natural: the reason was, because they were comparatively light; for their earthy parts were not so much detained, and consequently moved not so forcibly downwards." "No doubt," it is added, with *naïveté* enough, "but their coats conduced also somewhat to it." "Whence I collect," concludes the demonstration, "that an ordinary woman is almost one-third longer descending to the bottom, than an ordinary man, because a man, from being a third stronger (because he is a third heavier through the force of the light elements — but I mean not through fat or corpulency) than a woman, is conjectured to have one-third more heat than a woman."¹ But, if a woman has less heat than a man, she is, in the worthy doctor's opinion, still more decidedly his inferior in other respects, what heat she has, it should seem, being, after all, too much for the weakness of her general organization. "Women," he afterwards observes, "die faster, that is, thicker than men, and are more disposed to sickness than they, because their innate heat and air do effect greater alterations upon their bodies, as having but little earth or compressing density, in comparison to men, to resist the light elements and moderate their irruptions; and, therefore, women seldom reach to any equal or consistent temperature, but are always in changing, which in them after eighteen, twenty, or twenty-four years' expiration is particularly called *breaking*, because then they alter so fast that they swiftly put a period to their days; and that, because their bodies being lax and porous, their innate heat shoots through in particles, and not in *minimas*, without which there can be no durable temperature. Were their bodies heavier and denser, the *minimas* of earth would divide their heat into *minimas*, and reduce it to a temperature. If, then, their innate heat doth constantly cohere in particles, and is never directed into *minimas*, it retaining in that case stronger force than otherwise it could do in *minimas*, it alters their bodies continually, and so they never attain to any consistency of age. Many sexagenarian widowers, or men of three-score years of age, do alter less and slower than most women do from their five-and-thirtieth year; wherefore they do rather covet a wife of twenty, because she will just last as long in her prime, or will be as fast in breaking, altering, and changing her temperament, form, and shape in one year as the old man shall alter or change in three or four years; and so they [the old man and his

¹ Arch. Philos. Nova, Part ii. p. 106.

young wife] grow deformed in equal time. Wherefore a man's consistent age may last out the beauties of two or three women, one after the other; and, because of this, some in their mirth have proclaimed a woman after her thirty-fifth year to be fitter for an hospital than to continue a wife. No wonder if a woman be more fierce, furious, and of a more rash, swift judgment than a man; for their spirits and heat, moving in great troops and confluences of particles, must needs move swift, which swiftness of motion is the cause of their sudden rages, nimble tongues, and rash wits, &c., &c."¹ But our fair readers have probably had enough of this. From many other curious things in the multifarious miscellany, which comprises chemistry, botany, mineralogy, and other subjects besides those now usually included under the name of natural philosophy, we will transcribe a few sentences of what is laid down in various places on the matters that had most engaged the attention of inquirers for more than a century preceding the time of this writer, and in the elucidation of which the greatest progress had been made by Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, and some of his own countrymen.

The "old fancy of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristarchus, Seleucus, Niceta, and others," the making the earth revolve around the sun which had been in modern times revived by Copernicus, we have already seen that our author treats as a very absurd notion. "The earth is," he says, "and must necessarily be, the centre of the world, or of all the other elements, within which it is contained like the yolk of an egg within the white and the shell. I prove the proposition; if the nature of earth be to move conically from the circumference to its own centre through a contiguous gravity, and the nature of air and fire be to be equally diffused from the centre through their levity, *ergo*, the earth must needs fall to the midst of them all, its parts tending circularly and conically to their centre. The earth being arrived to the centre, it resteth quiet and immovable."² As for the position that the sun is the centre of the system, besides that it is in manifest contradiction to the language of Scripture, it cannot be true, we are told, for this, among other reasons:— "The sun is accounted by most, and proved by us, to be a fiery body, or a flame, and therefore is incapable of attaining to rest in a restless region, which, if it did, its flame would soon diminish through the continual rushing by of the fiery element.

¹ Arch. Philos. Nova, Part ii. p. 134.

² Ibid. p. 206.

tearing its flames into a thousand parts, whose effects would certainly prove destructive to the whole universe, but especially to all living creatures." "The moon," it is added, "is liker (if any) to be the centre, it consisting by far of more earth than the sun, as her minority in body, motion, and degree of brightness do testify."¹ Our author objects, moreover, to the motion assigned to the earth by the Copernican hypothesis on a variety of grounds. In particular, he argues, it is incredibly rapid for so large and heavy a body. Again, "were the earth a planet or star," he observes, "it is supposed it should cast a light, which is repugnant to its nature, through which, as I have showed before, she is rendered dark, and is the cause of all darkness. Were this absurdity admitted, all our knowledge which hitherto wise men have so laboured to accomplish would be in vain; for, as I said before, earth and earthy bodies must be light, fire and fiery bodies must be heavy, and enjoy their rest; water and waterish bodies must be likewise heavy; the air and airy bodies must be weighty, and enjoy their rest; . . . all dark colours must be supposed light; all astronomical appearances, shadows; sounds, tastes, scents, and all mixed bodies must then be understood to be contrary to what really they are." In fine, he concludes, after quoting some passages to show that Scripture likewise, as well as common sense, is plain against the earth's motion, "what need there more words to confute so absurd an opinion?"²

In a subsequent chapter on the tides, he objects altogether to the imagination entertained by Descartes, of the sun and moon having anything to do with that phenomenon. "I deny," he says, in the first place, "his supposition of the earth's motion, as being fabulous, which we have confuted elsewhere. He might as well assert that there be as many Neptunes under water moving it circularly, as Aristotle stated intelligences to move the heavens; for even this he might excuse by saying it was but an assumption to prove a phenomenon of the water." "Can any one rationally or probably conceive," again he indignantly asks, "that the sun, much less the moon, being so remote, and whose forcible effects are so little felt by sublunary bodies, should be capable of driving so deep, so large, and so heavy a body as the ocean, which is as powerful to resist through its extreme gravity as all the celestial bodies are potent to move through their extreme lightness? What,

¹ Arch. Philos. Nova, Part ii. p. 208.

² Ibid. p. 209.

because the ocean and the moon move one way, therefore the one must either follow or move the other? What, can a passion so durable and constant, and so equal, depend upon a violent cause? . . . Such fancies are ridiculous, and not to be proposed by any philosopher”¹ The reason why the greatest height of the waters happens at full-moon he conceives to be simply “because the ocean began its course at that instant when the moon after her creation, being placed in opposition to the sun, began hers.”² His own explanation of the cause of the tides is, that they are occasioned in some way or other, which he takes great pains, but not to much purpose, to investigate, by the force of their own gravity periodically drawing the waters of the ocean downward; “the waters,” he says, “take the beginning of their motion underneath not far from the ground, where their being pressed by the great weight of many hundred fathoms of water lying upon them must needs cause a very swift course of waters removing underneath and withdrawing from that of the surface, which is prevented by a swift motion, because it sinks down to that place whence the subjected parts do withdraw themselves; which gives us a reason why the superficial parts of the sea do not flow by many degrees so swift as the subjected ones.”³ In another chapter he takes up the question of the relative magnitudes of the earth, the sun, and the other heavenly bodies; setting out by asserting that “the body of the sun is by far exceeded in mole and bigness by the weighty globe,”⁴ (that is, by this earth). But what he calls his proofs of this proposition need not be inflicted upon the reader.

 THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

SUCH were the notions in science which prevailed, probably among the generality even of persons of education and reading, in England at the date of the incorporation and first public establishment of the Royal Society. The origin of this institution is traced to about the year 1645, when, on the suggestion of Mr. Theodore Haak, a native of the Palatinate, a number of persons

¹ Arch. Philos. Nova, Part ii. p. 303.

² Ibid. p. 305.

³ Ibid. p. 306.

⁴ Ibid. p. 417.

resident in London, who took an interest in what was called the new or experimental philosophy, began to meet together once a week, sometimes at the lodgings of one of their number, Dr. Jonathan Goddard, a physician, in Wood Street, who kept an operator in his house for grinding glasses for telescopes; sometimes at apartments in Cheapside, sometimes in Gresham College or its neighborhood. Such is the account given by Dr. Birch, on the authority of Dr. John Wallis, the eminent mathematician, who was himself a member of the association thus formed.¹ Besides Wallis, Haak, and Goddard, it included Dr. Wilkins (afterwards Bishop of Chester, and the author of several curious scientific projects and speculations), Dr. George Ent (the friend of Harvey, and defender of his great discovery), Dr. Glisson, already mentioned, Dr. Christopher Merret, who afterwards distinguished himself by his experimental investigations, Mr. Samuel Foster, professor of astronomy in Gresham College, and several others whose names have not been recorded. "Their business was," says Birch, "precluding affairs of state and questions of theology, to consider and discuss philosophical subjects, and whatever had any connection with or relation to them, — as physic, anatomy, geometry, astronomy, navigation, statics, magnetism, chemistry, mechanics, and natural experiments, with the state of these studies as then cultivated at home or abroad."

In some letters written in 1646 and 1647 we find the Honorable Robert Boyle, then a very young man, making mention of what he calls "our new Philosophical or Invisible College," by which he is supposed to mean this association. Wilkins, Wallis, and Goddard were all withdrawn to Oxford, by being appointed to offices in the university in the course of the years 1648, 1649, and 1651; and by their exertions a society similar to the London one was now established in that city, which was joined by Dr. Seth Ward, then Savilian professor of astronomy, afterwards successively Bishop of Exeter and Salisbury, by Dr. Ralph Bathurst, Dr. Thomas Willis, Dr. (afterwards Sir) William Petty (all physicians), and divers others. The Oxford society met at first in Dr. Petty's lodgings, in the house of an apothecary, whose boxes and phials furnished them with many of the chemical substances they

¹ History of the Royal Society of London, 1756, i. 1. Dr. Birch refers to Dr. Wallis's account of his own Life in the Preface to Hearne's edition of Langtoft's Chronicle, i. 161. What is here called an account of his life is a letter from Wallis to his friend Dr. Thomas Smith.

wanted for inspection or experiment. After Petty went to Ireland in September, 1652, the meetings seem to have been discontinued for some years; but in February, 1658, we find Petty, in a letter from Dublin to Boyle, observing that he had not heard better news than that the club was restored at Oxford; and shortly before that date the members appear to have, in fact, begun to assemble again at Dr. Wilkins's apartments in Wadham College, whence, on the appointment of Wilkins, in September, 1659, to the mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge, they transferred themselves to the lodgings of Mr. Boyle, who had come to Oxford in June, 1654, and continued to reside there till April, 1668.

All this while the original London society is believed to have met once or twice a week for the greater part of the year without interruption, those of the members who had removed to Oxford re-joining it whenever they chanced to come up to town. In course of time many of the members of the Oxford club became resident in London; and it is certain that, by the year 1659, the meetings had come to be held pretty regularly in term-time at Gresham College every week, either after the Wednesday's lecture on astronomy by Wren, or after the Thursday's on geometry by Mr. Lawrence Rooke, sometimes, perhaps, on both days. Among the members at this time are mentioned Lord Brouncker and John Evelyn. The confusion in which public affairs were involved in the latter part of the year 1659, when Gresham College was turned into a barrack for soldiers, dispersed the philosophers; but "their meetings," continues their historian, "were revived, and attended with a larger concourse of persons, eminent for their characters and learning, upon the Restoration, 1660; and, as appears from the journal-book of the Royal Society, on the 28th of November that year, the Lord Viscount Brouncker, Mr. Boyle, Mr. Bruce, Sir Robert Moray, Sir Paul Neile, Dr. Wilkins, Dr. Goddard, Dr. Petty, Mr. Balle, Mr. Rooke, Mr. Wren, and Mr. Hill, after the lecture of Mr. Wren at Gresham College, withdrew for mutual conversation into Mr. Rooke's apartment, where, amongst other matters discoursed of, something was offered about a design of founding a college for the promoting of physico-mathematical experimental learning. And, because they had these frequent occasions of meeting with one another, it was proposed that some course might be thought of to improve this meeting to a more regular way of debating things; and that, according to the manner in other

countries, where there were voluntary associations of men into academies for the advancement of various parts of learning, they might do something answerable here for the promoting of experimental philosophy." ¹ It was thereupon agreed that the meetings should be continued at three o'clock in the afternoon on every Wednesday, in Mr. Rooke's chamber at Gresham College during term-time, and at Mr. Balle's apartments in the Temple in the vacation. It was also arranged that every member of the society should pay ten shillings on his admission, and a shilling a week besides so long as he remained a member. At this meeting, which may be regarded as that at which the present Royal Society was actually founded, Dr. Wilkins presided. From the subsequent admissions it appears that only the twelve persons present on this occasion were considered as members; all others, even those who had attended the meetings kept before the Restoration, had to be regularly proposed and balloted for. A list, however, was now drawn out of "such persons as were known to those present, and judged by them willing and fit to be joined with them in their design, and who, if they should desire it, might be admitted before any others"; among whom we find the names of Lord Hatton, Mr. (afterwards Lord) Brereton, who had been a member of the old club, Sir Kenelm Digby, Mr. Evelyn, Mr. Slingsbey (another attendant at the meetings before the Restoration), Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Denham, Dr. Ward, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Glisson, Dr. Ent, Dr. Bate (author of the *Elenchus Mortuum*), Dr. Willis, Dr. Cowley (the poet), Mr. Ashmole (founder of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford), Mr. Oldenburg (for many years secretary), &c.

At the next meeting, on that day week, Sir Robert Moray informed the members, from the king, that his majesty had been made acquainted with their design, and that he highly approved of it, and would be ready to give it his encouragement. It appears to have been principally through Moray, who held the office of a sort of private secretary to Charles II., that the Society acquired and was enabled to keep up its interest at court. Burnet, who knew him well, calls him "the first former of the Royal Society." and adds that "while he lived he was the life and soul of that body." "He was," says the bishop, "the most universally beloved and esteemed by men of all sides and sorts of any man I have ever known in my whole life. He was a pious man, and in

¹ Birch, i. 3.

the midst of armies and courts he spent many hours a day in devotion, which was in a most elevating strain. He had gone through the easy parts of mathematics, and knew the history of nature beyond any man I ever yet knew. He had a genius much like Peiriski, as he is described by Gassendi."¹ On the 16th of January, 1661, we find the king sending the Society two loadstones by Sir Robert Moray, with a message, "that he expected an account from the Society of some of the most considerable experiments upon them."² Charles seems to have taken much interest in the Society from the first; in the account of the meeting of the 4th of September this year, it is noted that "a proposition of Mr. Hobbes, for finding two mean proportionals between two straight lines given, was delivered into the Society by Sir Paul Neile from the king, indorsed with his majesty's own hand, and was ordered to be registered";³ and on the 16th of October Sir Robert Moray acquaints the Society that he and Sir Paul Neile had kissed the king's hand in their name; on which he was desired to return their most humble thanks to his majesty "for the favour and honour done them, of offering himself to be entered one of their Society."⁴ "When the Society first addressed themselves to his majesty," Bishop Sprat tells us, "he was pleased to express much satisfaction that this enterprise was begun in his reign. He then represented to them the gravity and difficulty of their work; and assured them of all the kind influence of his power and prerogative. Since that he has frequently committed many things to their search; he has referred many foreign rarities to their inspection; he has recommended many domestic improvements to their care; he has demanded the result of their trials in many appearances of nature; he has been present, and assisted with his own hands, at the performing of many of their experiments, in his gardens, his parks, and on the river."⁵

On the 15th of July, 1662, a charter was passed incorporating the Society under the name of the Royal Society, and constituting William Lord Brouncker the first president; Moray, Boyle, Brereton, Digby, Neile, Slingsbey, Petty, Drs. Wallis, Timothy Clarke, Wilkins, and Ent, William Areskine, Esq., cup-bearers to his majesty; Drs. Goddard and Christopher Wren, William Balle, Esq., Matthew Wren, Esq., Evelyn, T. Henshaw, Esq., Dudley Palmer,

¹ Own Time, i. 59.

² Birch, i. 10.

³ Ibid. p. 42.

⁴ Ibid. p. 50.

⁵ History of the Royal Society, Lond. 1667, p. 133

Esq., and Oldenburg, the first council; Balle, the first treasurer, and Wilkins and Oldenburg the first secretaries. And some additional privileges were granted by a second charter which passed the privy seal on the 22d of April, 1663.¹ From a list drawn up on the 21st of May, in that year, it appears that the number of members was then a hundred and fifteen.² Among them, besides the names that have been already mentioned, are those of James Lord Annesley, John Aubrey, Esq. (the author of the *Miscellanies*), George Duke of Buckingham, George Lord Berkeley, Robert Lord Bruce, Isaac Barrow, B. D., Walter Lord Cavendish, Dr. Walter Charleton, John Earl of Crawford and Lindsay, Henry Marquis of Dorchester, William Earl of Devonshire, John Dryden, Esq. (the poet), John Graunt, Esq. (author of the *Observations upon the Bills of Mortality*), Mr. Robert Hooke (already a very active member, although the only one whose name stands thus undecorated by any designation either civil or academic), Alexander Earl of Kincardine, John Lord Lucas, John Viscount Massareene, James Earl of Northampton, Dr. Walter Pope (author of the well-known song called the *Old Man's Wish*, and other pieces of verse), Edward Earl of Sandwich, Thomas Sprat, M. A. (afterwards Bishop of Rochester), Edmund Waller, Esq. (the poet). The Royal Society, we thus perceive, besides the array of titled names which it doubtless owed in part to the patronage of the court, had at this time to boast of a considerable sprinkling of the cultivators of poetry and general literature among its men of science and experimentalists.³ It had however been specially constituted for the promotion of natural or physical science: *Regalis Societas Londini pro scientia naturali promovenda*, or the Royal Society of London for improving natural knowledge, is the full title by which it is described in the second royal charter, and in the English oath therein directed to be taken by the president.⁴

¹ See the first Charter in Birch, i. 88-96; the second, 221-230.

² Birch, i. 239.

³ On the 7th of December, 1664, "it being suggested that there were several persons of the Society whose genius was very proper and inclined to improve the English tongue, and particularly for philosophical purposes, it was voted that there be a committee for improving the English language, and that they meet at Sir Peter Wyche's lodgings in Gray's Inn once or twice a month, and give an account of their proceedings to the Society when called upon." A committee of twenty-one members was accordingly appointed for this purpose: among them were Dryden, Evelyn, Sprat, and Waller. — Birch, i. 499, 500.

⁴ In the first Charter it is called simply the Royal Society (*Regalis Societas*)

We have a curious account of the Royal Society at this early date from Louis XIV.'s historiographer, M. Samuel Sorbriere, who came over to this country in 1663, and after his return to France published a narrative of his adventures.¹ Sorbriere's book is on the whole a somewhat coxcombical performance, and, of course, in a hastily written description of a foreign country, in which he spent only a few months, he has made several mistakes as to matters of fact; but he may be trusted at least for the outside appearances of things which he saw with his own eyes, and which he evidently does not intend to misrepresent. One of his principal objects in visiting England, he states, was to renew his acquaintance with some old friends, and to be introduced to other learned persons here. One of those whom he had formerly known was Mr. Hobbes, whom, he tells us, he found much the same man as he had seen him fourteen years before, "and even," he adds, "in the same posture in his chamber as he was wont to be every afternoon, wherein he betook himself to his studies after he had been walking about all the morning. This he did for his health, of which he ought to have the greatest regard, he being at this time seventy-eight years of age. Besides which he plays so long at tennis once a week till he is quite tired. I found very little alteration in his face, and none at all in the vigour of his mind, strength of memory, and cheerfulness of spirit; all of which he perfectly retained."² Hobbes, who in fact was at this time no more than seventy-five, and who lived and wrote for sixteen or seventeen years longer, had already involved himself in his famous mathematical controversy with Dr. Wallis and the new society, which speedily became so angry and scurrilous on both sides — especially on that of Hobbes, who was in the wrong; but it does not appear either that Sorbriere was prepossessed against the Society, or they against him in the first instance, by his connection with their great assailant. Perhaps, however, the circumstance was remembered afterwards, when some of the more zealous members found themselves dissatisfied with the Frenchman's published narrative, and Sprat, already the

but its object is there still farther limited to mere experimental science — "*ad rerum naturalium artiumque utilium scientias experimentorum fide ulterius promovendas.*"

¹ Relation d'un Voyage en Angleterre, 1664: translated under the title of *A Voyage to England*, containing many things relating to the state of learning, religion, and other curiosities of that kingdom, 1709.

² English Translation, p. 27.

appointed historian of the Society, and vain of his reputation as the finest or smartest writer of the day, undertook the task of exposing its blunders and calumnies.¹

The Society elected Sorbieri a member while he was in England; and he on his part speaks with great respect both of the Society as a body and of those of its members whom he has occasion to mention. Of Sir Robert Moray he says, "It was a wonderful, or rather a very edifying thing, to find a person employed in matters of state, and of such excellent merit, and one who had been engaged a great part of his life in warlike commands and the affairs of the cabinet, apply himself in making machines in St. James's Park and adjusting telescopes. All this we have seen him do with great application. . . . I made him frequent visits, very much to my satisfaction, having never had the honour to see him but I learned something of him." He adds, "He was so kind as to introduce me to Prince Rupert, who is of the same frank temper, kind, modest, very curious, and takes no state upon him. . . . Sir Robert Moray brought me likewise into the king's presence, who is a lover of the curiosities of art and nature. He took the pains to bring me into the Royal Society, and had the goodness, almost every time that I attended there, to seat me next himself, that so he might interpret to me whatever was said in English."²

An account is afterwards given of the origin of the Royal Society, in which we are told that during the late civil war "persons of quality, having no court to make, applied themselves to their studies; some turning their heads to chemistry, others to mechanism, mathematics, or natural philosophy." "Those same persons," proceeds our author, "who had found their account in their respective studies, would not, after the king's return . . . be guilty of so much ingratitude as to leave them and take upon them an idle court life; but they chose rather to intersperse these sorts of entertainments with their other diversions; and so the Lords Digby, Boyle, Brouncker, Moray, Devonshire, Worcester, and divers others (for the English nobility are all of them learned and polite), built laboratories, made machines, opened mines, and made use of an hundred sorts of artists to find out some new inven-

¹ Observations on M. de Sorbieri's Voyage into England; written to Dr. Wren professor of astronomy in Oxford, 1708 (first printed in 1665).

² English Translation, p. 31.

tion or other. The king himself is not devoid of this curiosity. nay, he has caused a famous chymist to be brought over from Paris, for whom he has built a very fine elaboratory in St. James's Park. But his majesty more particularly takes great delight in finding out useful experiments in navigation, wherein he has immense knowledge."¹ He then notices with great admiration Boyle's pneumatic engine, or air-pump, and other inventions of some of the members of the Royal Society. He states, by mistake, that the Society had already begun a library adjoining to the gallery through which they passed from their hall of meeting in Gresham College: "they have as yet no library," Sprat observes, "but only a repository for their instruments and rarities."² Sprat is scandalized at the triviality of the description given of the meetings of the Society; but the "mean circumstances," the enumeration of which he denounces as unworthy of so noble a theme, are interesting enough at this distance of time. First is noticed the usher or beadle, "who goes before the president with a mace, which he lays down on the table when the Society have taken their places": this is the gilt silver mace the Society still possess, the gift of their first royal patron. It was till recently believed to be the same which was formerly used in the House of Commons, and which was removed from the table by one of the soldiers on Cromwell's order to "take away that bauble," when he came down and turned out the remnant of the Long Parliament on the famous 20th of April, 1653; but this appears to be a mistake. "The room where the Society meets," the account goes on, "is large and wainscoted; there is a large table before the chimney, with seven or eight chairs covered with green cloth about it, and two rows of wooden and matted benches to lean on, the first being higher than the other, in form like an amphitheatre. The president and council are elective; they mind no precedency in the Society, but the president sits at the middle of the table in an elbow chair, with his back to the chimney. The secretary sits at the end of the table on his left hand, and they have each of them pen, ink, and paper before them. I saw nobody sit on the chairs; I think they are reserved for persons of great quality, or those who have occasion to draw near to the president. All the other members take their places as they think fit, and without any ceremony; and, if any one comes in after the Society is fixed,

¹ English Translation, p. 33.

² Observations, p. 166.

nobody stirs, but he takes a place presently where he can find it, that so no interruption may be given to him that speaks. The president has a little wooden mace in his hand with which he strikes the table when he would command silence ; they address their discourse to him bareheaded till he makes a sign for them to put on their hats ; and there is a relation given in a few words of what is thought proper to be said concerning the experiments proposed by the secretary. There is nobody here eager to speak, that makes a long harangue, or intent upon saying all he knows ; he is never interrupted that speaks, and differences of opinion cause no manner of resentment, nor as much as a disobliging way of speech ; there is nothing seemed to me to be more civil, respectful, and better managed than this meeting ; and, if there are any private discourses held between any while a member is speaking, they only whisper, and the least sign from the president causes a sudden stop, though they have not told their mind out. I took special notice of this conduct in a body consisting of so many persons, and of such different nations. . . . In short, it cannot be discerned that any authority prevails here ; and, whereas those who are mere mathematicians favour Des Cartes more than Gassendus, the *literati*, on the other side, are more inclined to the latter. But both of them have hitherto demeaned themselves with so much moderation that no different hypotheses or principles have been a means to break in upon the good harmony of the Society.”¹ Sprat takes fire at this statement about the authority of Descartes with the mathematicians, and of Gassendi with the men of general learning. “Neither of these two men,” he says, “bear any sway amongst them ; they are never named there as dictators over men’s reasons ; nor is there any extraordinary reference to their judgments.”²

The Royal Society began to publish the most important of the papers communicated to it, under the title of the Philosophical Transactions, in March, 1665 ; and the work has been continued from that date to the present day, with the exception of the four years from January, 1679, to January, 1683 (for which space the deficiency is partly supplied by Hooke’s volume of Philosophical Collections), of the three years and a month from December, 1687, to January, 1691, and of various shorter intervals, amounting in all to nearly a year and a half more, previous to October

¹ English Translation, p. 38.

² Observations, p. 165.

1695. From this work, or either of its abridgments, — the first, begun by Mr. Lowthorp and brought down by a succession of continuators to the middle of last century; the second, and best, by the late Dr. Charles Hutton and assistants, extending to the year 1800, — and from the histories of Bishop Sprat and Dr. Birch, the former, however, coming down only to the year 1667, in which it was published, — may be learned the general character of the inquiries with which the Royal Society occupied itself in the earlier stage of its existence, and which, we may hence infer, formed the kind of science at that time chiefly cultivated in this country. It will be found that mathematical and analytical investigations then bore an extremely small proportion to the bulk of the business at the Society's meetings; which, indeed, did not consist much of mere speculation of any kind, but rather of exhibitions and experiments, of details as to the useful arts, accounts of new inventions, communications of remarkable facts, phenomena, and incidents in natural history, chemistry, medicine, and anatomy, — of a great deal, in truth, that would now probably be accounted to belong only to the curiosities or popular pastimes of science. A list drawn up 30th March, 1664, presents the members as then distributed into the following seven committees (besides an eighth for correspondence): 1. Mechanical, to consider and improve all mechanical inventions; 2. Astronomical and Optical; 3. Anatomical; 4. Chemical; 5. Georgical; 6. For Histories of Trades; 7. For collecting all the Phenomena of Nature hitherto observed, and all experiments made and recorded.¹ Here we have no mention at all of either mathematical or algebraical science; the cultivation of these branches separately, or for their own sake, does not seem to have then been considered as coming within the design of the Society. Nor were they extensively applied even in mechanical, astronomical, and optical investigations. If we take up the first volume of Hutton's abridgment of the Philosophical Transactions, which comprises the first seven volumes of the original publication, extending over seven years, from 1665 to 1672 inclusive, we shall find that of about 450 communications (besides nearly 200 reviews of books), only nine come under the heads of algebra and geometry, or pure science; that of about 140 relating to mechanical philosophy, and arranged under the heads of dynamics, astronomy, chronology, navigation, gunnery, hydraulics, pneumatics, optics, electricity, magnetism, pyrotechny, thermometry, etc., nine in

¹ Birch, i. 406, 407.

every ten are mere accounts of observations and experiments, or explanations and hypotheses in which there is little or no mathematics; and that the remaining 300, or two thirds of the whole belong to the departments of natural history (divided into zoölogy, botany, mineralogy, geography, and hydrology), of chemical philosophy (divided into chemistry, meteorology, and geology), of physiology (divided into physiology of animals, physiology of plants, medicine, surgery, and anatomy), and of the arts (divided into mechanical, chemical, and the fine arts).¹ So that at this time only about one paper in fifty was purely mathematical or analytical, and only one in three on subjects to which the science of lines and quantities was applicable, — for chemistry was not yet in a condition to be treated otherwise than tentatively, and, if mathematical reasoning had been attempted in medicine, the attempt was a failure and a folly.

The history of the Royal Society, however, is very nearly the whole history of English science, both physical and mathematical, from the date of its institution to the end of the seventeenth century. Almost all the scientific discoveries and improvements that originated in this country during that century were made by its members, and a large proportion of them are recorded and were first published in its Transactions. But the Royal Society, it is to be remembered, was, after all, still more an effect than a cause, still more an indication than a power; and, although it no doubt gave an impulse to the progress of science by the communication and union which it helped to maintain among the laborers in that field, by some advantages which it derived from its position, and by the spirit which it excited and diffused, the advance which was made under its auspices, or partly by force of its example, would probably have been accomplished little less rapidly without its assistance; for the time was come, and the men with it, who assuredly would not have been hindered from doing their work, although such an institution had never been called into existence. But it was part of the work they were sent to do to establish such an institution, which, although not the tree on which science grows, is both a convenient and ornamental shelter for the gathered fruit, and may be made serviceable for various subsidiary purposes which even philosophers are entitled to hold in some regard in a refined and luxurious age.

¹ In Hutton's table of contents a few papers are repeated under different heads but this cannot much affect the calculation.

THE STEAM-ENGINE.

ONE invention, dating after the Restoration, of which much has been said in recent times, is assigned to an individual whose name does not occur in the roll of the members of the Royal Society, — the first Steam-Engine, which is commonly believed to have been both described and constructed by the Marquis of Worcester, — the same whose negotiations with the Irish Catholics, when he was Earl of Glamorgan, make so remarkable a passage in the history of the contest between Charles I. and the parliament. The Marquis of Worcester's famous publication entitled *A Century of the names and scantlings of such Inventions as at present I can call to mind to have tried and perfected* (my former notes being lost), etc., was first printed in 1663. "It is a very small piece," says Walpole, "containing a dedication to Charles II. ; another to both Houses of Parliament, in which he affirms having in the presence of Charles I. performed many of the feats mentioned in his book : a table of contents ; and the work itself, which is but a table of contents neither, being a list of a hundred projects, most of them impossibilities, but all of which he affirms having discovered the art of performing. Some of the easiest seem to be, how to write with a single line ; with a point ; how to use all the senses indifferently for each other, as, to talk by colors, and to read by the taste ; to make an unsinkable ship ; how to do and to prevent the same thing ; how to sail against wind and tide ; how to form an universal character ; how to converse by jangling bells out of tune ; how to take towns or prevent their being taken ; how to write in the dark ; how to cheat with dice ; and, in short, how to fly."¹ "Of all these wonderful inventions," adds Walpole, "the last but one seems the only one of which his lordship has left the secret" ; but the wit, who characterizes the whole production as "an amazing piece of folly," has missed the most interesting of all the marquis's projects, the sixty-eighth in the list, which he entitles "An admirable and most forcible way to drive up water by fire," and which appears from his description to have been, in fact, a species of steam-engine. His language implies, too, that the idea had been actually carried into effect : he speaks of having made use of a cannon for his boiler ; and he says, "I have seen the water run like a constant fountain-stream forty feet high ; one vessel of water

¹ Royal and Noble Authors.

rarefied by fire driveth up forty of cold water." And Sorbieré when here in 1663, appears to have seen the engine at work, — although the superficial, chattering Frenchman has described it, and probably understood it, so imperfectly as to have taken no note even of the nature of the power by which it was made to act: — "One of the most curious things I had a mind to see," he writes, "was a water-engine invented by the Marquis of Worcester, of which he had made an experiment. I went on purpose to see it at Fox Hall (Vauxhall), on the other side of the Thames, a little above Lambeth, the Archbishop of Canterbury's palace, standing in sight of London. One man, by the help of this machine, raised four large buckets full of water in an instant forty feet high, and that through a pipe of about eight inches long; which invention will be of greater use to the public than that very ingenious machine already made use of, and raised upon wooden work above Somerset House, that supplies part of the town with water, but with great difficulty, and in less quantity than could be wished." ¹

Forty years before the publication of the *Century of Inventions*, it is to be observed, a French engineer, Solomon de Caus, in a volume published at Paris entitled *Les Raisons des Forces Mouvantes*,² had not only called attention to the power of steam produced in a close vessel, but had proposed a mode of raising water by means of such a force, the principle of which, as far as can be collected, appears to have been the same with that of the Marquis of Worcester's contrivance. It is possible that the marquis may have taken the idea from this book, which would be the more likely to attract attention in England from the circumstance of De Caus having come over to this country in 1612 in the train of the Elector Palatine, and resided here for some years; but still the English nobleman remains, as far as is known, the first person who ever actually constructed a steam-engine, supposing the water-engine seen by Sorbieré to have been such. Twenty years later, as appears from the author's manuscript now in the British Museum, the same idea that had been already published by De Caus, and realized by the Marquis of Worcester, was proposed as his own

¹ *Journey to England*, p. 29.

² Not to be confounded with another work entitled "*Traité des Forces Mouvantes; par Mons. de Camus, Gentilhomme Lorrain*"; 8vo, Paris, 1722; in which, although of so much later date, steam as a moving power does not appear to be mentioned.

by Sir Samuel Morland in a work on machines for raising water written in French, and addressed to Louis XIV.;¹ although the passage was omitted from the book when it was soon afterwards sent to the press. About 1690, Denis Papin, a native of France, but then and for a great part of his life resident in this country, discovered and applied the two important improvements of making the expansive force of the steam act by means of a piston and of producing a reaction of the piston through the condensation of the steam by means of cold; he is also the inventor of the safety-valve, which, however, he only applied in the cooking apparatus called his digester, where steam was employed merely to produce heat, not in any machine where that agent was the moving power. In 1698 Captain Savery contrived the first steam-engine which can be said to have been found practically useful; he employed the principle of the condensation of the steam by cold, not to permit the relapse of a piston, as Papin had done, but to effect the elevation of the water directly by allowing it to ascend into the vacuum so produced. From this date steam may be considered to have ranked as an important working power in this country, although Savery's engine was never applied to any other purpose except the raising of water, which, too, it could only effect from a very inconsiderable depth, the vacuum, by means of which it principally operated, ceasing to act as soon as the column of water came to balance an atmospheric column of the same base; in other words, as soon as the water had ascended through the vacuum to the height of about thirty-two feet. About 1711 a much more effective engine was invented by Thomas Newcomen, an ironmonger of Dartmouth, assisted by John Colley, a glazier of the same place, upon Papin's principle, of making the vacuum produced by the condensation of the steam serve for allowing the descent of a piston under its own gravitation and the pressure of the atmosphere. Newcomen's, or the atmospheric engine, as it has been called, soon came to be extensively employed, especially in the mining districts, where water had often to be raised from great depths. Dr. John Theophilus Desaguliers, a clergyman of the Church of England, but of French birth and extraction, in the year 1718 improved Savery's engine (which from its cheapness has for some purposes continued in use to our own day) by substituting the injection of a small current of cold water into the receiver for the old method

¹ *Recueil de Machines pour l'Élévation des Eaux, &c.*

of dashing the water over the outside of the vessel to effect the concentration of the steam; and this same improvement—rediscovered, it is said, by himself—was also soon after applied by Newcomen to his engine. About the same time Mr. Beighton contrived to make the machine itself open and shut the cocks by which it received its alternate supplies of steam and water.



OTHER DISCOVERIES AND IMPROVEMENTS IN NATURAL AND EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE.

AT the head of the cultivators of experimental science in England in the latter part of the seventeenth century stands the Honorable Robert Boyle, seventh and youngest son of Richard first Earl of Cork, commonly called the Great Earl. He was born in 1627, and lived till 1691. Boyle was an unwearied observer and collector of facts, and also a voluminous speculator, in physical science; but his actual discoveries do not amount to much. He made considerable improvements on the air-pump, originally invented a few years before by Otto von Guericke, of Magdeburg, and indeed it may be said to have been in his hands that it first became an instrument available for the purposes of science. The few additions which Boyle made to our knowledge of general principles, or what are called the laws of nature, were almost confined to the one department of pneumatics; he is commonly held to have discovered or established the absorbing power of the atmosphere and the propagation of sound by the air; he proved that element to possess much more both of expansibility and of compressibility than had been previously suspected; he made some progress towards ascertaining the weight of atmospheric air; and he showed more clearly than had been done before his time its indispensable-ness to the sustentation both of combustion and of animal life. He may be regarded, therefore, along with Torricelli, Pascal, and Guericke, as one of the fathers of pneumatic science,—in so far at least as it is concerned with the mechanical properties of the atmosphere. Boyle also ascertained many particular facts, and arrived at some general, though rather vague, conclusions in chemistry, in the course of his multifarious experiments: the practice

of applying one chemical agent as a test for detecting the presence of another was first adopted by him; and he exposed the falsehood of the notion, then commonly entertained, that whatever could not be destroyed or changed by fire was to be ranked among the elementary constituents of the natural world. In chemical pneumatics, however, little progress was made either by Boyle or for many years after his day. He conjectured, indeed, that only a portion of the atmosphere was employed in sustaining combustion and animal life; and his fellow-laborer Hooke divined that the element in question is the same with that contained in nitre (namely, what is now called oxygen), and that in combustion it combined with the burning body. But neither of these sagacious conclusions was yet experimentally established.

Robert Hooke, born in 1635, was, till his death in 1702, one of the most devoted cultivators of science in this age. Besides his skill and sagacity as a chemist, he had a remarkable quickness and fertility of mechanical invention, and his speculations ranged over the whole field of natural history and natural philosophy, from the minutest disclosures of the microscope to beyond the farthest sweep of the telescope. His jealous and rapacious temper, and sordid personal habits, which made him an object of general dislike in his own day, have probably somewhat stinted the acknowledgment paid to his merits both by his contemporaries and by posterity; and in fact, of numerous inventions and discoveries to which he himself laid claim, there is scarcely one to which his right has been universally admitted. It is generally allowed, however, that we are indebted to him for the improvement of the pendulum as a measure of time, and for some valuable innovations in the construction of pendulum watches, in particular the application of a spiral spring to regulate the balance. But in his own notion Hooke was the true author of several of the discoveries which have immortalized the greatest of his contemporaries. He disputed partly the originality, partly the truth, of Newton's theory of light; and he even asserted, when the *Principia* came out, that there was little or nothing there announced on the force and action of gravitation that he had not himself anticipated. He had, indeed, some years before, in a paper printed in the *Philosophical Transactions*, sketched an hypothesis of the movements of the earth and the other planets on the assumption of the principle of universal gravitation;¹ but

¹ *Phil. Trans.* No. 101 (for April, 1674).

this was a very different thing from the demonstration of the system of the world by Newton on the establishment and accurate measurement of that force. Newton himself eventually admitted that his proposition of the gravitation of the planets being as the inverse square of the distance had been previously deduced from Kepler's discovery of their elliptical orbits by Hooke, as well as by Wren and Halley; but this concession is supposed to have been made rather for the sake of peace than from conviction.

The first president of the Royal Society, William Brouncker, Lord Viscount Brouncker (of the kingdom of Ireland), who was born in 1620 and died in 1684, was an able mathematician, and is known as the author of the first series invented for the quadrature of the hyperbola, and also as the first writer who noticed what are called continued fractions in arithmetic. Dr. John Wallis (b. 1616, d. 1703) is the author of many works of great learning, ingenuity, and profoundness on algebra, geometry, and mechanical philosophy. Among the practical subjects to which he devoted himself were the deciphering of secret writing, and the teaching of persons born deaf to speak. "I was informed," says Sorbier, "that Dr. Wallis had brought a person that was born deaf and dumb to read at Oxford, by teaching him several inflections fitted to the organs of his voice, to make it articulate."¹ The French traveller afterwards went to Oxford, and saw and conversed with Wallis (who held the office of Savilian Professor of Geometry in the university), although he complains that the professor and all the other learned Englishmen he met with spoke Latin, which was his medium of communication with them, with such an accent and way of pronunciation that they were very hard to be understood.² However, he adds that he was much edified, notwithstanding, by Wallis's conversation; and was mightily pleased both with the experiments he saw made by him in teaching the deaf to read, and with the model of a floor he had invented "that could bear a great weight, and make a very large hall, though it consisted only of several short pieces of timber joined together, without any mortices, nails, and pins, or any other support than what they gave one another; for the weight they bear closes them so together as

¹ *Journey to England*, p. 28.

² In this matter, "we do," says Sprat, in his answer, "as all our neighbours besides; we speak the ancient Latin after the same way that we pronounce our mother tongue; so the Germans do, so the Italians, so the French," p. 159

if they were but one board, and the floor all of a piece." He gives a diagram of this ingenious floor; "and indeed," he continues, "I made Mr. Hobbes himself even admire it, though he is at no good terms with Dr. Wallis, and has no reason to love him."¹ We have already mentioned the hot war, about what might seem the least heating of all subjects, that was carried on for some years between Wallis and Hobbes. A curious account is afterwards given of Wallis's personal appearance: — "The doctor," says our traveller, "has less in him of the gallant man than Mr. Hobbes; and, if you should see him with his university cap on his head, as if he had a *porte-feuille* on, covered with black cloth, and sewed to his calot, you would be as much inclined to laugh at this diverting sight as you would be ready to entertain the excellency and civility of my friend [Hobbes] with esteem and affection." And then the coxcomb adds, — "What I have said concerning Dr. Wallis is not intended in the least to derogate from the praises due to one of the greatest mathematicians in the world; and who, being yet no more than forty years of age [he was forty-seven], may advance his studies much farther, and become polite, if purified by the air of the court at London; for I must tell you, sir, that that of the university stands in need of it, and that those who are not purified otherways have naturally strong breaths that are noxious in conversation."² It may be doubtful whether these last expressions are to be understood literally, or in some metaphorical sense; for it is not obvious how the air of a court, though it may polish a man's address, is actually to sweeten a bad breath. Dr. Wallis, besides his publication of the papers of Horrocks already noticed, edited several of the works of Archimedes, Ptolemy, and other ancient mathematicians; and he is also the author of a Grammar of the English tongue, written in Latin, which abounds in curious and valuable matter.

Another ingenious though somewhat fanciful mathematician of this day was Dr. John Wilkins, who was made Bishop of Chester some years after the Restoration, although during the interregnum he had married a sister of Oliver Cromwell, as Archbishop Tillotson had a niece in the reign of Charles I. Dr. Wilkins is chiefly remembered for his *Discovery of a New World*, published in 1638, in which he attempts to prove the practicability of a passage to the moon; and his *Essay towards a Real Character*, being a scheme of

¹ Journey to England, p. 39.

² Ibid. p. 41.

a universal language, which he gave to the world thirty years later. He is also the author of various theological works. Of the high mathematical merits of Dr. Isaac Barrow we have already spoken. Barrow's *Lectiones Opticæ*, published in 1669, and his *Lectiones Geometricæ*, 1670, contain his principal contributions to mathematical science. The former advanced the science of optics to the point at which it was taken up by Newton: the latter promulgated a partial anticipation of Newton's differential calculus, — what is known by the name of the method of tangents, and was the simplest and most elegant form to which the principle of fluxions had been reduced previous to the system of Leibnitz. Barrow's *Mathematicæ Lectiones*, not published till after his death, which took place in 1677, as already mentioned, at the early age of forty-six, are also celebrated for their learning and profoundness. Another person who likewise distinguished himself in this age by his cultivation of mathematical science, although he earned his chief renown in another department, was the great architect Sir Christopher Wren. Wren's most important paper in the *Philosophical Transactions* is one on the laws of the collision of bodies, read before the Royal Society in December, 1668.¹ It is remarkable that this subject, which had been recommended by the Society to the attention of its members, was at the same time completely elucidated by three individuals working without communication with each other: — by Wren in this paper; by Wallis in another, read the preceding month; and by the celebrated Huyghens (who had been elected a fellow of the Society soon after its establishment), in a third, read in January, 1669.

NEWTON.

A GREATER glory is shed over this than over any other age in the history of the higher sciences by the discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton, the most penetrating and comprehensive intellect which has ever been exerted in that field of speculation. The era of Newton extends to the year 1727, when he died at the age of eighty-five. What he did for science almost justifies the poetical

¹ In No. 43, p. 867.

comparison of his appearance among men to the first dispersion of the primeval darkness at the creation of the material world: "God said, Let Newton be, and there was light." While yet in earliest manhood, he had not only outstripped and left far behind him the ablest mathematicians and analytic investigators of the day, but had discovered, it may be said, the whole of his new system of the world, except only that he had not verified some parts of it by the requisite calculations. The year 1664, when he was only twenty-two, is assigned as the date of his discovery of the Binomial Theorem; the year 1665 as that of his invention of fluxions; the year 1666 as that in which he demonstrated the law of gravitation in regard to the movement of the planets around the sun, and was only prevented from extending it to the movement of the moon around the earth, and to that of bodies falling towards the earth, by the apparent refutation of his hypothesis when attempted to be so applied, which was occasioned by the erroneous estimate then received of the earth's diameter. He did not attempt to wrest the supposed facts so as to suit his theory; on the contrary, with a singular superiority to the seductions of mere plausibility, he said nothing of his theory to any one, and seems even to have thought no more of it for sixteen years, till, having heard by chance, at a meeting of the Royal Society in 1682, of Picard's measurement of an arc of the meridian executed three years before, he thence deduced the true length of the earth's diameter, resumed and finished his long abandoned calculation — not without such emotion as compelled him to call in the assistance of a friend as he discerned the approaching confirmation of what he had formerly anticipated — and the following year transmitted to the Royal Society what afterwards formed the leading propositions of the *Principia*. That work, containing the complete exposition of the new theory of the universe, was published at London, at the expense of the Royal Society, in 1687. Meanwhile, about the year 1669, he had made his other great discovery of the non-homogeneity of light, and the differing refrangibility of the rays of which it is composed; by these fundamental facts revolutionizing the whole science of optics. His *Treatise on Optics*, in which these discoveries and their consequences were developed, was first published in 1704; and along with it a Latin tract, entitled *De Quadratura Curvarum*, containing an exposition of the method of fluxions; of which, however, the *Principia* had already

shown him to be in complete possession twenty years before, and which he had made use of in a paper written, according to his own account, in 1666, and undoubtedly communicated to Dr. Barrow, and by him to Mr. Collins, in 1669. This paper, entitled *Analysis per Aequationes nurrero terminorum Infinitas*, was published in 1711. The question of the invention of the fluxionary or differential calculus, as is well known, gave occasion to a warm and protracted dispute between the partisans of Newton and those of his illustrious continental contemporary, Leibnitz; but it is now admitted on all hands, that, whatever claim Leibnitz also may have to be accounted its independent inventor (and there can scarcely be a doubt that he has a good claim to be so accounted), the honor of the prior invention belongs to Newton.



JAMES GREGORY, AND OTHER CONTEMPORARIES OF NEWTON.

WE must dismiss some other distinguished names with a very brief mention. James Gregory, who died in 1675 at the age of only thirty-six, after having been successively Professor of Mathematics at St. Andrews and at Edinburgh, had in his short life accomplished more than any of his contemporaries except Newton. He is popularly remembered chiefly as the inventor of the first reflecting telescope; but his geometrical and analytical inventions and discoveries were also numerous, and some of them of the highest order of merit. His nephew, David Gregory, Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh, and afterwards Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, was also an able mathematician, and published some valuable works on geometry, optics, and astronomy. The Newtonian Theory of universal gravitation is said to have been taught by him at Edinburgh before it was introduced into any other European university. It is remarkable that when this David Gregory died, in 1708, he and two of his brothers held professorships in three British universities, — himself at Oxford, James at Edinburgh, and Charles at St. Andrews. The last-mentioned, too, was succeeded, upon his resignation in 1639, by his son, named David.

John Collins (b. 1624, d. 1683) is the author of several practical works and of a good many papers in the Philosophical Transactions; but he was most useful in promoting the publication of the works of others; it is said that Wallis's History of Algebra, Barrow's Optical and Geometrical Lectures, and various other publications owed their seeing the light principally to his instigation and encouragement. He also kept up an extensive epistolary intercourse with the other scientific men of the day: it was principally from the letters and papers he left behind him that the *Commercium Epistolicum*, or volume of correspondence on the invention of fluxions, published in 1712, was made up. "Many of the discoveries in physical knowledge," says Dr. Hutton, "owe their chief improvement to him; for while he excited some to disclose every new and useful invention, he employed others in improving them. Sometimes he was peculiarly useful by showing where the defect lay in any branch of science, and pointing out the difficulties attending the inquiry; at other times explaining their advantages, and keeping up a spirit and energy for improvement. In short, Mr. Collins was like the register of all the new acquisitions made in the mathematical sciences; the magazine to which the curious had frequent recourse; which acquired him the appellation of the English Mersenne."¹

Roger Cotes died in 1716, at the age of thirty-four, after having, in the estimation of his contemporaries, given promise of becoming one of the greatest mathematicians that had ever existed: Newton himself is reported to have said, "If Cotes had lived we should have known something." Cotes's mathematical papers were published, in 1722, under the title of *Harmonia Mensurarum*, by his cousin Dr. Robert Smith (author of a work on optics), and his *Hydrostatical and Pneumatical Lectures* in 1738 by the same editor. Of all the publications that appeared in the early stages of the fluxionary calculus, Professor Playfair conceives that none is more entitled to notice than the *Harmonia Mensurarum* of Cotes. In this work, he observes, a method of reducing the areas of curves, in cases not admitting of an accurate comparison with rectilinear spaces, to those of the circle and hyperbola, which Newton had exemplified in his *Quadratura Curvarum*, was extended by Cotes, who also "gave the rules for finding the fluents of fractional expressions, whether rational or irrational, greatly gener-

¹ Abridg. of Phil. Trans. i. 338.

alized and highly improved by means of a property of the circle discovered by himself, and justly reckoned among the most remarkable propositions in geometry.”¹ Another eminent authority describes the *Harmonia* as “the earliest work in which decided progress was made in the application of logarithms, and of the properties of the circle, to the calculus of fluents.”² Cotes superintended the printing of the second edition of Newton’s *Principia*, published in 1713, and prefixed to it a preface which immediately acquired for him a wide scientific reputation.

The last of these early English cultivators of the new calculus whom we shall mention is Dr. Brook Taylor, a geometrician and analyst of great profoundness and originality, whose *Methodus Incrementorum*, published in 1715, is characterized by Playfair as having “added a new branch to the analysis of variable quantity.” “A single analytical formula,” Playfair adds, “in the Method of Increments has conferred a celebrity on its author which the most voluminous works have not often been able to bestow. It is known by the name of Taylor’s Theorem, and expresses the value of any function of a variable quantity in terms of the successive orders of increments, whether finite or infinitely small. If any one proposition can be said to comprehend in it a whole science, it is this: for from it almost every truth and every method of the new analysis may be deduced. It is difficult to say whether the theorem does most credit to the genius of the author, or the power of the language which is capable of concentrating such a vast body of knowledge in a single expression.”³ Taylor’s Theorem has since its first announcement been, in the language of the late Professor Leslie, “successively modified, transformed, and extended by Maclaurin, Lagrange, and Laplace, whose names are attached to their respective formulæ.”⁴

¹ Dissertation on Progress of Math. and Phys. Science, p. 531.

² Article on Cotes, in Penny Cyclopædia, viii. 87.

³ Dissertation, p. 532.

⁴ Dissertation on the Progress of the Math. and Phys. Sciences in the Eighteenth Century, in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, p. 599.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY.

THE example and discoveries of Newton, and especially the publication of the *Principia*, had, before the end of the seventeenth century, given a new direction and character to scientific speculation, and even to what was generally understood by the term science, in England. The day of little more than mere virtuosity, in which the Royal Society had taken its rise and commenced its operations, had given place to that of pure science in its highest forms and most lofty and extensive applications.

Next to the development and application of the fluxionary calculus, the field in which, as might have been expected, the impulse given by Newton produced the most brilliant results, was that of astronomy. The Royal Observatory at Greenwich was founded by Charles II., for the benefit of astronomy and navigation, in 1676; and the appointment of Astronomer Royal (or Astronomical Observer, in the official style) bestowed upon John Flamsteed, then about thirty years of age, and already distinguished as a cultivator of astronomical science. Flamsteed held this office till his death in 1719; and during that space of time made and published a voluminous series of observations, from the commencement of which his late biographer Mr. Baily dates the commencement of modern astronomy. "Nor," observes another writer, to whose masterly contributions to the history of the mathematical sciences we have been repeatedly indebted in the preceding pages, "can such chronology be disputed, if we consider that we now return to Flamsteed's observations as the earliest with which it is desirable to compare those of our day, and also that Flamsteed's Catalogue is the first which attained a precision comparable to that of later times."¹ What is here alluded to is a catalogue of above 3300 stars, "whose places," as has been remarked, "were more accurate than any determined in the next fifty years, and whose selection and nomenclature have served as basis to every catalogue since that time."² A portion of this Catalogue was first published, without Flamsteed's consent, in 1712, by a committee appointed by the government, of which Newton, Wren, and Gregory were members, and under the immediate superintendence of Halley, by

¹ Article on Flamsteed, in *Penny Cyclopædia*, x. 296.

² Article on Greenwich Observatory, in *Penny Cyclopædia*, xi. 441.

whose name the work, entitled *Historiæ Cœlestis Libri Duo*, is commonly known. Flamsteed considered himself, and apparently with good reason, to have been very ill used in this transaction ;¹ and, having at last succeeded in recovering from the government all the copies of Halley's book that remained unsold, he committed them to the flames, with the exception of a portion of the sheets, out of which he formed part of the first volume of a new work, with the title of *Historia Cœlestis Britannica*, the printing of which, however (in three volumes, folio), was not completed till 1725, six years after the author's death. It was carried through the press by his widow, with the aid of his assistants Mr. Crosthwait and Mr. Abraham Sharp, the latter of whom had attained great distinction as an accurate observer. This work is characterized by the writer of the article on Flamsteed in the *Penny Cyclopædia* as occupying the same place in practical astronomy which the *Principia* of Newton holds in the theoretical part. It was to Flamsteed that Newton (who afterwards quarrelled with his old friend, and abused him in no measured terms, on the misunderstanding that arose about the first publication of his catalogue) was indebted for all the observations of the moon which he made use of in the illustration and verification of his lunar theory. "The first edition of Newton's *Principia*," to quote again the publication just referred to, "had appeared shortly before Flamsteed had supplied himself with his best instruments; and at Newton's request many of Flamsteed's observations of the moon, reduced as well as was then practicable, were communicated to him to aid in perfecting the theory deduced from the principle of universal gravitation. The time at which these observations were made was in fact a most critical one — when the most accurate observations that had been made were needed for the support of the most extensive philosophical theory that man had invented."²

¹ See the particulars, as for the first time brought to light by Mr. Francis Baily, in his new edition of *The British Catalogue of Stars*, corrected and enlarged, with an account of the life of Flamsteed prefixed. Lond. 1835.

² Article on Greenwich Observatory, in *Penny Cyclopædia*, xi 441.

MEDICAL SCIENCE AND NATURAL HISTORY.

IN the English medical science of the latter part of the seven-teenth century the most distinguished name is that of Dr. Thomas Sydenham (b. 1624, d. 1689). Discarding mere theory, Sydenham applied himself to the careful observation of nature and facts and his practice and writings are considered as marking an era in the history of the healing art. After his time little innovation was made among British practitioners, either in the treatment or doctrine of diseases, till the era of Cullen and Brown in the middle of the succeeding century. Anatomical science from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century was principally advanced by Malpighi, Steno, Ruysch, Duverney, Morgagni, Albinus, Haller, and other Italian, French, and German physicians; but some new facts were also contributed by Humphrey Ridley, the author of a work on the Brain, published in 1695; by William Cowper, whose Anatomical Tables, published in 1698, however, are asserted to have been stolen from the Dutch anatomist Bidloo; by the eldest Alexander Monro, the author of the Osteology, first published in 1726, and the founder of the medical school of Edinburgh; and by the celebrated William Cheselden, author of the Osteography, published in 1733, and of various other works, and the most expert English operator of his day. To these names ought to be added that of Stephen Hales, whose Vegetable Statics, published in 1727, and Haemastatics, published in 1733, carried both vegetable and animal physiology considerably farther than any preceding work either English or foreign. Something was also done in the new sciences (if they were yet entitled to be so called) of zoölogy and comparative anatomy, by Nehemiah Grew, Edward Tyson, Samuel Collins, and other early members of the Royal Society. Grew is likewise one of the fathers of modern botany; but that science was indebted for altogether a new form to the famous John Ray, whose various works were published between 1670 and his death in 1705. "Botany," says a late writer, in noticing the merits of Ray, "he found was fast settling back into the chaos of the middle ages, partly beneath the weight of undigested materials, but more from the want of some fixed principles by which the knowledge of the day should be methodized. Profiting by the discoveries of Grew and the other vegetable

anatomists, to which he added a great store of original observations he, in his *Historia Plantarum*, the first volume of which appeared in 1686, embodied in one connected series all the facts that had been collected concerning the structure and functions of plants: to these he added an exposition of what he considered the philosophy of classification, as indicated partly by human reason, and partly by experience; and from the whole he deduced a classification which is unquestionably the basis of that which, under the name of the system of Jussieu, is everywhere recognized at the present day."¹ Ray's views, however, were encountered even in his own day by the artificial system of the French botanist Tournefort; and before the middle of the next century the science was again revolutionized by the genius of the great Linnæus. The Botanical, or Phisic Garden, as it was called, at Oxford, we may here mention, had been founded and endowed by Henry Danvers, Earl of Danby, in 1632. Ornithology and ichthyology may almost be said to owe their beginning, at least in this country, to Ray's friend, Francis Willughby. Willughby died, at the age of thirty-seven, in 1672, but his works on these subjects—his *Ornithologiæ Libri Tres*, and his *Historia Piscium*—were not published till some years after, under the superintendence of Ray; indeed, of the latter, which did not appear till 1686, Ray was half the author as well as the editor. A similar service was performed to conchology by the magnificent *Historia Conchyliorum* of Dr. Martin Lister, the first part of which appeared in 1685, the fifth and last in 1693. Finally, in geology, while some progress was made in the collecting and even in the arranging of facts by Ray, Dr. John Woodward, and others, and a few elementary general principles or natural laws of the science were beginning to be perceived, a host of speculators, headed by the eloquent Thomas Burnet and the eccentric William Whiston, both men of genius and learning, but of more fancy than either judgment or knowledge of the subjects which in this instance they undertook to discuss, produced in the last years of the seventeenth and the first of the eighteenth century many theories of the earth, which explained not only its structure, but its origin and its destiny, — in other words, its whole history, past, present, and future, — as well as such a task could be accomplished by the imagination working without materials, and without the aid of any other faculty.

¹ Penny Cyclopædia, v. 248.

ENGLISH LITERATURE SINCE THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.



FIRST EFFECTS OF THE REVOLUTION ON OUR LITERATURE

THE Revolution, brought on by some of the same causes that had given birth to the Commonwealth, and restoring something of the same spirit and condition of things, came like another night-fall upon our higher literature, putting out the light of poetry in the land still more effectually than had even that previous triumph of the popular principle. Up to this date English literature had grown and flourished chiefly in the sunshine of court protection and favor; the public appreciation and sympathy were not yet sufficiently extended to afford it the necessary warmth and shelter. Its spirit, consequently, and affections were in the main courtly; it drooped and withered when the encouragement of the court was withdrawn, from the deprivation both of its customary support and sustenance and of its chief inspiration. And, if the decay of this kind of light at the Revolution was, as we have said, still more complete than that which followed upon the setting up of the Commonwealth, the difference seems to have been mainly owing to there having been less of it to extinguish at the one epoch than at the other. At the Restoration the impulse given by the great poets of the age of Elizabeth and James was yet operating, without having been interrupted and weakened by any foreign influence, upon the language and the national mind. Doubtless, too, whatever may be thought of the literary tendencies of puritanism and republicanism when they had got into the ascendant, the nurture both for head and heart furnished by the ten years of high deeds, and higher hopes and speculations, that ushered in the Commonwealth, must have been of a far other kind than any that was to be got out of the thirty years, or thereby, of laxity, frivolity, denationalization, and insincerity of all sorts, down the comparatively smooth stream of which men slid, without effort and without thought, to the Revolution. No wonder that some powerful minds were trained by the former, and almost none by the latter.

SURVIVING WRITERS OF THE PRECEDING PERIOD.

WITH the exception of some two or three names, none of them of the highest class, to be presently mentioned, almost the only writers that shed any lustre on the first reign after the Revolution are those of a few of the survivors of the preceding era. Dryden, fallen on what to him were evil days and evil tongues, and forced in his old age to write for bread with less rest for his wearied head and hand than they had ever had before, now produced some of his most laborious and also some of his most happily executed works: his translation of Virgil, among others, his Fables, and his Alexander's Feast. Lee, the dramatic poet, discharged from Bedlam, finished two more tragedies, his Princess of Cleve and his Massacre of Paris, before, "returning one night from the Bear and Harrow, in Butcher-Row, through Clare Market, to his lodgings in Duke Street, overladen with wine, he fell down on the ground as some say, according to others on a bulk, and was killed or stifled in the snow," early in the year 1692.¹ The comic Etherege also outlived the deposition of his patron James II., but is not known to have written anything after that event; he followed James to France, and is reported to have died characteristically at Ratisbon a year or two after: "having treated some company with a liberal entertainment at his house there, where he had taken his glass too freely, and, being, through his great complaisance, too forward in waiting on his guests at their departure, flushed as he was, he tumbled down-stairs and broke his neck, and so fell a martyr to jollity and civility."² Wycherley, who at the date of the Revolution was under fifty, lived to become a correspondent of Pope, and even saw out the reign of Anne; but he produced nothing in that of William, although he published a volume of poems in 1704, and left some other trifles behind him, which were printed long afterwards by Theobald. Southerne, indeed, who survived till 1746, continued to write and publish till within twenty years

¹ MS. note by Oldys, quoted in *Biog. Dram.* It was not known whether his death happened in this or the preceding year, till Mr. Peter Cunningham ascertained from the Burial Register that he was buried in the churchyard of St Clement Danes on the 6th of April, 1692. — See Campbell's *Specimens of the British Poets*, edit. of 1844, p. 301.

² *Biog. Dram.*, on authority of *Biog. Brit.*, the writer in which says that he received this account from John Locker, Esq.

of his death; his two best dramas—his *Fatal Marriage* and his *Oroonoko*—were both produced in the reign of William. South-erne, though not without considerable pathetic power, was fortunate in a genius on the whole not above the appreciation of the unpoetical age he lived in: “Dryden once took occasion to ask him how much he got by one of his plays; to which he answered that he was really ashamed to inform him. But, Mr. Dryden being a little importunate to know, he plainly told him that by his last play he cleared seven hundred pounds, which appeared astonishing to Dryden, as he himself had never been able to acquire more than one hundred by his most successful pieces.”¹ South-erne, who, whatever estimate may be formed of his poetry, was not, we may gather from this anecdote, without some conscience and modesty, had worse writers than himself to keep him in countenance by their preposterous prosperity, in this lucky time for mediocrity and dulness. Shadwell was King William’s first poet-laureate, and Nahum Tate his next. Tate, indeed, and his friend Dr. Nicholas Brady, were among the most flourishing authors and greatest public favorites of this reign: it was now that they perpetrated in concert their version, or perversion, of the Psalms, with which we are still afflicted. Brady also published a play, and, at a later date, some volumes of sermons and a translation of the *Æneid*, which, fortunately, not having been imposed or recommended by authority, are all among the most forgotten of books. Elkanah Settle, too, was provided for as city poet.

Among writers of another class, perhaps the most eminent who, having been distinguished before the Revolution, survived and continued to write after that event, was Sir William Temple. His *Miscellanies*, by which he is principally known, though partly composed before, were not published till then. John Evelyn, who, however, although a very miscellaneous as well as voluminous writer, has hardly left any work that is held in esteem for either style or thought, or for anything save what it may contain of positive information or mere matter of fact, also published one or two books in the reign of William, which he saw to an end; for he died at the age of eighty-five, in 1706. Bishop Stillingfleet, who had been known as an author since before the Restoration, for his *Irenicum* appeared in 1659, when he was only in his twenty-fourth year, and who had kept the press in employment by a rapid suc-

¹ Biog. Dram.

cession of publications during the next five-and-twenty years, resumed his pen after the Revolution, which raised him to the bench, to engage in a controversy with Locke about some of the principles of his famous essay ; but, whether it was that years had abated his powers, or that he had a worse cause to defend, or merely that the public taste was changed, he gained much less applause for his dialectic skill on this than on most former occasions. Stillingfleet lived to the year 1699. Two other eminent theological writers of this reign, Cumberland and Bull, who both eventually became bishops, had also first acquired distinction in the preceding period. Cumberland's principal work is his Latin treatise *De Legibus Naturæ*, an attack of considerable acuteness on the philosophy of Hobbes ; Bull, who is also the author of some sermons in English, is most celebrated for his *Harmonia Apostolica*, directed against Calvinism, 1669 ; his *Defensio Fidei Nicenæ*, 1685 ; and his *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ*, 1694 ; all in Latin.

John Norris, also, one of the last of the school of English Platonists, which may be considered as having been founded in the latter part of the seventeenth century by Cudworth and Henry More, had, we believe, become known as a writer some years before the Revolution ; but the greater number of his publications first appeared in the reign of William, and he may be reckoned one of the best writers properly or principally belonging to that reign. Yet he is not for a moment to be compared for learning, compass of thought, or power and skill of expression, to either Cudworth or More. Norris's principal work is his *Essay on the Ideal World*, published in two parts in 1701 and 1702. He is also the author of a volume of religious poetry, of rather a feeble character, which has been often reprinted. Bishop Sprat, though a clergyman, and a writer both of prose and verse, cannot be called a divine ; he had in earlier life the reputation of being the finest writer of the day, but, although he lived till very nearly the end of the reign of Anne, he published nothing, we believe, after the Revolution, nor indeed for a good many years before it. His style, which was so much admired in his own age, is a Frenchified English, with an air of ease and occasionally of vivacity, but without any true grace or expressiveness.

Good old Richard Baxter, who had been filling the world with books for half a century, just lived to see the Revolution. He died, at the age of seventy-six, in the beginning of December, 1691

And in the end of the same month died, a considerably younger man, Robert Boyle, another of the most voluminous writers of the preceding period, and famous also for his services in the cause of religion, as well as of science. In the preceding May, at a still less advanced age, had died the most eminent Scotch writer of the period between the Restoration and the Revolution, Sir George Mackenzie, lord-advocate under both Charles II. and his successor; the author of the Institution of the Laws of Scotland, and many other professional, historical, and antiquarian works, but the master also of a flowing pen in moral speculation, the belles lettres, and even in the department of fancy and fiction — as may be gathered from the titles of his *Aretina*, or the *Serious Romance*, 1660; *Religio Stoici*, or the *Virtuoso*, 1663; *Solitude preferred to Public Employment*, 1665; *Moral Gallantry*, 1667. Mackenzie may be regarded as the first successor of his countryman Drummond of Hawthornden in the cultivation of an English style; he was the correspondent of Dryden and other distinguished English writers of his day; but he has no pretensions of his own to any high rank either for the graces of his expression or the value of his matter. Whatever may have been his professional learning, too, his historical disquisitions are as jejune and uncritical as his attempts at fine writing are, with all their elaboration, at once pedantic and clownish. He has nothing either of the poetry or the elegance of Drummond.

BISHOP BURNET.

THE most active and conspicuous undoubtedly of the prose writers who, having acquired distinction in the preceding period, continued to prosecute the business of authorship after the Revolution, was the celebrated Dr. Gilbert Burnet, now Bishop of Salisbury. Of 145 distinct publications (many of them, however, only single sermons and other short pamphlets), which are enumerated as having proceeded from his incessant pen between 1669 and his death, at the age of seventy-two, in 1715 (including, indeed, his *History of his Own Time*, and his *Thoughts on Education*, which did not appear till after his death), we find that 71, namely 21 historical works and 50 sermons and tracts, belong to

the period before the Revolution; 36, namely 5 historical works and 31 sermons and tracts, to the reign of William; and the remaining 38, namely one historical work and 37 pamphlets, to a later date.¹ Many of what we have called historical works, however, are mere pamphlets: in fact Burnet's literary performances of any considerable extent are only three in number: — his *Memoirs of James and William, Dukes of Hamilton*, published, in one volume folio, in 1676; his *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, 3 volumes folio, 1679, 1681, and 1714; and his *History of his Own Time*, in two volumes folio, published after his death in 1723 and 1734. There is enough of literary labor, as well as of historical value, in these works to preserve to the author a very honorable name; each of them contains much matter now nowhere else to be found, and they must always continue to rank among the original sources of our national history, both ecclesiastical and civil. In regard to their execution, too, it must be admitted that the style is at least straightforward and unaffected, and generally as unambiguous as it is unambitious; the facts are clearly enough arranged; and the story is told not only intelligibly, but for the most part in rather a lively and interesting way. On the other hand, to any high station as a writer Burnet can make no claim; he is an industrious collector of intelligence, and a loquacious and moderately lively gossip; but of eloquence, or grace, or refinement of any sort, he is as destitute as he is (and that is altogether) of imagination, and wit, and humor, and subtlety, and depth and weight of thought, and whatever other qualities give anything either of life or lustre to what a man utters out of his own head or heart. We read him for the sake of his facts only; he troubles us with but few reflections, but of that no reader will complain. He does not see far into anything, nor indeed, properly speaking, into it at all; for that matter he is little more, to adopt a modern term, than a penny-a-liner on a large scale, and best performs his task when he does not attempt to be anything else. Nor is he a neat-handed workman even of that class; in his *History of his Own Time*, in particular, his style, with no strength, or flavor, or natural charm of any kind, to redeem its rudeness, is the most slovenly undress in which a writer ever wrapt up what he had to communicate to the public. Its only merit, as we have

¹ We have for convenience of classification, reckoned each of the three volumes of the *History of the Reformation* a distinct publication, as it really was.

observed, is that it is without any air of pretension, and that it is evidently as extemporaneous and careless as it is unelevated, shapeless, and ungrammatical. Among the most important and best known of Burnet's other works are, that entitled *Some Passages of the Life and Death of the Right Honourable John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, 1680; his *Life of Bishop Bedel*, 1685; his *Travels through France, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland*, 1685; and his *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 1699. The first-mentioned of these is the best written of all his works.

THOMAS BURNET.

IN the same year with Bishop Burnet, but at a more advanced age, died Dr. Thomas Burnet, the learned and eloquent author of the *Telluris Sacra Theoria*, first published in Latin in 1680, and afterwards translated into English by the author; of the *Archæologia Philosophica*, published in 1692; and of two or three other treatises, also in Latin, which did not appear till after his death. Burnet's system of geology has no scientific value whatever; indeed, it must be considered as a mere romance, although, from the earnestness of the author's manner and his constant citation of texts of Scripture in support of his positions, as well as from more than one answer which he afterwards published to the attacks made upon his book, it is evident that he by no means intended it to be so received. But, with his genius and imagination and consummate scholarship, he is a very different species of writer from his garrulous and mitred namesake: his English style is singularly flowing and harmonious, as well as perspicuous and animated, and rises on fit occasions to much majesty and even splendor. As a specimen, we will transcribe a portion of the concluding Chapter of the Third Book of the *Sacred Theory of the Earth*, entitled *An Imperfect Description of the Coming of our Saviour, and of the World on Fire*:—

Certainly there is nothing in the whole course of nature, or of human affairs, so great and so extraordinary as the two last scenes of them, the Coming of our Saviour, and the Burning of the World. If we could draw in our minds the pictures of these in true and lively colours, we should

scarce be able to attend any thing else, or ever divert our imagination from these two objects: for what can more affect us than the greatest glory that ever was visible upon earth, and at the same time the greatest terror;—a God descending at the head of an array of angels, and a burning world under his feet?

As to the face of nature just before the coming of our Saviour, that may be best collected from the signs of his coming mentioned in the precedent chapter. Those, all meeting together, help to prepare and make ready a theatre fit for an angry God to come down upon. The countenance of the heavens will be dark and gloomy; and a veil drawn over the face of the sun. The earth in a disposition every where to break into open flames. The tops of the mountains smoking; the rivers dry; earthquakes in several places; the sea sunk and retired into its deepest channel, and roaring as against some mighty storm. These things will make the day dead and melancholy; but the night scenes will have more of horror in them, when the blazing stars appear, like so many furies with their lighted torches, threatening to set all on fire. For I do not doubt but the comets will bear a part in this tragedy, and have something extraordinary in them at that time, either as to number or bigness, or nearness to the earth. Besides, the air will be full of flaming meteors, of unusual forms and magnitudes; balls of fire rolling in the sky, and pointed lightnings darted against the earth, mixed with claps of thunder and unusual noises from the clouds. The moon and the stars will be confused and irregular, both in their light and motions: as if the whole frame of the heavens was out of order, and all the laws of nature were broken or expired.

When all things are in this languishing or dying posture, and the inhabitants of the earth under the fears of their last end, the heavens will open on a sudden and the glory of God will appear. A glory surpassing the sun in its greatest radiance; which though we cannot describe, we may suppose it will bear some resemblance or proportion with those representations that are made in Scripture of God upon his throne. This wonder in the heavens, whatsoever its form may be, will presently attract the eyes of all the Christian world. Nothing can more affect than an object so unusual and so illustrious, and that probably brings along with it their last destiny, and will put a period to all human affairs.

As it is not possible for us to express or conceive the dread and majesty of his appearance, so neither can we, on the other hand, express the passions and consternation of the people that behold it. These things exceed the measures of human affairs, and of human thoughts: we have neither words nor comparisons to make them known by. The greatest pomp and magnificence of the Emperors of the East, in their armies, in their triumphs, in their inaugurations, is but the sport and entertainment of children if compared with this solemnity. When God condescends to an

external glory, with a visible train and equipage ; when, from all the provinces of his vast and boundless empire, he summons his nobles, as I may so say — the several orders of angels and archangels — to attend his person, though we cannot tell the form or manner of his appearance, we know there is nothing in our experience, or in the whole history of this world, that can be a just representation of the least part of it. No armies so numerous as the host of Heaven ; and, instead of the wild noises of the rabble, which makes a great part of our worldly state, this blessed company will breathe their hallelujahs into the open air, and repeated acclamations of salvation to God, which sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb. . . .

Imagine all Nature now standing in a silent expectation to receive its last doom ; the tutelary and destroying angels to have their instructions ; every thing to be ready for the fatal hour ; and then, after a little silence, all the host of heaven to raise their voice, and sing aloud : Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered ; as smoke is driven away, so drive them away ; As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. And upon this, as upon a signal given, all the sublunary world breaks into flames, and all the treasures of fire are opened in heaven and in earth.

Thus the conflagration begins. If one should now go about to represent the world on fire, with all the confusions that necessarily must be in nature and in mankind upon that occasion, it would seem to most men a romantic scene. Yet we are sure there must be such a scene. The heavens will pass away with a noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat, and all the works of the earth will be burnt up ; and these things cannot come to pass without the greatest disorders imaginable, both in the minds of man and in external nature, and the saddest spectacles that eye can behold. We think it a great matter to see a single person burnt alive ; here are millions shrieking in the flames at once. It is frightful to us to look upon a great city in flames, and to see the distractions and misery of the people : here is an universal fire through all the cities of the earth, and an universal massacre of their inhabitants. Whatsoever the prophets foretold of the desolations of Judea, Jerusalem, or Babylon, in the highest strains, is more than literally accomplished in this last and general calamity ; and those only that are spectators of it can make its history.

The disorders in nature and the inanimate world will be no less, nor less strange and unaccountable, than those in mankind. Every element and every region, so far as the bounds of this fire extend, will be in a tumult and a fury, and the whole habitable world running into confusion. A world is sooner destroyed than made ; and nature relapses hastily into that chaos state out of which she came by slow and leisurely motions : as an army advances into the field by just and regular marches ; but,

when it is broken and routed, it flies with precipitation, and one cannot describe its posture. Fire is a barbarous enemy; it gives no mercy; there is nothing but fury and rage, and ruin and destruction, wheresoever it prevails. A storm, or hurricane, though it be but the force of air, makes a strange havoc where it comes; but devouring flames, or exhalations set on fire, have still a far greater violence, and carry more terror along with them. Thunder and earthquakes are the sons of fire; and we know nothing in all nature more impetuous or more irresistibly destructive than these two. And, accordingly, in this last war of the elements, we may be sure they will bear their parts, and do great execution in the several regions of the world. Earthquakes and subterraneous eruptions will tear the body and bowels of the earth; and thunders and convulsive motions of the air rend the skies. The waters of the sea will boil and struggle with streams of sulphur that run into them; which will make them fume, and smoke, and roar, beyond all storms and tempests; and these noises of the sea will be answered again from the land by falling rocks and mountains. This is a small part of the disorders of that day.

But if we suppose the storm over, and that the fire hath got an entire victory over all other bodies, and hath subdued every thing to itself, the conflagration will end in a deluge of fire, or in a sea of fire, covering the whole globe of the earth; for, when the exterior region of the earth is melted into a fluor, like molten glass or running metal, it will, according to the nature of other fluids, fill all vacuities and depressions, and fall into a regular surface, at an equal distance every where from its centre. This sea of fire, like the first abyss, will cover the face of the whole earth, make a kind of second chaos, and leave a capacity for another world to rise from it. But that is not our present business. Let us only, if you please, to take leave of this subject, reflect, upon this occasion, on the vanity and transient glory of all this habitable world; how, by the force of one element breaking loose upon the rest, all the varieties of nature, all the works of art, all the labours of men, are reduced to nothing; all that we admired and adored before as great and magnificent is obliterated or banished; and another form and face of things, plain, simple, and every where the same, overspreads the whole earth. Where are now the great empires of the world, and their great imperial cities? Their pillars, trophies, and monuments of glory? Show me where they stood; read the inscription; tell me the victor's name. What remains, what impressions, what difference or distinction, do you see in this mass of fire? Rome itself, eternal Rome, the great city, the Empress of the world, whose domination and superstition, ancient and modern, make a great part of the history of this earth, what is become of her now? She laid her foundations deep, and her palaces were strong and sumptuous; she glorified herself

and lived deliciously, and said in her heart, I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow. But her hour is come, she is wiped away from the face of the earth, and buried in perpetual oblivion. But it is not cities only, and works of men's hands, but the everlasting hills and mountains and rocks of the earth are melted as wax before the sun; and their place is nowhere found. Here stood the Alps, a prodigious range of stone, the load of the earth, that covered many countries, and reached their arms from the ocean to the Black Sea: this huge mass of stone is softened and dissolved, as a tender cloud into rain. Here stood the African mountains, and Atlas with his top above the clouds. There was frozen Caucasus, and Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains of Asia. And yonder, towards the north, stood the Riphæan Hills, clothed in ice and snow. All these are vanished, dropt away as the snow upon their heads, and swallowed up in a red sea of fire. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints! Hallelujah.

OTHER THEOLOGICAL WRITERS.—TILLOTSON. SOUTH.

ANOTHER name that may be here mentioned is that of Archbishop Tillotson, who was a very popular preacher among the Presbyterians before the Restoration, and began publishing sermons so early as in the year 1661, while he still belonged to that sect. He died in 1694, in his sixty-fourth year. Tillotson's Sermons, still familiarly known by reputation, long continued to be the most generally esteemed collection of such compositions in the language; but are probably now very little read. They are substantial performances, such as make the reader feel, when he has got through one of them, that he has accomplished something of a feat; and, being withal as free from pedantry and every other kind of eccentricity or extravagance as from flimsiness, and exceedingly sober in their strain of doctrine, with a certain blunt cordiality in the expression and manner, they were in all respects very happily addressed to the ordinary peculiarities of the national mind and character. But, having once fallen into neglect, Tillotson's writings have no qualities that will ever revive attention to them. There is much more of a true vitality in the sermons of Dr. Robert South, whose career of authorship commenced in the time of the Protectorate, though his life was extended till after the

accession of George I. He died in 1716, at the age of eighty three. South's sermons, the first of which dates even before the earliest of Tillotson's, and the last after Tillotson's latest, are very well characterized by Mr. Hallam:—"They were," he observes, "much celebrated at the time, and retain a portion of their renown. This is by no means surprising. South had great qualifications for that popularity which attends the pulpit, and his manner was at that time original. Not diffuse, nor learned, nor formal in argument like Barrow, with a more natural structure of sentences, a more pointed though by no means a more fair and satisfactory turn of reasoning, with a style clear and English, free from all pedantry, but abounding with those colloquial novelties of idiom, which, though now become vulgar and offensive, the age of Charles II. affected, sparing no personal or temporary sarcasm, but, if he seems for a moment to tread on the verge of buffoonery, recovering himself by some stroke of vigorous sense and language: such was the worthy Dr. South, whom the courtiers delighted to hear. His sermons want all that is called unction, and sometimes even earnestness; but there is a masculine spirit about them, which, combined with their peculiar characteristics, would naturally fill the churches where he might be heard."¹ Both South and Tillotson are considered to belong as divines to the Arminian, or, as it was then commonly called, the Latitudinarian school,—as well as Cudworth, More, and Stillingfleet.

A few paragraphs from one of his discourses against long and extempore prayers, on *Ecclesiastes* v. 2, "Be not rash with thy mouth," etc., will exemplify his lively and pregnant style of preaching:—

And, thus having shown how the Almighty utters himself when he speaks, and that upon the greatest occasions, let us now descend from heaven to earth, from God to man, and show that it is no presumption for us to conform our words, as well as our actions, to the supreme pattern; and, according to our poor measures, to imitate the wisdom that we adore. And for this, has it not been noted by the best observers and the ablest judges, both of things and persons, that the wisdom of any people or nation has been most seen in the proverbs and short sayings commonly received amongst them? And what is a proverb, but the experience and observation of several ages, gathered and summed up into one expression? The Scripture vouches Solomon for the wisest of men; and they are his

¹ Lit. of Europe, iv. 56.

Proverbs that prove him so. The seven wise men of Greece, so famous for their wisdom all the world over, acquired all that fame, each of them, by a single sentence consisting of two or three words; and γινῶθι σεαυτὸν (Know thyself) still lives and flourishes in the mouths of all, while many vast volumes are extinct, and sunk into dust and utter oblivion. And then, for books: we shall generally find that the most excellent, in any art or science, have been still the smallest and most compendious: and this not without ground; for it is an argument that the author was a master of what he wrote, and had a clear notion and a full comprehension of the subject before him. For the reason of things lies in a little compass, if the mind could at any time be so happy as to light upon it. Most of the writings and discourses in the world are but illustration and rhetoric, which signifies as much as nothing to a mind eager in pursuit after the causes and philosophical truth of things. It is the work of fancy to enlarge, but of judgment to shorten and contract; and therefore this must needs be as far above the other as judgment is a greater and a nobler faculty than fancy or imagination. All philosophy is reduced to a few principles, and those principles comprised in a few propositions. And, as the whole structure of speculation rests upon three or four axioms or maxims, so that of practice also bears upon a very small number of rules. And surely there was never yet any rule or maxim that filled a volume, or took up a week's time to be got by heart. No, these are the *apices rerum* the tops and sums, the very spirit and life of things extracted and abridged; just as all the lines drawn from the vastest circumference do at length meet and unite in the smallest of things, a point: and it is but a very little piece of wood with which a true artist will measure all the timber in the world. The truth is, there could be no such thing as art or science could not the mind of man gather the general natures of things out of the numberless heap of particulars, and then bind them up into such short aphorisms or propositions, that so they may be made portable to the memory, and thereby become ready or at hand for the judgment to apply and make use of, as there shall be occasion.

In fine, brevity and succinctness of speech is that which, in philosophy or speculation, we call *maxim*, and first principle; in the counsels and resolves of practical wisdom, and the deep mysteries of religion, *oracle*; and lastly, in matters of wit, and the finenesses of imagination, *epigram*. All of them, severally and in their kinds, the greatest and the noblest things that the mind of man can show the force and dexterity of its faculties in.

And now, if this be the highest excellency and perfection of speech in all other things, can we assign any true, solid reason why it should not be likewise in prayer? Nay, is there not rather the clearest reason imaginable why it should be much more so; since most of the forementioned

things are but addresses to an human understanding, which may need as many words as may fill a volume to make it understand the truth of one line? Whereas prayer is an address to that Eternal Mind, which, as we have shown before, such as rationally invoke pretend not to inform. Nevertheless, since the nature of man is such that, while we are yet in the body, our reverence and worship of God must of necessity proceed in some analogy to the reverence that we show to the grandees of this world, we will here see what the judgment of all wise men is concerning fewness of words when we appear as suppliants before our earthy superiors; and we shall find that they generally allow it to import these three things: 1, Modesty; 2, Discretion; and 3, Height of respect to the person addressed to. And first, for modesty. Modesty is a kind of shame or bashfulness, proceeding from the sense a man has of his own defects, compared with the perfections of him whom he comes before. And that which is modesty towards man is worship and devotion towards God. It is a virtue that makes a man unwilling to be seen, and fearful to be heard; and yet, for that very cause, never fails to make him both seen with favour and heard with attention. It loves not many words, nor indeed needs them. For modesty, addressing to any one of a generous worth and honour, is sure to have that man's honour for its advocate and his generosity for its intercessor. And how, then, is it possible for such a virtue to run out into words? Loquacity storms the ear, but modesty takes the heart; that is troublesome, this gentle but irresistible. Much speaking is always the effect of confidence; and confidence still presupposes, and springs from, the persuasion that a man has of his own worth: both of them, certainly, very unfit qualifications for a petitioner.

Secondly. The second thing that naturally shows itself in paucity of words is discretion; and particularly that prime and eminent part of it that consists in a care of offending, which Solomon assures us that in much speaking it is hardly possible for us to avoid. In Prov. x. 19, *In the multitude of words, says he, there wanteth not sin.* It requires no ordinary skill for a man to make his tongue run by rule, and at the same time to give it both its lesson and its liberty too. For seldom or never is there much spoke, but something or other had better been not spoke, there being nothing that the mind of man is so apt to kindle and take distaste at as at words; and, therefore, whensoever any one comes to prefer a suit to another, no doubt the fewer of them the better, since, where so very little is said, it is sure to be either candidly accepted, or, which is next, easily excused; but at the same time to petition and to provoke too is certainly very preposterous.

Thirdly. The third thing that brevity of speech commends itself by in all petitioning addresses is, a peculiar respect to the person addressed to; for whosoever petitions his superior in such a manner does, by his very se

doing, confess him better able to understand, than he himself can be to express, his own case. He owns him as a patron of a preventing judgment and goodness, and, upon that account, able not only to answer but also to anticipate his requests. For, according to the most natural interpretation of things, this is to ascribe to him a sagacity so quick and piercing that it were presumption to inform, and a benignity so great that it were needless to importune, him. And can there be a greater and more winning deference to a superior than to treat him under such a character? Or can anything be imagined so naturally fit and efficacious, both to enforce the petition and to endear the petitioner? A short petition to a great man is not only a suit to him for his favour, but also a panegyric upon his parts.

Here we have, if not much subtlety, depth, or largeness of view, what is better fitted to win acceptance with the common taste, and especially to prove effective in spoken eloquence, pith, and point, and a vein of reasoning or remark certainly not commonplace, yet at the same time approving itself, so far as it goes, to every man's experience or consciousness, and alarming no prejudices by any tincture either of extravagance or novelty. It is a striking without being in any respect a startling style, whether we regard the thought or the expression; a manner of disquisition which never goes mining far underground for hidden treasure, yet stirs the surface of the soil so as effectually to bring out whatever fertility may be there resident. There is no passion or poetry in South's eloquence; its chief seasoning rather partakes of the nature of wit. Many smart sayings, having that peculiar species of truth in them which belongs to a witticism, might be gathered from his writings; and some current *bons mots* may probably be traced to him. The sarcastic definition, for instance, which has been given of gratitude, that it is a sense of obligation for favors expected, seems to be originally his. We are told by the author of the *Memoirs of his Life* prefixed to his *Sermons*, that, when Dr. Owen, the puritanical vice-chancellor, in the time of the Commonwealth, threatened to expel South, then an undergraduate, from Cambridge, on his being caught performing worship according to the Book of Common Prayer, remarking that "he could do no less, in gratitude to his highness the Protector, and his other great friends, who had thought him worthy of the dignities he then stood possessed of," the future champion of the restored Church of England replied, "Gratitude among friends is like credit amongst tradesmen; it keeps business

up, and maintains the correspondence : and we pay, not so much out of a principle that we ought to discharge our debts, as to secure ourselves a place to be trusted another time." The buffoonery, or something like it, occasionally to be found in his sermons, is principally directed against the sectaries ; for South, although not given to take up with any creed or system on the mere ground of authority, was, as we have just said, a strict and strenuous adherent of the Establishment, and had convinced himself that there was no good to be found either to the right or the left of the Thirty-nine Articles, either in Romanism on the one hand or Protestant dissent on the other. It is true that when at college, in 1655, he had gone so far as to contribute a copy of Latin verses to the volume published by the university in congratulation of Cromwell on the peace conquered by him that year from the Dutch ; and this circumstance considerably annoys his orthodox and loyal biographer. Upon the said poem, it is remarked, "some people have made invidious reflections, as if contrary to the sentiments he afterwards espoused ; but these are to be told that such exercises are usually imposed by the governors of colleges upon bachelors of arts and undergraduates : I shall forbear to be particular in his, as being a forced compliment to the usurper. Not but even those discover a certain unwillingness to act in favour of that monster, whom even the inimitable Earl of Clarendon, in his History of the Grand Rebellion, distinguishes by the name and title of a Glorious Villain." As a further sample of the principles and temper of this biographer, we may just notice that a little lower down in mentioning the learned Dr. John Owen, he designates him, "this man (if he deserves the name of one)," and describes all his party as "creatures divested of all qualities that point towards the least symptoms of humanity." In South himself the feeling of aversion to the sectarianism and republicanism that had for the present been shuffled out of sight, or out of the way, never took this bitter tone. His way of viewing the matter may be exemplified by a famous passage from a sermon which he preached, as one of the chaplains in ordinary, before Charles II. in 1681 : — "Who that had looked upon Agathocles, first handling the clay, and making pots under his father, and afterwards turning robber, could have thought that, from such a condition, he should come to be king of Sicily ? Who that had seen Masaniello, a poor fisherman, with his red cap and his angle, would have reckoned it possible to see such a pitiful

thing, within a week after, shining in his cloth of gold, and with a word or a nod absolutely commanding the whole city of Naples? And who that had beheld such a bankrupt, beggarly fellow as Cromwell, first entering the Parliament House, with a threadbare, torn cloak, greasy hat (perhaps neither of them paid for), could have suspected that, in the space of so few years, he should, by the murder of one king and the banishment of another, ascend the throne?" There is contempt and abuse here, but not any malignity. At this sally, we are told, Charles fell into a violent fit of laughter, and, turning round to Lord Rochester, said, "Ods fish, Lory, your chaplain must be a bishop: put me in mind of him at the next death." But, however much South may have enjoyed thus setting the Chapel Royal in a roar, he was not fishing for a bishopric with his comic pulpit oratory. He had it several times in his power, after this, to take his seat upon the right reverend bench, but he always declined that distinction; and, although he was perhaps the most influential English ecclesiastic of his day, he continued to the end of his life nothing more than prebendary of Westminster and canon of Christ Church, Oxford. In all other worldly matters, indeed, he showed the same disinterestedness, so worthy of him both as a Christian and as a wit.



LOCKE.

THE only considerable literary name that belongs exclusively, or almost exclusively, to the first reign after the Revolution is that of Locke. John Locke, born in 1632, although his *Adversarium Methodus*, or *New Method of a Common-Place-Book*, had appeared in French in Leclerc's *Bibliothèque* for 1686, and an abridgment of his celebrated *Essay*, and his first *Letter on Toleration*, both also in French, in the same publication for 1687 and 1688, had published nothing in English, or with his name, till he produced in 1690 the work which has ever since made him one of the best known of English writers, both in his own and in other countries, his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. This was followed by his *Second Letter on Toleration*, and his two *Treatises on Government*, in the same year; his *Considerations on Lowering*

the Interest of Money, in 1691; his Third Letter on Toleration, in 1692; his Thoughts concerning Education, in 1693; his Reasonableness of Christianity, in 1695; and various controversial tracts in reply to his assailants, Dr. Edwards and Bishop Stillingfleet, between that date and his death in 1704. After his death appeared his Conduct of the Understanding, and several theological treatises, the composition of which had been the employment of the last years of his industrious and productive old age. Locke's famous Essay was the first work, perhaps in any language, which professedly or systematically attempted to popularize metaphysical philosophy. The author's persuasion apparently is, that there is nothing much more difficult to comprehend, or at least more incomprehensible, about the operations of the human mind than there is in the movements of an eight-day clock. What he especially sets himself to run down and do away with, from the beginning to the end of his book, is the notion that there is any mystery in the subject he has undertaken to explain which cannot be made clear to whoever will only listen with fair attention to the exposition. Locke was a man of great moral worth, of the highest integrity, disinterested, just, tolerant, and humane, as well as of extraordinary penetration and capacity; moreover, he was probably as free from anything like self-conceit, or the over-estimation either of his own virtues or his own talents, as people of good sense usually are; and he had undoubtedly a great respect for the deity, as the First Magistrate of the universe; yet, to a mind differently constituted from his, and which, instead of seeing a mystery in nothing, sees a mystery in all things, there is, it must be confessed, something so unsatisfactory in the whole strain of his philosophy, that his merits perhaps will scarcely be rated by such a mind so high as they deserve. It seems all like a man, if not trying to deceive others, at least so perseveringly shutting his eyes upon, and turning away his head from, every real difficulty, that he may be almost said to be wilfully deceiving himself; merely skimming the surface of his subject while he assumes the air of exploring it to the bottom; repelling objections sometimes by dexterously thrusting them aside, mostly by not noticing them at all: in other words, a piece of mere clever and plausible, but hollow and insincere, conjuring; a vain show of wisdom, having in it almost as little of the real as of the reverential. No awe, no wonder, no self-distrust, — no sense of anything above — we might almost say beside, or out of — the

intellect of the speculator. Malebranche saw all things in God, Locke saw all things in himself. Nay, he went all but the length of seeing the whole universe in his five corporeal senses; and the majority of his disciples in more recent times have boldly leaped across the slight barrier which kept their master back from that great discovery. But, while there will continue to be in many minds this dissent from the general spirit of Locke's philosophy, and also from much in his conclusions, the *Essay on Human Understanding* will, nevertheless, always be recognized as not only an illustrious monument of the penetration, ingenuity, and other high mental powers and resources of its author, but as a fundamental book in modern metaphysics. It is, as has been remarked, the first comprehensive survey that had been attempted of the whole mind and its faculties; and the very conception of such a design argued an intellect of no common reach, originality, and boldness. It will remain also of very considerable value as an extensive register of facts, and a storehouse of acute and often suggestive observations on psychological phenomena, whatever may be the fate of the views propounded in it as aspiring to constitute a metaphysical system. Further, it is not to be denied that this work has exercised a powerful influence upon the course of philosophical inquiry and opinion ever since its appearance. At first, in particular, it did good service in putting finally to the rout some fantastic notions and methods that still lingered in the schools; it was the loudest and most comprehensive proclamation that had yet been made of the liberation of philosophy from the dominion of authority; but Locke's was a mind stronger and better furnished for the work of pulling down than of building up: he had enough of clear-sightedness and independence of mental character for the one; whatever endowments of a different kind he possessed, he had too little imagination, or creative power, for the other. Besides, the very passionless character of his mind would have unfitted him for going far into the philosophy of our complex nature, in which the passions are the revealers and teachers of all the deepest truths, and alone afford us any intimation of many things which, even with the aid of their lurid light, we discern but as fearful and unfathomable mysteries. What would Shakspeare's understanding of the philosophy of human nature have been, if he had had no more imagination and passion in his own nature than Locke?

WRITERS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY.

AMONG Locke's writings are two treatises, the one entitled *Considerations on the Lowering of Interest and Raising the Value of Money*, published in 1691, the other entitled *Further Considerations on Raising the Value of Money*, published in 1695. Some of the most important questions in what is now called Political Economy had been discussed in England in a popular fashion before the end of the sixteenth century; but it was only since the Revolution that attempts had been made to settle the general principles of the science of wealth or to give it a systematic form. Sir William Petty, Sir Josiah Child, and Mr. Thomas Mun had all written upon the subject of money before Locke, and both his publications and theirs contain many sound and valuable observations; but by far the most remarkable work belonging to this early era of the science is Sir Dudley North's *Discourses on Trade*, principally directed to the cases of Interest, Coinage, Clipping, and Increase of Money, published in the same year with Locke's first tract, and with reference to the same matter, the general recoinage of the silver currency, which was about this time first proposed by the government, and was accomplished five years afterwards. Sir Dudley's pamphlet was in opposition to a material point of the plan actually adopted, by which the loss arising from the clipped money was thrown upon the public, and the publication is supposed to have been suppressed; but a few years ago a distinguished living political economist (Mr. M'Culloch) was fortunate enough to recover a copy, then supposed to be the only one in existence.¹ Its leading principle is simply, that gold and silver differ commercially in no respect whatever from other commodities; and on this basis the author has reared a theory entirely unvitiated by the ancient and almost universally received errors and prejudices of his day, and, so far as it goes, as perfect as the subject admits of. A more voluminous writer on commerce and finance in this and the next reign was Dr. Charles Davenant (son of Sir William, the poet), whose works, however, are more valuable for the mere facts they record than for any light they throw on the principles of economical science. Davenant, who held the office of Inspector-General

¹ In his *Literature of Political Economy*, 8vo, Lond. 1845, p. 43, Mr. M'Culloch informs us that he has since met with two other copies of the original edition.

of Exports and Imports, was a laborious examiner of documents and accounts, and a sensible man withal, but rather dull, it must be allowed, notwithstanding his poetical descent.

BOYLE AND BENTLEY CONTROVERSY.

IN taking leave of the seventeenth century, we must not omit noticing the memorable contest of wit and learning which arose, in the reign of William, out of the publication of an edition of the Greek Epistles attributed to Phalaris, the tyrant of Agrigentum, in Sicily, famous for his brazen bull, by the Honorable Charles Boyle (afterwards Earl of Orrery). In the preface to his book, which was published in the beginning of the year 1695, Boyle, who was then an undergraduate of Christ Church, Oxford, animadverted with some severity upon a piece of discourtesy which he conceived he had met with from Dr. Bentley, then keeper of the King's Library, in regard to the loan of a manuscript of the Epistles there preserved. After an interval of two years, Bentley published, in an appendix to the second edition of his friend William Wotton's *Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning*, an elaborate exposition of his reasons for holding the compositions printed by Boyle, and ranked by him with the most precious remains of the remotest antiquity, to be a comparatively modern forgery; and at the same time took an opportunity both of replying to the charge brought against him by Boyle (from which he apparently clears himself), and of criticizing the late edition of the Epistles with great asperity, and with all the power of his vast erudition and unrivalled acumen. This, the first edition of Bentley's celebrated *Dissertation on Phalaris*, is now, in truth, universally considered to have established the spuriousness of the Epistles conclusively and unanswerably. An answer, however, was produced to it in the following year (1698), under the title of *Dr. Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of Æsop examined*; to which Boyle's name was prefixed, but which is believed to have been chiefly the composition of his tutor, the celebrated Dr. Francis Atterbury, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, whose very considerable attainments in classical scholarship were

enlivened and decorated by the finest spirit of wit and humor. Some others of the most distinguished among the Oxford men also contributed their blows or missiles; so that the cause of the old Sicilian tyrant against the denier and derider of his literary pretensions may be said to have been taken up and defended by the whole force and fury of the university. The laugh was turned for the moment against Bentley by this attack, which was for the most part a fierce personal invective; but he set at least the original question at rest, and effectually put down the pretensions of his assailants to cope with him in the field of learning and criticism, by a second and enlarged edition of his Dissertation, which he brought forth after about another year's interval. To this a reply was threatened, but none was ever made. Bentley's performance was in every way a masterpiece. "Professedly controversial," observes a late writer, "it embodies a mass of accurate information relative to historical facts, antiquities, chronology, and philology, such as we may safely say has rarely been collected in the same space; and the reader cannot fail to admire the ingenuity with which things apparently trifling, or foreign to the point in question, are made effective in illustrating or proving the author's views. Nothing shows so well how thoroughly digested and familiar was the vast stock of reading which Bentley possessed. The banter and ridicule of his opponents are returned with interest, and the reader is reconciled to what might seem to savor too much of arrogance and the bitterness of controversy by a sense of the strong provocation given to the author."¹ We may add a few words from Mr. Hallam's notice of this controversy: — "It was the first great literary war that had been waged in England; and, like that of Troy, it has still the prerogative of being remembered after the Epistles of Phalaris are as much buried as the walls of Troy itself. Both combatants were skilful in wielding the sword: the arms of Boyle, in Swift's language, were given him by all the gods;² but

¹ Article on Bentley, in Penny Cyclopædia, iv. 250.

² Upon this assertion of Swift's, Boyle's son, John Earl of Orrery, remarks, with a filial or family partiality that is excusable enough: — "I shall not dispute about the gift of the armour; but thus far I will venture to observe, that the gods never bestowed celestial armour except upon heroes whose courage and superior strength distinguished them from the rest of mankind; whose merits and abilities were already conspicuous; and who could wield, though young, the sword of Mars, and adorn it with all the virtues of Minerva." — Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Swift, 5th edition, p. 228. Charles Boyle was in truth a person of respectable talent; but, although in after-life he wrote a comedy (*As You Find It*), and

his antagonist stood forward in no such figurative strength, — master of a learning to which nothing parallel had been known in England, and that directed by an understanding prompt, discriminating, not idly sceptical, but still farther removed from trust in authority, sagacious in perceiving corruptions of language, and ingenious, at the least, in removing them, with a style rapid, concise, amusing, and superior to Boyle in that which he had most to boast, a sarcastic wit.”¹ The Battle of the Books, here alluded to, the production of the afterwards renowned Jonathan Swift, did not, however, appear till the year 1704. In fact the dispute about the authenticity of the Epistles of Phalaris had formed all along only a branch of a larger controversy, which was kept up for some years after the question of Phalaris had been set at rest and abandoned on all hands. It was Swift’s relation and patron, Sir William Temple, who had first called attention to the Epistles by a passage in one of his Essays, in which he endeavored to maintain the superiority of the ancients over the moderns in all kinds of learning and knowledge, the physical and experimental sciences themselves not excepted. It was in answer to Temple’s Essay, which was itself a reply to Perrault’s *Parallèle des Anciens et Modernes*, published at Paris in 1687, that Wotton wrote his *Reflections*, the first edition of which appeared in 1694, and expressed therein an opinion unfavorable to the antiquity of the Epistles, which Temple had both eulogized in warm terms and cited as of unquestionable authenticity. This argument between Temple as the champion-general of the ancients, and Wotton of the moderns, which produced a great many more publications from both, and from their respective partisans, is the main subject of the *Battle of the Books*, which was probably the last blow struck in the pen-and-ink war, and at any rate is the last that is now remembered.²

some other trifles, his wit does not appear to have ripened with his years, and nothing that he produced ever excited any attention except his college publication in the Phalaris controversy.

¹ *Lit. of Eur.* iv. 10.

² Most readers will remember Lord Macaulay’s brilliant sketch of this controversy in his *Essay on Sir William Temple*, *Edin. Rev.* for Oct. 1838.

SWIFT.

THE Tale of a Tub and the Battle of the Books, published together, were the first announcement of the greatest master of satire at once comic and caustic that has yet appeared in our language. Swift, born in Dublin in 1667, had already, in the last years of the reign of King William, made himself known by two volumes of Letters selected from the papers of his friend Temple (who died in 1699), and also by a political pamphlet in favor of the ministry of the day, which attracted little notice, and gave as little promise of his future eminence as a writer. To politics as well as satire, however, he adhered throughout his career, — often blending the two, but producing scarcely anything, if we may not except some of his effusions in verse, that was not either satirical or political. His course of authorship as a political writer may be considered properly to begin with his Letter concerning the Sacramental Test, and another high Tory and high Church tract, which he published in 1708; in which same year he also came forward with his ironical Argument for the Abolition of Christianity, and, in his humorous Predictions first assumed his *nom d' guerre* of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, subsequently made so famous by other *jeux d'esprit* in the same style, and by its adoption soon after by the wits of the Tatler. Of his other most notable performances, his Conduct of the Allies was published in 1712; his Public Spirit of the Whigs, in 1714; his Drapier's Letters, in 1724; his immortal Gulliver's Travels, in 1727; and his Polite Conversation, which, however, had been written many years before, in 1738. His poem of Cadenus and Vanessa, besides, had appeared, without his consent, in 1723, soon after the death of Miss Hester Vanhomrigh, its heroine. The History of the Four Last Years of Queen Anne (if his, which there can hardly be a doubt that it is), the Directions for Servants, many of his verses and other shorter pieces, and his Diary written to Stella (Miss Johnson, whom he eventually married), were none of them printed till after, some of them not till long after, his death, which took place in 1745.

“O thou!” exclaims his friend Pope,

— “whatever title please thine ear,
Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gulliver!
Whether thou choose Cervantes' serious air,

Or laugh and shake in Rabelais' easy chair,
 Or praise the court, or magnify mankind,
 Or thy grieved country's copper chains unbind," —

lines that describe comprehensively enough the celebrated dean's genius and writings — what he did and what he was. And the first remark to be made about Swift is, that into everything that came from his pen he put a strong infusion of himself; that in his writings we read the man — not merely his intellectual ability, but his moral nature, his passions, his principles, his prejudices, his humors, his whole temper and individuality. The common herd of writers have no individuality at all; those of the very highest class can assume at will any other individuality as perfectly as their own, — they have no exclusiveness. Next under this highest class stand those whose individuality is at once their strength and their weakness; — their strength, inasmuch as it distinguishes them from and lifts them far above the multitude of writers of mere talent or expository skill; their weakness and bondage, in that it will not be thrown off, and that it withholds them from ever going out of themselves, and rising from the merely characteristic, striking, or picturesque, either to the dramatic or to the beautiful, of both of which equally the spirit is unegotistic and universal. To this class, which is not the highest but the next to it, Swift belongs. The class, however, like both that which is above and that which is below it, is one of wide comprehension, and includes many degrees of power, and even many diversities of gifts. Swift was neither a Cervantes nor a Rabelais; but yet, with something that was peculiar to himself, he combined considerable portions of both. He had more of Cervantes than Rabelais had, and more of Rabelais than was given to Cervantes. There cannot be claimed for him the refinement, the humanity, the pathos, the noble elevation of the Spaniard — all that irradiates and beautifies his satire and drollery as the blue sky does the earth it bends over; neither, with all his ingenuity and fertility, does our English wit and humorist anywhere display either the same inexhaustible abundance of grotesque invention, or the same gayety and luxuriance of fancy, with the historian of the Doings and Sayings of the Giant Gargantua. Yet neither Cervantes nor Rabelais, nor both combined, could have written the Tale of a Tub, or the Battle of the Books. The torrent of triumphant merriment is broader and more rushing than anything of the same kind in either. When

we look indeed to the perfection and exactness of the allegory at all points, to the biting sharpness and at the same time the hilarity and comic animation of the satire, to its strong and unpausing yet easy and natural flow, to the incessant blaze of the wit and humor, and to the style so clear, so vivid and expressive, so idiomatic, so English, so true and appropriate in all its varieties, narrative, didactic, rhetorical, colloquial, as we know no work of its class in our own language that as a whole approaches the Tale of a Tub, so we doubt if there be another quite equal to it in any language. Even a few extracts may give some notion of its wonderful spirit and brilliancy. Passing over some preliminary matter, — among other things the inimitable Dedication to Prince Posterity, — we come in what is entitled Section Second to the proper commencement of the story, the death-bed bequest by the father to his three sons, all born at a birth, of a new coat each, — the miraculous virtues of the garments being, that with good keeping they would last them fresh and sound as long as they lived, and that they would grow with the bodies of their wearers, lengthening and widening of themselves, so as always to fit. “Here,” said the father; “let me see them on you before I die. So; very well: pray, children, wear them clean, and brush them often. You will find in my will — here it is — full instructions in every particular concerning the wearing and management of your coats; wherein you must be very exact, to avoid the penalties I have appointed for every transgression or neglect, upon which your future fortunes will entirely depend. I have also commanded in my will that you should live together in one house like brethren and friends, for then you will be sure to thrive, and not otherwise.” The will in question is the Bible. The three young men, after their father’s death, go forth all together to seek their fortunes. “I shall not trouble you,” says our author, “with recounting what adventures they met with for the first seven years, any further than by taking notice that they carefully observed their father’s will, and kept their coats in very good order; that they travelled through several countries, encountered a reasonable quantity of giants, and slew certain dragons.” And thus he dismisses the primitive ages of Christianity. “Being now, however, arrived at the proper age for producing themselves,” he tells us, “they came up to town, and fell in love with the ladies,” — among the rest, and especially, with the Duchess d’Argent (Covetousness), Madame de Grands

Titres (Ambition), and the Countess d'Orgueil (Pride). We must refer the reader to the original for the account of the courses they took, with no effect, to gain the favor of these ladies, — giving themselves for that purpose to the acquisition and practice of all the fashionable ways of the town; and also for the full exposition of the facetious and profound theory that follows on the subject of dress, — that the universe is only a large suit of clothes, and that every part of nature, and man himself, is nothing more; so that, argues our author, “what the world calls improperly suits of clothes are in reality the most refined species of animals, or, to proceed higher, that they are rational creatures or men.” “Is it not they,” he asks, “and they alone who walk the streets?” “It is true, indeed,” he adds, “that these animals, which are truly only called suits of clothes, or dresses, do, according to certain compositions, receive different appellations. If one of them be trimmed up with a gold chain, and a red gown, and a white rod, and a great horse, it is called a lord mayor; if certain ermines and furs be placed in a certain position, we style them a judge; and so an apt conjunction of lawn and black satin we entitle a bishop.” The devotees of dress are represented as a sect that had lately arisen, whose tenets had spread extensively in the great world, and whose supreme deity was a tailor. “They worshipped,” we are told, “a sort of idol, who, as their doctrine delivered, did daily create men by a kind of manufactory operation. This idol they placed in the highest part of the house on an altar erected about three foot: he was shown in the posture of a Persian emperor, sitting on a superficies, with his legs interwoven under him. This god had a goose for his ensign: whence it is that some learned men pretend to deduce his original from Jupiter Capitolinus. At his left hand, beneath the altar, hell seemed to open and catch at the animals the idol was creating; to prevent which, certain of his priests hourly flung in pieces of the uninformed mass, or substance, and sometimes whole limbs already enlivened, which that horrid gulf insatiably swallowed, terrible to behold.” “To this system of religion,” it is added, “were tagged several subaltern doctrines, which were entertained with great vogue; as, particularly, the faculties of the mind were deduced by the learned among them in this manner: — embroidery was sheer wit, gold fringe was agreeable conversation, gold lace was repartee, a huge long periwig was humour, and a coat full of powder was very good railery, — all

which required abundance of *finesse* and *delicatesse* to manage w^{it} advantage, as well as a strict observance of the times and fashions.’ And then the story proceeds as follows : —

These opinions therefore were so universal, as well as the practices of them, that our three brother adventurers, as their circumstances then stood, were strangely at a loss. For, on the one side, the three ladies they addressed themselves to, whom we have named already, were ever at the very top of the fashion, and abhorred all that were below it but the breadth of a hair. On the other side, their father’s will was very precise ; and it was the main precept in it, with the greatest penalties annexed, not to add or diminish from their coats one thread, without a positive command in the will. Now the coats their father had left them were, it is true, of very good cloth, and besides so neatly sewn you would swear they were all of a piece ; but at the same time very plain, and with little or no ornament ; and it happened that before they were a month in town great shoulder-knots came up ; straight all the world wore shoulder-knots — no approaching the ladies’ *ruelles* without the *quota* of shoulder-knots. That fellow, cries one, has no soul ; where is his shoulder-knot ? Our three brethren soon discovered their want by sad experience, meeting in their walks with forty mortifications and indignities. If they went to the play-house, the doorkeeper showed them into the twelvepenny gallery ; if they called a boat, says a waterman, “ I am first sculler ; ” if they stepped to the Rose to take a bottle, the drawer would cry, “ Friend, we sell no ale ; ” if they went to visit a lady, a footman met them at the door with “ Pray send up your message.” In this unhappy case they went immediately to consult their father’s will, read it over and over, but not a word of the shoulder-knot. What should they do ? What temper¹ should they find ? Obedience was absolutely necessary, and yet shoulder-knots appeared extremely requisite. After much thought, one of the brothers, who happened to be more booklearned than the other two, said he had found an expedient. It is true, said he, there is nothing here in this will, *totidem verbis*,² making mention of shoulder-knots ; but I dare conjecture we may find them *inclusive*,³ or *totidem syllabis*.⁴ This distinction was immediately approved by all, and so they fell again to examine ; but their evil star had so directed the matter that the first syllable was not to be found in the whole writings. Upon which disappointment, he who found the former evasion took heart, and said, “ Brothers, there are yet hopes ; for, though we cannot find them *totidem verbis*, nor *totidem syllabis*, I dare engage we shall make them out *tertio modo*,⁵ or *totidem literis*.⁶ This

¹ Middle course

² In so many words.

³ Inclusively.

⁴ In so many syllables.

⁵ In the third mode or manner.

⁶ In so many letters

Discovery was also highly commended, upon which they fell once more to the scrutiny, and soon picked out S, H, O, U, L, D, E, R; when the same planet, enemy to their repose, had wonderfully contrived that a K was not to be found. Here was a weighty difficulty! But the distinguishing brother, for whom we shall hereafter find a name, now his hand was in, proved by a very good argument that K was a modern, illegitimate letter, unknown to the learned ages, nor any where to be found in ancient manuscripts. It is true, said he, the word *Calendar* hath in Q. V. C.¹ been sometimes written with a K, but erroneously; for in the best copies it has been ever spelt with a C. And, by consequence, it was a gross mistake in our language to spell *knot* with a K; but that from henceforward he would take care it should be written with a C. Upon this all further difficulty vanished — shoulder-knots were made clearly out to be *jure paterno*,² and our three gentlemen swaggered with as large and as flaunting ones as the best. But, as human happiness is of a very short duration, so in those days were human fashions, upon which it entirely depends. Shoulder-knots had their time, and we must now imagine them in their decline; for a certain lord came just from Paris, with fifty yards of gold lace upon his coat, exactly trimmed after the court fashion of that month. In two days all mankind appeared closed up in bars of gold lace. . . . What should our three knights do in this momentous affair? They had sufficiently strained a point already in the affair of shoulder-knots: upon recourse to the will, nothing appeared there but *altum silentium*.³ That of the shoulder-knot was a loose, flying, circumstantial point; but this of gold lace seemed too considerable an alteration without better warrant; it did *aliquo modo essentialiter adherere*,⁴ and therefore required a positive precept. But about this time it fell out that the learned brother aforesaid had read *Aristotelis Dialectica*,⁵ and especially that wonderful piece *De Interpretatione*,⁶ which has the faculty of teaching its readers to find out a meaning in every thing but itself; like commentators on the Revelations, who proceed prophets without understanding a syllable of the text. Brothers, said he, you are to be informed that of wills *duo sunt genera*.⁷ nuncupatory and scriptory: that in the scriptory will here before us there is no precept or mention about gold lace, *conceditur*; ⁸ but, *si idem affirmetur de nuncupatorio, negatur*.⁹ For, brothers, if you remember, we heard a fellow say when we were boys that he heard my father's man say that

¹ Quibusdem veteribus codicibus (in some ancient manuscripts).

² Conformable to paternal law.

³ Deep silence.

⁴ In some measure belong to the essence. These are all phrases of the schoolmen, whose endless distinctions and methods of reasoning are ridiculed.

⁵ Aristotle's Dialectics.

⁶ On Interpretation.

⁷ There are two kinds.

⁸ Is granted.

⁹ If the same thing be affirmed of the nuncupatory, it is denied. Of course, the nuncupatory will be the oral traditions of the Romish Church.

he would advise his sons to get gold lace on their coats as soon as ever they could procure money to buy it. By G—! that is very true, cries the other; I remember it perfectly well, says the third. And so, without more ado, they got the largest gold lace in the parish, and walked about as fine as lords.

A while after there came up in fashion a pretty sort of flame-coloured satin for lining,¹ and the mercer brought a pattern of it immediately to our three gentlemen. "An' please your worships," said he, "my Lord Conway and Sir John Walters had linings out of this very piece last night: it takes wonderfully, and I shall not have a remnant left enough to make my wife a pineushion by to-morrow morning at ten o'clock." Upon this they fell again to rummage the will, because the present case also required a positive precept: the lining being held by orthodox writers to be of the essence of the coat. After a long search they could fix upon nothing to the matter in hand, except a short advice of their father in the will to take care of fire and put out their candles before they went to sleep.² This, though a good deal for the purpose, and helping very far towards self-conviction, yet not seeming wholly of force to establish a command (being resolved to avoid further scruple, as well as future occasion for scandal), says he that was the scholar, I remember to have read in wills of a codicil annexed, which is indeed a part of the will, and what it contains has equal authority with the rest. Now, I have been considering of this same will here before us, and I cannot reckon it to be complete for want of such a codicil: I will therefore fasten one in its proper place very dexterously. I have had it by me some time: it was written by a dog-keeper of my grandfather's,³ and talks a great deal, as good luck would have it, of this very flame-coloured satin. The project was immediately approved by the other two: an old parchment scroll was tagged on according to art, in the form of a codicil annexed, and the satin bought and worn.

Next winter a player, hired for the purpose by the corporation of fringe-makers, acted his part in a new comedy, all covered with silver fringe, and, according to the laudable custom, gave rise to that fashion. Upon which the brothers, consulting their father's will, to their great astonishment, found these words: *Item*, I charge and command my said three sons to wear no sort of silver fringe upon or about their said coats, &c., with a penalty, in case of disobedience, too long here to insert. However, after some pause, the brother so often mentioned for his erudition, who was well skilled in criticisms, had found in a certain author, which he said should be nameless, that the same word which in the will is called fringe does also signify a broomstick, and doubtless ought to have the same

¹ The fire of purgatory, and prayers for the dead.

² To subdue their lusts, that they might escape the fire of hell.

³ Pointed, apparently, at the Apocrypha.

interpretation in this paragraph. This another of the brothers disliked, because of that epithet silver, which could not, he humbly conceived, in propriety of speech, be reasonably applied to a broomstick; but it was replied upon him that this epithet was understood in a mythological and allegorical sense. However, he objected again why their father should forbid them to wear a broomstick on their coats, a caution that seemed unnatural and impertinent; upon which he was taken up short, as one that spoke irreverently of a mystery, which doubtless was very useful and significant, but ought not to be over-curiously pried into or nicely reasoned upon. And, in short, their father's authority being now considerably sunk, this expedient was allowed to serve as a lawful dispensation for wearing their full proportion of silver fringe.

A while after was revived an old fashion, long antiquated, of embroidery with Indian figures of men, women, and children.¹ Here they remembered but too well how their father had always abhorred this fashion; that he made several paragraphs on purpose, importing his utter detestation of it, and bestowing his everlasting curse to his sons whenever they should wear it. For all this, in a few days they appeared higher in the fashion than any body else in the town. But they solved the matter by saying that these figures were not at all the same with those that were formerly worn and were meant in the will. Besides, they did not wear them in the sense as forbidden by their father, but as they were a commendable custom, and of great use to the public. That these rigorous clauses in the will did therefore require some allowance and a favourable interpretation, and ought to be understood *cum grano salis*.

But, fashions perpetually altering in that age, the scholastic brother grew weary of searching farther evasions and solving everlasting contradictions. Resolved, therefore, at all hazards to comply with the modes of the world, they concerted matters together, and agreed unanimously to lock up their father's will in a strong box, brought out of Greece or Italy, I have forgotten which, and trouble themselves no farther to examine it, but only refer to its authority whenever they thought fit;² in consequence whereof, a while after it grew a general mode to wear an infinite number of points, most of them tagged with silver;³ upon which the scholar pronounced, *ex cathedra*,⁴ that points were absolutely *jure paterno*, as they might very well remember. It is true, indeed, the fashion prescribed somewhat more than were directly named in the will; however, 'hat they, as heirs general of their father, had power to make and add

¹ Images of saints.

² The prohibition of the use of the Scriptures, except in the Greek or Latin languages

³ Novel rites and doctrines, many of which were sources of pecuniary profit.

⁴ From the seat of authority, in allusion to the papal decretals and bulls.

certain clauses for public emolument, though not deducible *totidem verbis* from the letter of the will, or else *multa absurda sequerentur*.¹ This was understood for canonical, and therefore on the following Sunday they came to church all covered with points.

The learned brother, so often mentioned, was reckoned the best scholar in all that or the next street to it, insomuch as, having run something behindhand in the world, he obtained the favour of a certain lord² to receive him into his house, and to teach his children. A while after, the lord died; and he, by long practice upon his father's will, found the way of contriving a deed of conveyance of that house to himself and his heirs;³ upon which he took possession, turned the young squires out, and received his brothers in their stead.

In all this the satire is as admirable for the fineness of its edge as for its force and liveliness; but in the sequel the drollery becomes still richer. The glory of the work undoubtedly is the fourth section, in which it is recounted how the learned brother, advanced in the world as we have seen, after a while would not allow the others to call him any longer brother, but Mr. Peter, and then Father Peter, and sometimes My Lord Peter; and what discoveries and inventions he fell upon to support his grandeur, including his purchase of a large continent in *terra australis incognita* (the other world), which (although its very existence was doubtful) he retailed in parcels to a continual succession of dealers and colonists, who were always shipwrecked in the voyage, — his sovereign remedy for the worms (penance and fasting), — his whispering office (the confessional), — his office of insurance (indulgences), — his puppets and raree-shows (ceremonies and processions), — his famous universal pickle (holy water), — above all, his bulls, descended from those of Colchis, only that by some accident or mismanagement they had lost their brazen, and got, instead, leaden feet; and still better, the paper pardons he used to sell to poor condemned Newgate wretches, commanding all mayors, sheriffs, jailers, &c. to set the holder at large, in terms more imperative than we care to quote, but which yet never proved of any use; and how, when he had in these ways become exceeding rich, his head began to turn, and he grew in fact distracted, conceiving the strangest imaginations in the world, sometimes, in the height of his fits, calling himself God Almighty and monarch of the uni

¹ Many absurd consequences would follow.

² Constantine the Great.

³ The temporal sovereignty claimed by the popes.

verse; taking three old high-crowned hats, and clapping them all on his head three-story high, with a large bunch of keys at his girdle, and an angling-rod in his hands, "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 "whoever walked by without paying him their compliments, having a wonderful strong breath, he would blow their hats off into the dirt"; and how his affairs at home went upside down, and his two brothers had a wretched time; "where his first *boutade*¹ was to kick both their wives one morning out of doors, and his own too, and, in their stead, gave orders to pick up the first three strollers that could be met with in the streets"; and the crowning scene of the transubstantiation of the loaf of brown bread into the shoulder of mutton, with sundry other minor illustrations of Peter's lying, swearing, and mad tyranny and extravagance. But, as a shorter and more manageable passage, we will take instead for our next extract the account in a subsequent chapter of the first proceedings of his two brothers, Martin (the representative of Lutheranism and the Church of England) and Jack (who stands for Calvinism, Presbytery, and Protestant dissent), after, Peter having grown so scandalous that all the neighborhood began in plain words to say he was no better than a knave, they had left his house, or rather been kicked out of it, having previously, however, both contrived to take a copy of their father's will, and also "to break open the cellar-door, and get a little good drink to spirit and comfort their hearts." At first they took a lodging together; but although, we are told, they "had lived in much friendship and agreement under the tyranny of their brother Peter, as it is the talent of fellow-sufferers to do," now that they were left to themselves it soon began to appear that their complexions, or tempers, were extremely different, "which," says our author, "the present posture of their affairs gave them sudden opportunity to discover"; and then he proceeds as follows:—

I ought in method to have informed the reader, about fifty pages ago, of a fancy Lord Peter took, and infused into his brothers, to wear on their coats whatever trimmings came up in fashion; never pulling off any as they went out of the mode, but keeping on all together, which amounted in time to a medley the most antic you can possibly conceive; and this to a degree, that, upon the time of their falling out, there was hardly a thread

¹ A sudden jerk or lash given to a horse.

of the original coat to be seen; but an infinite quantity of lace and ribbons, and fringe, and embroidery, and points, — I mean only those tagged with silver, for the rest fell off. Now this material circumstance, having been forgot in due place, as good fortune has ordered, comes in very properly here, when the two brothers are just going to reform their vestures into the primitive state prescribed by their father's will.

They both unanimously entered upon this great work, looking sometimes on their coats and sometimes on the will. Martin laid the first hand; at one twitch brought off a large handful of points; and, with a second pull, stripped away ten dozen yards of fringe. But, when he had gone thus far, he demurred a while: he knew very well there yet remained a great deal more to be done: however, the first heat being over, his violence began to cool, and he resolved to proceed more moderately in the rest of the work, having already narrowly escaped a swinging rent in pulling off the points, which, being tagged with silver (as we have observed before), the judicious workman had, with much sagacity, double sewn, to preserve them from falling. Resolving, therefore, to rid his coat of a large quantity of gold lace, he picked up the stitches with much caution, and diligently gleaned out all the loose threads as he went, which proved to be a work of time. Then he fell about the embroidered Indian figures of men, women, and children, against which, as you have heard in its due place, their father's testament was extremely exact and severe: these, with much dexterity and application, were, after a while, quite eradicated or utterly defaced. For the rest, where he observed the embroidery to be worked so close as not to be got away without damaging the cloth, or where it served to hide or strengthen any flaw in the body of the coat, contracted by the perpetual tampering of workmen upon it, he concluded the wisest course was to let it remain, resolving in no case whatsoever that the substance of the stuff should suffer injury, which he thought the best method for serving the true intent and meaning of his father's will. And this is the nearest account I have been able to collect of Martin's proceedings upon this great revolution.

But his brother Jack, whose adventures will be so extraordinary as to furnish a great part in the remainder of this discourse, entered upon the matter with other thoughts and a quite different spirit. For the memory of Lord Peter's injuries produced a degree of hatred and spite, which had a much greater share of inciting him than any regard after his father's commands; since these appeared, at the best, only secondary and subservient to the other. However, for this medley of humour he made a shift to find a very plausible name, honouring it with the title of zeal; which is perhaps the most significant word that has been ever yet produced in any language; as I think I have fully proved in my excellent analytical discourse upon that subject; wherein I have deduced a histori-theo-physi

logical account of zeal, showing how it first proceeded from a notion into a word, and thence, in a hot summer, ripened into a tangible substance. This work, containing three large volumes in folio, I design very shortly to publish by the modern way of subscription, not doubting but the nobility and gentry of the land will give me all possible encouragement; having had already a taste of what I am able to perform.

I record, therefore, that brother Jack, brimful of this miraculous compound, reflecting with indignation upon Peter's tyranny, and farther provoked by the despondency of Martin, prefaced his resolutions to this purpose. "What," said he, "a rogue, that locked up his drink, turned away our wives, cheated us of our fortunes; palmed his damned crusts upon us for mutton; and at last kicked us out of doors; must we be in his fashions, with a pox! A rascal, besides, that all the street cries out against." Having thus kindled and inflamed himself as high as possible, and by consequence in a delicate temper for beginning a reformation, he set about the work immediately; and in three minutes made more dispatch than Martin had done in as many hours. For, courteous reader, you are given to understand that zeal is never so highly obliged as when you set it a tearing; and Jack, who doted on that quality in himself, allowed it at this time its full swing. Thus it happened that, stripping down a parcel of gold lace a little too hastily, he rent the main body of his coat from top to bottom; and, whereas his talent was not of the happiest in taking up a stitch, he knew no better way than to darn it again with pack-thread and a skewer. But the matter was yet infinitely worse (I record it with tears) when he proceeded to the embroidery; for, being clumsy by nature, and of temper impatient; withal, beholding millions of stitches that required the nicest hand and sedatest constitution to extricate; in a great rage he tore off the whole piece, cloth and all, and flung it into the kennel, and furiously thus continued his career:—"Ah, good brother Martin," said he, "do as I do, for the love of God; strip, tear, pull, rend, flay off all, that we may appear as unlike that rogue Peter as it is possible: I would not for a hundred pounds carry the least mark about me that might give occasion to the neighbours of suspecting that I was related to such a rascal." But Martin, who at this time happened to be extremely phlegmatic and sedate, begged his brother, of all love, not to damage his coat by any means; for he never would get such another; desired him to consider that it was not their business to form their actions by any reflection upon Peter, but by observing the rules prescribed in their father's will. That he should remember Peter was still their brother, whatever faults or injuries he had committed; and therefore they should by all means avoid such a thought as that of taking measures for good and evil from no other rule than of opposition to him. That it was true the testament of their good father was very exact in what related to

the wearing of their coats : yet it was no less penal and strict in prescribing agreement and friendship and affection between them. And, therefore, if straining a point were at all dispensable, it would certainly be so rather to the advance of unity than increase of contradiction.

Martin had still proceeded as gravely as he began, and doubtless would have delivered an admirable lecture of morality, which might have exceedingly contributed to my reader's repose both of body and mind, the true ultimate end of ethics ; but Jack was already gone a flight-shot beyond his patience. And, as in scholastic disputes nothing serves to rouse the spleen of him that opposes so much as a kind of pedantic affected calmness in the respondent ; disputants being for the most part like unequal scales, where the gravity of the one side advances the lightness of the other, and causes it to fly up and kick the beam ; so it happened here that the weight of Martin's argument exalted Jack's levity, and made him fly out and spurn against his brother's moderation. In short, Martin's patience put Jack in a rage ; but that which more afflicted him was, to observe his brother's coat so well reduced into the state of innocence ; while his own was either wholly rent to his shirt, or those places which had escaped his cruel clutches were still in Peter's livery. So that he looked like a drunken beau, half rifled by bullies ; or like a fresh tenant of Newgate, when he has refused the payment of garnish : or like a discovered shop-lifter, left to the mercy of Exchange women.¹ Like any, or like all, of these, a medley of rags, and lace, and rents, and fringes, unfortunate Jack did now appear : he would have been extremely glad to see his coat in the condition of Martin's, but infinitely gladder to find that of Martin in the same predicament with his. However, since neither of these was likely to come to pass, he thought fit to lend the whole business another turn, and to dress up necessity into a virtue. Therefore, after as many of the fox's arguments as he could muster up for bringing Martin to reason, as he called it, or, as he meant it, into his own ragged, hob-tailed condition : and observing he said all to little purpose : what, alas ! was left for the forlorn Jack to do, but, after a million of scurrilities against his brother, to run mad with spleen, and spite, and contradiction. To be short, here began a mortal breach between these two. Jack went immediately to new lodgings, and in a few days it was for certain reported that he had run out of his wits. In a short time after, he appeared abroad, and confirmed the report by falling into the oddest whimsies that ever a sick brain conceived.

How capital, too, is the following, which is all we can afford to give of Jack's vagaries : —

He would stand in the turning of a street, and, calling to those who

¹ The women who kept the shops in the galleries of the Old Royal Exchange

passed by, would cry to one, "Worthy Sir, do me the honour of a good slap in the chaps." To another, "Honest friend, pray favour me with a handsome kick Madam, shall I entreat a small box on the ear from your ladyship's fair hands? Noble captain, lend a reasonable thwack, for the love of God, with that cane of yours over these poor shoulders." And when he had, by such earnest solicitations, made a shift to procure a basting sufficient to swell up his fancy and his sides, he would return home extremely comforted, and full of terrible accounts of what he had undergone for the public good. "Observe this stroke," said he, showing his bare shoulders: "a plaguy janisary gave it me this morning, at seven o'clock, as, with much ado, I was driving off the Great Turk. Neighbours, mind, this broken head deserves a plaster; had poor Jack been tender of his noddle, you would have seen the pope and the French king, long before this time of day, among your wives and your warehouses. Dear Christians, the Great Mogul was come as far as Whitechapel, and you may thank these poor sides that he hath not (God bless us!) already swallowed up man, woman, and child."

It was highly worth observing the singular effects of that aversion or antipathy which Jack and his brother Peter seemed, even to an affectation, to bear against each other. Peter had lately done some rogueries that forced him to abscond, and he seldom ventured to stir out before night, for fear of bailiffs. Their lodgings were at the two most distant parts of the town from each other; and, whenever their occasions or humours called them abroad, they would make choice of the oddest unlikely times, and most uncouth rounds they could invent, that they might be sure to avoid one another; yet, after all this, it was their perpetual fortune to meet. The reason of which is easy enough to apprehend: for, the frenzy and the spleen of both having the same foundation, we may look upon them as two pair of compasses, equally extended, and the fixed foot of each remaining in the same centre, which, though moving contrary ways at first, will be sure to encounter somewhere or other in the circumference. Besides, it was among the great misfortunes of Jack to bear a huge personal resemblance with his brother Peter. Their humour and dispositions were not only the same, but there was a close analogy in their shape, their size, and their mien. Insomuch as nothing was more frequent than for a bailiff to seize Jack by the shoulders, and cry "Mr. Peter, you are the king's prisoner." Or, at other times, for one of Peter's nearest friends to accost Jack with open arms, "Dear Peter, I am glad to see thee: pray send me one of your best medicines for the worms." This, we may suppose, was a mortifying return of those pains and proceedings Jack had laboured in so long; and, finding how directly opposite all his endeavours had answered to the sole end and intention which he had proposed to himself, how could it avoid having terrible effects upon a head and heart so furnished as his?

However, the poor remainders of his coat bore all the punishment; the orient sun never entered upon his diurnal progress without missing a piece of it. He hired a tailor to stitch up the collar so close that it was ready to choke him, and squeezed out his eyes at such a rate as one could see nothing but the white. What little was left of the main substance of the coat he rubbed every day for two hours against a rough-cast wall, in order to grind away the remnants of lace and embroidery; but at the same time went on with so much violence, that he proceeded a heathen philosopher. Yet, after all he could do of this kind, the success continued still to disappoint his expectation. For, as it is the nature of rags to bear a kind of mock resemblance to finery, there being a sort of fluttering appearance in both which is not to be distinguished at a distance, in the dark, or by short-sighted eyes, so, in those junctures, it fared with Jack and his tatters, that they offered to the first view a ridiculous flaunting, which, assisting the resemblance in person and air, thwarted all his projects of separation, and left so near a similitude between them as frequently deceived the very disciples and followers of both.

It is said that one day in the latter part of his life, Swift, after looking over the Tale of a Tub for some time, suddenly shut the book, and exclaimed, "Good God! what a genius I had when I wrote that!" It was indeed something too good to be done over again; so happy a feat as to forbid all hope of its ever being surpassed, and in that way tending even to repress the courage and effort by which it might have been equalled. But at this period of his life Swift's genius certainly had a fervor, exuberance, and florid gayety which it lost in a great degree (whatever it may have gained in compensation) as he advanced in years. Here and there in the Tale of a Tub, and likewise in the Battle of the Books, the expression rises to an eloquence, and sometimes to a poetic glow, such as is not to be found in any of his later writings either in prose or in verse. In the discourse, for instance, prefixed to the Tale, entitled The Author's Apology, how lively and apt is the figure by which "the usual fate of common answerers to books that are allowed to have any merit" is illustrated:—"They are indeed like annuals that grow about a young tree, and seem to vie with it for a summer, but fall and die with the leaves in autumn, and are never heard of more." Here is the oldest and most hackneyed of all similitudes—that of the elm and the vine—made again as bright and striking as the first time it was used. In the Dedication to Prince Posterity, the different methods of tyranny and destruction which the prince's governor, Time, employs in

putting out of existence the productions of the common authors of the day are thus described: — “His inveterate malice is such to the writings of our age, that, of several thousands produced yearly from this renowned city, before the next revolution of the sun there is not one to be heard of: unhappy infants! many of them barbarously destroyed before they have so much as learned their mother-tongue to beg for pity. Some he stifles in their cradles; others he frights into convulsions, whereof they suddenly die; some he flays alive; others he tears limb from limb. Great numbers are offered to Moloch; and the rest, tainted by his breath, die of a languishing consumption.” How powerfully are the extemporaneous preacher and his hearers depicted in the great chapter on the renowned sect of the Aeolists (or pretenders to immediate inspiration) founded by Jack: — “The wind, in breaking forth, deals with his face as it does with that of the sea, first blackening, then wrinkling, and at last bursting it into a foam. It is in this guise the sacred Aeolist delivers his oracular belches to his panting disciples, of whom some are greedily gaping after the sanctified breath; others are all the while hymning out the praises of the winds; and gently wafted to and fro by their own humming, do thus represent the soft breezes of their deities appeased.” In the next chapter — “A digression concerning the original, the use, and improvement of Madness in a Commonwealth” — the eloquence flows throughout in a full and rapid stream, rising at times to a height not unworthy of Bacon or Taylor. Here is a single sentence: — “How fading and insipid do all objects accost us that are not conveyed in the vehicle of delusion! how shrunk is everything as it appears in the glass of nature! so that, if it were not for the assistance of artificial mediums, false lights, refracted angles, varnish and tinsel, there would be a mighty level in the felicity and enjoyments of mortal men.” When he wrote this, indeed, Swift must have been thinking of Bacon, or fresh from the reading of the passage in his Essay on Truth, in which he says, “This same truth is a naked and open daylight, that doth not show the masks, and mummeries, and triumphs of the world half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. . . . A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that, if there were taken out of men’s minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and

indisposition, and displeasing to themselves?" Swift, with the phraseology of this passage apparently running in his head, goes on to condemn the so-called wisdom which consists in *unmasking*; concluding his argument as follows: "Whatever philosopher or projector can find out an art to solder and patch up the flaws and imperfections of nature, will deserve much better of mankind, and teach us a more useful science, than that so much in present esteem, of widening and exposing them, like him who held anatomy to be the ultimate end of physic. And he whose fortunes and dispositions have placed him in a convenient station to enjoy the fruits of this noble art; he that can, with Epicurus, content his ideas with the films and images that fly off upon his senses from the superficies of things; such a man, truly wise, creams off nature, leaving the sour and the dregs for philosophy and reason to lap up. This is the sublime and refined point of felicity, called the possession of being well deceived; the serene, peaceful state of being a fool among knaves." We will take our leave of the Tale of a Tub with the transcription of one sentence more from the next chapter: "I have a strong inclination," exclaims our half jesting, half serious author, "before I leave the world, to taste a blessing which we mysterious writers can seldom reach till we have gotten into our graves; whether it be that fame, being a fruit grafted on the body, can hardly grow, and much less ripen, till the stock is in the earth; or whether she be a bird of prey, and is lured, among the rest, to pursue after the scent of a carcase; or whether she conceives her trumpet sounds best and farthest when she stands on a tomb, by the advantage of a rising ground and the echo of a hollow vault."

Of the Battle of the Books we can only afford to give the concluding section, entitled The Episode of Bentley and Wotton, the latter portion of which in particular is a very happy Homeric burlesque: —

Day being far spent, and the numerous forces of the moderns half inclining to a retreat, there issued forth from a squadron of their heavy armed foot a captain, whose name was Bentley, the most deformed of all the moderns; tall, but without shape or comeliness; large, but without strength or proportion. His armour was patched up of a thousand incoherent pieces; and the sound of it as he marched was loud and dry, like that made by the fall of a sheet of lead, which an Etesian wind blows suddenly down from the roof of some steeple. His helmet was of old rusty iron, but the vizor was brass, which, tainted by his breath, corrupted

into copperas, nor wanted gall from the same fountain; so that, when ever provoked by anger or labour, an atramentous quality, of most malignant nature, was seen to distil from his lips. . . . Completely armed,¹ he advanced with a slow and heavy pace where the modern chiefs were holding a consult upon the sum of things; who, as he came onwards, laughed to behold his crooked leg and humped shoulder, which his boot and armour, vainly endeavouring to hide, were forced to comply with and expose. The generals made use of him for his talent of railing; which, kept within government, proved frequently of great service to their cause. but at other times did more mischief than good; for, at the least touch of offence, and often without any at all, he would, like a wounded elephant, convert it against his leaders. Such, at this juncture, was the disposition of Bentley; grieved to see the enemy prevail, and dissatisfied with every body's conduct but his own. He humbly gave the modern generals to understand that he conceived, with great submission, they were all a pack of rogues, and fools, and d—d cowards, and confounded loggerheads, and illiterate whelps, and nonsensical scoundrels; that, if himself had been constituted general, those presumptuous dogs, the ancients, would long before this have been beaten out of the field. You, said he, sit here idle; but, when I, or any other valiant modern, kill an enemy, you are sure to seize the spoil. But I will not march one foot against the foe till you all swear to me that, whomever I take or kill, his arms I shall quietly possess. Bentley having spoken thus, Scaliger, bestowing him a sour look, Miscreant prater! said he, eloquent only in thine own eyes, thou railest without wit, or truth, or discretion. The malignity of thy temper perverteth nature; thy learning makes thee more barbarous; thy study of humanity² more inhuman; thy converse among poets, more grovelling, miry, and dull. All arts of civilizing others render thee rude and untractable; courts have taught thee ill manners, and polite conversation has finished thee a pedant. Besides, a greater coward burdeneth not the army. But never despond: I pass my word, whatever spoil thou takest shall certainly be thy own: though I hope that vile carcase will first become a prey to kites and worms.

Bentley durst not reply; but, half choked with spleen and rage, withdrew in full resolution of performing some great achievement. With him, for his aid and companion, he took his beloved Wotton; resolving by policy or surprise to attempt some neglected quarter of the ancients' army. They began their march over carcases of their slaughtered friends; then to the right of their own forces; then wheeled northward, till they came to Aldrovandus's tomb, which they passed on the side of

¹ He is represented as grasping a flail in his right hand, and a vessel full of filth in his left.

² The *Literæ Humaniores*.

the declining sun. And now they arrived, with fear, toward the enemy's outguards: looking about if haply they might spy the quarters of the wounded, or some straggling sleepers, unarmed and apart from the rest. As when two mongrel curs, whom native greediness and domestic want provoke and join in partnership, though fearful, nightly to invade the folds of some rich grazier, they, with tails depressed and lolling tongues, creep soft and slow; meanwhile the conscious moon, now in her zenith, on their guilty heads darts perpendicular rays; nor dare they bark, though much provoked at her refulgent visage, whether seen in puddle by reflection or in sphere direct; but one surveys the region round, while the other scouts the plain, if haply to discover, at distance from the flock, some ear case half-devoured, the refuse of gorged wolves or ominous ravens. So marched this lovely, loving pair of friends, nor with less fear and circumspection; when at a distance they might perceive two shining suits of armour hanging upon an oak, and the owners not far off in a profound sleep. The two friends drew lots, and the pursuing this adventure fell to Bentley; on he went, and in his van Confusion and Amaze, while Horror and Affright brought up the rear. As he came near, behold two heroes of the ancients' army, Phalaris and Aesop, lay fast asleep; Bentley would fain have dispatched them both, and, stealing close, aimed his flail at Phalaris's breast. But then the goddess Affright, interposing, caught the modern in her icy arms, and dragged him from the danger she foresaw; both the dormant heroes happened to turn at the same instant, though soundly sleeping and busy in a dream. For Phalaris was just that minute dreaming how a most vile poetaster had lampooned him, and how he had got him roaring in his bull. And Aesop dreamed that, as he and the ancient chiefs were lying on the ground, a wild ass, broke loose, ran about trampling and kicking . . . in their faces. Bentley, leaving the two heroes asleep, seized on both their armours, and withdrew in quest of his darling Wotton.

He, in the meantime, had wandered long in search of some enterprise, till at length he arrived at a small rivulet that issued from a fountain hard by, called, in the language of mortal men, Helicon. Here he stopped, and, parched with thirst, resolved to allay it in this limpid stream. Thrice, with profane hands, he essayed to raise the water to his lips, and thrice it slipped all through his fingers. Then he stooped prone on his breast, but, ere his mouth had kissed the liquid crystal, Apollo came, and in the channel held his shield betwixt the modern and the fountain, so that he drew up nothing but mud. For, although no fountain on earth can compare with the clearness of Helicon, yet there lies at bottom a thick sediment of slime and mud; for so Apollo begged of Jupiter, as a punishment to those who durst attempt to taste it with unhallowed lips, and for a lesson to all not to draw too deep or far from the spring.

At the fountain-head Wotton discerned two heroes; the one he could not distinguish, but the other was soon known for Temple, general of the allies to the ancients. His back was turned, and he was employed in drinking large draughts in his helmet from the fountain, where he had withdrawn himself to rest from the toils of the war. Wotton, observing him, with quaking knees and trembling hands, spoke thus to himself: O that I could kill this destroyer of our army! What renown should I purchase among the chiefs! But to issue out against him, man against man, shield against shield, and lance against lance, what modern of us dare? For he fights like a god, and Pallas or Apollo are ever at his elbow. But, O mother! if what Fame reports be true, that I am the son of so great a goddess,¹ grant me to hit Temple with this lance, that the stroke may send him to hell, and that I may return in safety and triumph, laden with his spoils. The first part of this prayer the gods granted at the intercession of his mother and of Momus; but the rest, by a perverse wind sent from Fate, was scattered in the air. Then Wotton grasped his lance, and, brandishing it thrice over his head, darted it with all his might, the goddess his mother at the same time adding strength to his arm. Away the lance went whizzing, and reached even to the belt of the averted ancient, upon whom lightly grazing it fell to the ground.² Temple neither felt the weapon touch him nor heard it fall; and Wotton might have escaped to his army, with the honour of having remitted his lance against so great a leader unrevenged; but Apollo, enraged that a javelin flung by the assistance of so foul a goddess should pollute his fountain, put on the shape of —, and softly came to young Boyle, who then accompanied Temple. He pointed first to the lance, then to the distant modern that flung it, and commanded the young hero to take immediate revenge. Boyle, clad in a suit of armour which had been given him by all the

¹ Wotton is represented as the son of a malignant deity, called Criticism, by an unknown father of mortal race. "She dwelt," we are told, "on the top of a snowy mountain in Nova Zembla; there Momus found her extended in her den upon the spoils of numberless volumes half devoured. At her right hand sat Ignorance, her father and husband, blind with age; at her left Pride, her mother, dressing her up in the scraps of paper herself had torn. There was Opinion, her sister, light of foot, hoodwinked, and headstrong, yet giddy and perpetually turning. About her played her children, Noise and Impudence, Dulness and Vanity, Positiveness, Pedantry, and Ill-Manners. The goddess herself had claws like a cat; her head, and ears, and voice resembled those of an ass; her teeth fallen out before; her eyes turned inward, as if she looked only upon herself; her diet was the overflowing of her own gall; her spleen was so large as to stand prominent, like a dug of the first rate; nor wanted excrescences in form of teats, at which a crew of ugly monsters were greedily sucking; and, what is wonderful to conceive, the bulk of spleen increased faster than the sucking could diminish it."

² This may be understood as an admission that Temple was mistaken on the point of the authenticity of the Epistles of Phalaris, though the matter is represented as of no moment in reference to the great question at issue.

gods, immediately advanced against the trembling foe, who now fled before him. As a young lion in the Libyan plains or Araby Desert, sent by his aged sire to hunt for prey, or health, or exercise, he scours along, wishing to meet some tiger from the mountains or a furious boar: if chance a wild ass, with brayings importune, affronts his ear, the generous beast, though loathing to distain his claws with blood so vile, yet much provoked at the offensive noise, which Echo, foolish nymph, like her ill-judging sex, repeats much louder, and with more delight, than Philomela's song, he vindicates the honour of the forest, and hunts the noisy long-eared animal. So Wotton fled, so Boyle pursued. But Wotton, heavy-armed and slow of foot, began to slack his course, when his lover Bentley appeared, returning laden with the spoils of the two sleeping ancients. Boyle observed him well, and, soon discovering the helmet and shield of Phalaris, his friend, both which he had lately with his own hands new polished and gilt, rage sparkled in his eyes, and, leaving the pursuit after Wotton, he furiously rushed on against this new approacher. Fain would he be revenged on both; but both now fled different ways: and, as a woman in a little house that gets a painful livelihood by spinning, if chance her geese be scattered o'er the common, she courses round the plain from side to side, compelling here and there the stragglers to the flock; they cackle loud, and flutter o'er the champaign; so Boyle pursued, so fled this pair of friends: finding at length their flight was vain, they bravely joined and drew themselves in phalanx. First Bentley threw a spear with all his force, hoping to pierce the enemy's breast; but Pallas came unseen, and in the air took off the point and clapped on one of lead, which, after a dead bang against the enemy's shield, fell blunted to the ground. Then Boyle, observing well his time, took up a lance of wondrous length and sharpness; and, as this pair of friends, compacted, stood close side to side, he wheeled him to the right, and, with unusual force, darted the weapon. Bentley saw his fate approach, and, flanking down his arms close to his sides, hoping to save his body, in went the point, passing through arm and side, nor stopped or spent its force till it had also pierced the valiant Wotton, who, going to sustain his dying friend, shared his fate. As when a skilful cook has trussed a brace of woodcocks, he with iron skewer pierces the tender sides of both, their legs and wings close pinioned to the ribs: so was this pair of friends transfix'd, till down they fell, joined in their lives, joined in their deaths: so closely joined that Charon would mistake them both for one, and waft them over Styx for half his fare. Farewell, beloved, loving pair; few equals have you left behind; and happy and immortal shall you be, if all my wit and eloquence can make you.

Swift was undoubtedly the most masculine intellect of his age; the most earnest thinker of a time in which there was less among

us of earnest and deep thinking than in any other era of our literature. In its later and more matured form, his wit itself becomes earnest and passionate, and has a severity, a fierceness, a *serva indignatio*, that are all his own, and that have never been blended in any other writer with so keen a perception of the ludicrous and so much general comic power. The breath of his rich, pungent, original jocularities is at the same time cutting as a sword and consuming as fire. Other masters of the same art are satisfied if they can only make their readers laugh; this is their main, often their sole aim: with Swift, to excite the emotion of the ludicrous is, in most of his writings, only a subordinate purpose, — a means employed for effecting quite another and a much higher end; if he labors to make anything ridiculous, it is because he hates it, and would have it trodden into the earth or extirpated. This, at least, became the settled temper of all the middle and latter portion of his life. No sneaking kindness for his victim is to be detected in his crucifying raillery; he is not a mere admirer of the comic picturesque, who will sometimes rack or gibbet an unhappy individual for the sake of the fantastic grimaces he may make, or the capers he may cut in the air; he has the true spirit of an executioner, and only loves his joke as sauce and seasoning to more serious work. Few men have been more perversely prejudiced and self-willed than Swift, and therefore of absolute truth his works may probably contain less than many others not so earnestly written; but of what was truth to the mind of the writer, of what he actually believed and desired, no works contain more. Here, again, as well as in the other respect noticed some pages back, Swift is in the middle class of writers; far above those whose whole truth is truth of expression — that is, correspondence between the words and the thoughts (possibly without any between the thoughts and the writer's belief); but below those who both write what they think, and whose thoughts are preëminently valuable for their intrinsic beauty or profoundness. Yet in setting honestly and effectively before us even his own passions and prejudices a writer also tells us the truth, — the truth, at least, respecting himself, if not respecting anything else. This much Swift does always; and this is his great distinction among the masters of wit and humor; — the merriest of his jests is an utterance of some real feeling of his heart at the moment, as much as the fiercest of his invectives. Alas! with all his jesting and merriment, he did not know what it

was to have a mind at ease, or free from the burden and torment of dark, devouring passions, till, in his own words, the cruel indignation that tore continually at his heart was laid at rest in the grave. In truth, the insanity which ultimately fell down upon and laid prostrate his fine faculties had cast something of its black shadow athwart their vision from the first — as he himself probably felt or suspected when he determined to bequeath his fortune to build an hospital in his native country for persons afflicted with that calamity; and sad enough, we may be sure, he was at heart, when he gayly wrote that he did so merely

To show, by one satiric touch,
No nation wanted it so much.¹

Yet the madness, or predisposition to madness, was also part and parcel of the man, and possibly an element of his genius — which might have had less earnestness and force, as well as less activity, productiveness, and originality, if it had not been excited and impelled by that perilous fervor. Nay, something of their power and peculiar character Swift's writings may owe to the exertions called forth in curbing and keeping down the demon which, like a proud steed under a stout rider, would have mastered him, if he had not mastered it, and, although support and strength to him so long as it was held in subjection, would, dominant over him, have rent him in pieces, as in the end it did. Few could have maintained the struggle so toughly and so long.

Swift's later style cannot be better illustrated than by a few passages from his famous series of Letters, written in 1724, under the signature of M. B., Drapier, against Wood's halfpence and farthings. Wood was an extensive proprietor of iron works in Staffordshire, who had obtained a patent for coining copper money to the extent of 108,000*l.* sterling, to circulate in Ireland, where the want of such small coin for change was confessedly much felt and had been long complained of. It is difficult to get at what were really the facts of the matter; very plausible explanations and answers were produced by Wood and the government upon the

¹ "I have often," says Lord Orrery, "heard him lament the state of childhood and idiotism to which some of the greatest men of this nation were reduced before their death. He mentioned, as examples within his own time, the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Somers; and, when he cited these melancholy instances, it was always with a heavy sigh, and with gestures that showed great uneasiness, as if he felt an impulse of what was to happen to him before he died." — Remarks, p. 188.

various points as to which the project was attacked; and there was undoubtedly much exaggeration in many of Swift's representations. But the circumstances were by no means free from suspicion. Swift, in his second Letter, sums up his leading objections in a short statement, which he proposed should be circulated for signature throughout the country, to the following purport:—

“Whereas one William Wood, hardwareman, now or lately sojourning in the City of London, has, by many misrepresentations, procured a grant for coining 108,000*l.* in copper halfpence for this kingdom, which is a sum five times greater than our occasions require; and whereas it is notorious that the said Wood has coined his halfpence of such base metal and false weight that they are at least six times in seven below the real value; and whereas we have reason to apprehend that the said Wood may at any time hereafter clandestinely coin as many more halfpence as he pleases; and whereas the said patent neither does nor can oblige his majesty's subjects to receive the said halfpence in any payment, but leaves it to their voluntary choice, because by law the subject cannot be obliged to take any money except gold or silver; and whereas, contrary to the letter and meaning of the said patent, the said Wood has declared that every person shall be obliged to take $5\frac{1}{2}d.$ of his coin in every payment; and whereas the House of Commons and Privy Council have severally addressed his most sacred Majesty, representing the ill consequences which the said coinage may have upon this kingdom; and, lastly, whereas it is universally agreed that the whole nation to a man (except Mr Wood and his confederates) are in the utmost apprehensions of the ruinous consequences that must follow from the said coinage; therefore we whose names are underwritten, being persons of considerable estates in this kingdom, do unanimously resolve and declare that we will never receive one farthing or halfpenny of the said Wood's coining, and that we will direct all our tenants to refuse the said coin from any person whatsoever.”

Some of these allegations, certainly, were never very well made out. That about the lightness of the pieces and the base quality of the metal, in particular, seems to have been without foundation, in so far at least as regarded the portion of the coinage actually fabricated. But, on the other hand, some facts and surmises, which could not be so openly stated, had a large share in exciting the public indignation. It was believed that the profits of the patent were to be shared by

Wood with the royal mistress, the Duchess of Munster (or Countess of Kendal, as she was commonly called in England), by whose influence it had been obtained; and various irritating expressions, in regard to the attempt made to defeat the project, were attributed not only to Wood himself, but also to Walpole, the minister, and other persons high in authority and power in England. Feelings and principles thus came to be involved in the contest, going far beyond the mere economical and material considerations that appeared on the surface. The stand was felt to be for the dignity and liberties of the nation; and Swift was universally regarded by his countrymen as the champion of the independence of Ireland — the preserver of whatever they had most to value or to be proud of as a people. And perhaps the birth of political and patriotic spirit in Ireland, as a general sentiment, may be traced with some truth to this affair of Wood's halfpence and to these letters of Swift's. No agitation that has since been got up in that country has been so immediately and completely successful. The whole power of the English government was found ineffectual to cope with the opposition that had been aroused and marshalled by one man; and Wood soon found there was nothing for him but to resign his patent. No other of Swift's writings brought him anything like the fame and influence that he acquired by his Drapier's Letters. At first pains were taken to conceal the authorship, and for a short time, it would appear, successfully. It was desirable to withhold at any rate such legal proof as might have enabled the government to lay their hands upon him. A proclamation was early issued, offering a reward of 300*l.* for the discovery of the writer; but, after the printer had been indicted for some passages in the fourth letter, and the grand jury had thrown out the bill, concealment was probably no longer attempted; and even from the first it must have been generally suspected, as soon as people began to speculate on the matter, that the Drapier could be nobody but Swift. From this date to the end of his life, or at least till the extinction of his faculties, Swift, or the Dean, as he was universally called, continued to be the most popular and most powerful individual in Ireland, — his voice, in Dublin at least, being in every election, or other occasion on which the citizens had any public part to act, obeyed like the fiat of an oracle. That warm-hearted race are not apt to forget their benefactors, or to change their idols; but neither did Swift abuse his ascendancy; he never sought to

turn his popularity to account in the promotion of any private interest or object; he asked nothing for himself from any government; he never obtained any higher preferment, but lived and died Dean of St. Patrick's, and nothing more. As for the Letters themselves, much forgotten as they are now, they have been described as the most Demosthenic compositions since the time of Demosthenes; and it would perhaps be difficult to produce any modern writing in which the most remarkable qualities of the old Greek orator are so happily exemplified, — his force, his rapidity, his directness, his alertness and dexterity, his luminousness of statement and apparent homeliness or plainness, the naturalness and at the same time aptness of his figures, his wonderful logic (whether for fair reasoning or sophistry and misrepresentation), his ever-present life and power of interesting, his occasional fire and passion, his bursts of scorn, indignation, and withering invective, and the other resources of his supreme art. The measure, such as it is, in which all this is found in Swift can only, however, of course, be fully gathered from the entire Letters.

The following passages are from the second Letter: —

But your newsletter says that an assay was made of the coin. How impudent and insupportable is this! Wood takes care to coin a dozen or two halfpence of good metal, sends them to the Tower, and they are approved; and these must answer all that he has already coined or shall coin for the future. It is true, indeed, that a gentleman often sends to my shop for a pattern of stuff; I cut it fairly off, and, if he likes it, he comes or sends, and compares the pattern with the whole piece, and probably we come to a bargain. But if I were to buy a hundred sheep, and the grazier should bring me one single wether, fat and well fleeced, by way of pattern, and expect the same price round for the whole hundred, without suffering me to see them before he was paid, or giving me good security to restore my money for those that were lean, or shorn, or scabby, I would be none of his customers. I have heard of a man who had a mind to sell his house, and therefore carried a piece of brick in his pocket, which he showed as a pattern to encourage customers; and this is directly the case in point with Mr. Wood's assay.

The paragraph concludes thus: "N.B." (that is to say, *nota bene* or *mark well*) "No evidence appeared from Ireland, or elsewhere, to prove the mischiefs complained of, or any abuses whatsoever committed, in the execution of the said grant."

The impudence of this remark exceeds all that went before. First, the House of Commons in Ireland, which represents the whole people of the

kingdom, and, secondly, the Privy Council, addressed his Majesty against these halfpence. What could be done more to express the universal sense of the nation? If his copper were diamonds, and the kingdom were entirely against it, would not that be sufficient to reject it? Must a committee of the whole House of Commons, and our whole Privy Council, go over to argue *pro* and *con* with Mr. Wood? To what end did the king give his patent for coining halfpence for Ireland? Was it not because it was represented to his sacred Majesty that such a coinage would be of advantage to the good of this kingdom, and of all his subjects here? It is to the patentee's peril if this representation be false, and the execution of his patent be fraudulent and corrupt. Is he so wicked and foolish to think that his patent was given him to ruin a million and a half of people, that he might be a gainer of three or four score thousand pounds to himself? Before he was at the charge of passing a patent, much more of raking up so much filthy dross, and stamping it with his Majesty's image and superscription, should he not first, in common sense, in common equity, and common manners, have consulted the principal party concerned — that is to say, the people of the kingdom, the House of Lords or Commons, or the Privy Council? If any foreigner should ask us whose image or superscription there is on Wood's coin, we should be ashamed to tell him it was Caesar's. In that great want of copper halfpence which he alleges we were, our city set up Caesar's statue in excellent copper, at an expense that is equal in value to thirty thousand pounds of his coin, and we will not receive his image in worse metal.

Although my letter be directed to you, Mr. Harding [the printer], yet I intend it for all my countrymen. I have no interest in this affair but what is common to the public. I can live better than many others; I have some gold and silver by me, and a shop well furnished; and shall be able to make a shift when many of my betters are starving. But I am grieved to see the coldness and indifference of many people with whom I discourse. Some are afraid of a proclamation; others shrug up their shoulders and cry, "What would you have us to do?" Some give out there is no danger at all; others are comforted that it will be a common calamity, and they shall fare no worse than their neighbours. Will a man who hears midnight robbers at his door get out of bed and raise his family for a common defence; and shall a whole kingdom lie in a lethargy, while Mr. Wood comes, at the head of his confederates, to rob them of all they have to ruin us and our posterity for ever? If a highwayman meets you on the road, you give him your money to save your life; but, God be thanked, Mr. Wood cannot touch a hair of your heads. You have all the laws of God and man on your side; when he or his accomplices offer you his dross, it is but saying no, and you are safe. If a madman should come into my shop with a handful of dirt raked out of the kennel, and offer it in pay-

ment for ten yards of stuff, I would pity or laugh at him ; or, if his behaviour deserved it, kick him out of my doors. And, if Mr. Wood comes to demand my gold and silver, or commodities for which I have paid my gold and silver, in exchange for his trash, can he deserve or expect better treatment ?

The following is the winding-up of Letter Third : —

I am very sensible that such a work as I have undertaken might have worthily employed a much better pen : but, when a house is attempted to be robbed, it often happens the weakest in the family runs first to stop the door. All the assistance I had were some informations from an eminent person ; whereof I am afraid I have spoiled a few, by endeavouring to make them of a piece with my own productions, and the rest I was not able to manage : I was in the case of David, who could not move in the armour of Saul, and therefore I rather chose to attack this uncircumcised Philistine (Wood, I mean) with a sling and a stone. And I may say, for Wood's honour as well as my own, that he resembles Goliath in many circumstances very applicable to the present purpose ; for Goliath had "a helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail ; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass ; and he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders." In short, he was, like Mr. Wood, all over brass, and he defied the armies of the living God. Goliath's conditions of combat were likewise the same with those of Wood : "if he prevail against us, then shall we be his servants." But, if it happens that I prevail over him, I renounce the other part of the condition : he shall never be a servant of mine ; for I do not think him fit to be trusted in any honest man's shop.

We can only give in addition a few short paragraphs from Letter Fourth : —

It is true, indeed, that within the memory of man the parliaments of England have sometimes assumed the power of binding this kingdom by laws enacted there : wherein they were at first openly opposed (as far as truth, reason, and justice are capable of opposing) by the famous Mr. Molyneux, an English gentleman born here, as well as by several of the greatest patriots and best Whigs in England ; but the love and torrent of power prevailed. Indeed, the arguments on both sides were invincible. For, in reason, all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery ; but, in fact, eleven men well armed will certainly subdue one single man in his shirt. But I have done ; for those who have used power to cramp liberty have gone so far as to resent ever the liberty of complaining ; although a man upon the rack was never known to be refused the liberty of roaring as loud as he thought fit.

And, as we are apt to sink too much under unreasonable fears, so we are too soon inclined to be raised by groundless hopes, according to the nature of all consumptive bodies like ours. Thus, it has been given about for several days past that somebody in England empowered a second somebody to write to a third somebody here to assure us that we should no more be troubled with these halfpence. And this is reported to have been done by the same person¹ who is said to have sworn some months ago "that he would ram them down our throats," though I doubt they would stick in our stomachs; but, whichever of these reports be true or false, it is no concern of ours. For in this point we have nothing to do with English ministers, and I should be sorry to leave it in their power to redress this grievance or to enforce it, for the report of the Committee² has given me a surfeit. The remedy is wholly in your own hands, and therefore I have digressed a little in order to refresh and continue that spirit so seasonably raised among you, and to let you see, that, by the laws of GOD, of NATURE, of NATIONS, and of your COUNTRY, you ARE and OUGHT to be as FREE a people as your brethren in England.

Before I conclude, I must beg leave in all humility to tell Mr. Wood, that he is guilty of great indiscretion, by causing so honourable a name as that of Mr. Walpole to be mentioned so often and in such a manner upon this occasion. A short paper printed at Bristol, and reprinted here, reports Mr. Wood to say "that he wonders at the impudence and insolence of the Irish in refusing his coin, and what he will do when Mr. Walpole comes to town." Where, by the way, he is mistaken; for it is the true English people of Ireland who refuse it, although we take it for granted that the Irish will do so too whenever they are asked. In another printed paper of his contriving it is roundly expressed, "that Mr. Walpole will cram his brass down our throats." Sometimes it is given out "that we must either take those halfpence or eat our brogues;" and in another newsletter, but of yesterday, we read, "that the same great man has sworn to make us swallow his coin in fire-balls."

This brings to my mind the known story of a Scotchman, who, receiving the sentence of death with all the circumstances of hanging, beheading, quartering, embowelling, and the like, cried out, "What need all this COOKERY?" And I think we have reason to ask the same question; for, if we believe Wood, here is a dinner getting ready for us, and you see the bill of fare; and I am sorry the drink was forgot, which might easily be supplied with melted lead and flaming pitch.

What vile words are these to put into the mouth of a great counsellor, in high trust with his Majesty and looked upon as a prime minister? If

¹ Walpole.

² A committee of the English Privy Council to whom the matter had been referred.

Mr. Wood has no better a manner of representing his patrons, when I come to be a great man he shall never be suffered to attend at my levee. This is not the style of a great minister: it savours too much of the kettl and the furnace, and came entirely out of Wood's forge.

As for the threat of making us eat our brogues, we need not be in pain; for, if his coin should pass, that unpolite covering for the feet would no longer be a national reproach; because then we should have neither shoe nor brogue left in the kingdom. But here the falsehood of Mr. Wood is fairly detected: for I am confident Mr. Walpole never heard of a brogue in his whole life.

As to "swallowing these halfpence in fire-balls," it is a story equally improbable. For, to execute this operation, the whole stock of Mr. Wood's coin and metal must be melted down, and moulded into hollow balls, with wildfire, no bigger than a reasonable throat may be able to swallow. Now, the metal he has prepared, and already coined, will amount to at least fifty millions of halfpence, to be swallowed by a million and a half of people; so that allowing two halfpence to each ball, there will be about seventeen balls of wildfire apiece to be swallowed by every person in the kingdom; and, to administer this dose, there cannot be conveniently fewer than fifty thousand operators, allowing one operator to every thirty; which, considering the squeamishness of some stomachs, and the peevishness of young children, is but reasonable. Now, under correction of better judgments, I think the trouble and charge of such an experiment would exceed the profit; and therefore I take this report to be spurious, or at least only a new scheme of Mr. Wood himself; which, to make it pass the better in Ireland, he would father upon a minister of state.

But I will now demonstrate beyond all contradiction that Mr. Walpole is against this project of Mr. Wood, and is an entire friend to Ireland, only by this one invincible argument: that he has the universal opinion of being a wise man, an able minister, and in all his proceedings pursuing the true interest of the king his master: and that, as his integrity is above all corruption, so is his fortune above all temptation. I reckon, therefore, we are perfectly safe from that corner, and shall never be under the necessity of contending with so formidable a power, but be left to possess our brogues and potatoes in peace, — as remote from thunder as we are from Jupiter.¹

Swift would probably have enjoyed a higher reputation as a poet if he had not been so great a writer in prose. His productions in verse are considerable in point of quantity, and many of them admirable of their kind. But those of them that deserve to be so described belong to the humblest kind of poetry — to that kind

¹ In allusion to the Latin proverb, *Procul a Jove, procul a fulmine*

which has scarcely any distinctively poetical quality or characteristic about it except the rhyme. He has made some attempts in a higher style, but with little success. His Pindaric Odes, written and published when he was a young man, drew from Dryden (who was his relation) the emphatic judgment, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet": and, though Swift never forgave this frankness, he seems to have felt that the prognostication was a sound one, for he wrote no more Pindaric Odes. Nor indeed did he ever afterwards attempt anything considerable in the way of serious poetry, if we except his *Cadmus* and *Vanessa* (the story of Miss Vanhomrigh), his effusion entitled *Poetry*, a *Rhapsody*, and that on his own death, — and even these are chiefly distinguished from his other productions by being longer and more elaborate, the most elevated portions of the first-mentioned scarcely rising above narrative and reflection, and whatever there is of more dignified or solemn writing in the two others being largely intermixed with comedy and satire in his usual easy ambling style. With all his liveliness of fancy, he had no grandeur of imagination, as little feeling of the purely graceful or beautiful, no capacity of tender emotion, no sensibility to even the simplest forms of music. With these deficiencies it was impossible that he should produce anything that could be called poetical in a high sense. But of course he could put his wit and fancy into the form of verse — and so as to make the measured expression and the rhyme give additional point and piquancy to his strokes of satire and ludicrous narratives or descriptions. Some of his lighter verses are as good as anything of the kind in the language. As a specimen we will give one which is less known than some others that might be quoted, one of the many rattling volleys of rhyme by which he aided the heavier artillery of his *Drapier's Letters*, a eulogy on Archbishop King, who gained great applause by taking the popular side on that occasion, under the title of *An excellent New Song, upon his Grace our Good Lord Archbishop of Dublin; By Honest Jo, one of his Grace's Farmers in Fingal*: —

I sing not of the Drapier's praise, nor yet of William Wood,
 But I sing of a famous lord, who seeks his country's good;
 Lord William's grace of Dublin town, 'tis he that first appears,
 Whose wisdom and whose piety do far exceed his years.¹
 In every council and debate he stands for what is right,

¹ He was at this time seventy-four.

And still the truth he will maintain, whate'er he loses by 't.
 And, though some think him in the wrong, yet still there comes a season
 When every one turns round about, and owns his grace had reason.
 His firmness to the public good, as one that knows it swore,
 Has lost his grace for ten years past ten thousand pounds and more.
 Then come the poor and strip him so, they leave him not a cross,
 For he regards ten thousand pounds no more than Woods's dross.
 To beg his favour is the way new favours still to win ;
 He makes no more to give ten pounds than I to give a pin.
 Why, there 's my landlord, now, the squire, who all in money wallows,
 He would not give a groat to save his father from the gallows.
 " A bishop," says the noble squire, " I hate the very name,
 To have two thousand pounds a year — O 'tis a burning shame !
 Two thousand pounds a year ! Good lord ! and I to have but five !"
 And under him no tenant yet was ever known to thrive :
 Now from his lordship's grace I hold a little piece of ground,
 And all the rent I pay is scarce five shillings in the pound.
 Then master steward takes my rent, and tells me, " Honest Jo,
 Come, you must take a cup of sack or two before you go."
 He bids me then to hold my tongue, and up the money locks,
 For fear my lord should send it all into the poor man's box.
 And once I was so bold to beg that I might see his grace, —
 Good lord ! I wonder how I dared to look him in the face :
 Then down I went upon my knees his blessing to obtain ;
 He gave it me, and ever since I find I thrive again.
 " Then," said my lord, " I 'm very glad to see thee, honest friend ;
 I know the times are something hard, but hope they soon will mend :
 Pray never press yourself for rent, but pay me when you can ;
 I find you bear a good report, and are an honest man."
 Then said his lordship with a smile, " I must have lawful cash ;
 I hope you will not pay my rent in that same Woods's trash."
 " God bless your grace !" I then replied, " I 'd see him hanging higher,
 Before I 'd touch his filthy dross, than is Clandalkin spire.
 To every farmer twice a week all round about the Yoke,
 Our parsons read the Drapier's books, and make us honest folk."
 And then I went to pay the squire, and in the way I found
 His baillie driving all my cows into the parish pound :
 " Why, sirrah," said the noble squire, " how dare you see my face ?
 Your rent is due almost a week, beside the days of grace."
 And yet the land I from him hold is set so on the rack,
 That only for the bishop's lease 'twould quickly break my back.
 Then God preserve his lordship's grace, and make him live as long
 As did Methusalem of old, and so I end my song.

POPE.

OF Swift's contemporaries, by far the most memorable name is that of Alexander Pope. If Swift was at the head of the prose writers of the early part of the last century, Pope was as incontestably the first of the writers in verse of that day, with no other either equal or second to him. Born a few months before the Revolution, he came forth as a poet, by the publication of his Pastorals in Tonson's Miscellany in 1709, when he was yet only in his twenty-first year; and they had been written five years before. Nor were they the earliest of his performances; his Ode on Solitude, his verses upon Silence, his translations of the First Book of the Thebais and of Ovid's Epistle from Sappho to Phaon, and his much more remarkable paraphrases of Chaucer's January and May and the Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale, all preceded the composition of the Pastorals. His Essay on Criticism (written in 1709) was published in 1711; the Messiah the same year (in the Spectator); the Rape of the Lock in 1712; the Temple of Fame (written two years before) the same year; his Windsor Forest (which he had commenced at sixteen) in 1713; the first four books of his translation of the Iliad in 1715; his Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard (written some years before) we believe in 1717, when he published a collected edition of his poems; the remaining portions of the Iliad at different times, the last in 1720; his translation of the Odyssey (in concert with Fenton and Broome) in 1725; the first three books of the Dunciad in 1728; his Essay on Man in 1733 and 1734; his Imitations of Horace, various other satirical pieces, the Prologue and Epilogue to the Satires, his four epistles styled Moral Essays, and his modernized version of Donne's Satires between 1730 and 1740; and the fourth book of the Dunciad in 1742. Besides all this verse, collections of his Letters were published, first surreptitiously by Curl, and then by himself in 1737; and, among other publications in prose, his clever *jeu d'esprit* entitled a Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis appeared in 1713; his Preface to Shakspeare, with his edition of the works of that poet, in 1721; his Treatise of the Bathos, or Art of Sinking in Poetry, and his Memoirs of P. P., Clerk of This Parish (in ridicule of Burnet's History of his Own Time), in 1727. He died in May, 1744, about a year and a half before

his friend Swift, who, more than twenty years his senior, had naturally anticipated that he should be the first to depart, and that, as he cynically, and yet touchingly too, expressed it, while Arbuthnot grieved for him a day, and Gay a week, he should be lamented a whole month by "poor Pope," — whom, of all those he best knew, he seems to have the most loved.

Pope, with talent enough for anything, might deserve to be ranked among the most distinguished prose writers of his time, if he were not its greatest poet; but it is in the latter character that he falls to be noticed in the history of our literature. And what a broad and bright region would be cut off from our poetry if he had never lived! If we even confine ourselves to his own works, without regarding the numerous subsequent writers who have formed themselves upon him as an example and model, and may be said to constitute the school of which he was the founder, how rich an inheritance of brilliant and melodious fancies do we not owe to him! For what would any of us resign the Rape of the Lock, or the Epistle of Eloisa, or the Essay on Man, or the Moral Essays, or the Satires, or the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, or the Dunciad? That we have nothing in the same style in the language to be set beside or weighed against any one of these performances will probably be admitted by all; and, if we could say no more, this would be to assign to Pope a rank in our poetic literature which certainly not so many as half a dozen other names are entitled to share with his. Down to his own day at least, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, and Dryden alone had any pretensions to be placed before him or by his side. It is unnecessary to dilate upon what has been sufficiently pointed out by all the critics, and is too obvious to be overlooked, the general resemblance of his poetry, in both its form and spirit, to that of Dryden rather than to that of our elder great writers. A remarkable external peculiarity of it is, that he is probably the only one of our modern poets of eminence who has written nothing in blank verse; while even in rhyme he has nearly confined himself to that one decasyllabic line upon which it would almost seem to have been his purpose to impress a new shape and character. He belongs to the classical school as opposed to the romantic, to that in which a French rather than to that in which an Italian inspiration may be detected. Whether this is to be attributed principally to his constitutional temperament and the native character of his imagination,

or to the influences of the age in which he lived and wrote, we shall not stop to inquire. It is enough that such is the fact. But, though he may be regarded as in the main the pupil and legitimate successor of Dryden, the amount of what he learned or borrowed from that master was by no means so considerable as to prevent his manner from having a great deal in it that is distinctive and original. If Dryden has more impetuosity and a freer flow, Pope has far more delicacy, and, on fit occasions, far more tenderness and true passion. Dryden has written nothing in the same style with the Rape of the Lock on the one hand, or with the Epistle to Abellard and the Elegy on the Death of an Unfortunate Lady on the other. Indeed, these two styles may be said to have been both, in so far as the English tongue is concerned, invented by Pope. In what preceding writer had he an example of either? Nay, did either the French or the Italian language furnish him with anything to copy from nearly so brilliant and felicitous as his own performances? In the sharper or more severe species of satire, again, while in some things he is inferior to Dryden, in others he excels him. It must be admitted that Dryden's is the nobler, the more generous scorn; it is passionate, while Pope's is frequently only peevish: the one is vehement, the other venomous. But, although Pope does not wield the ponderous, fervid scourge with which his predecessor tears and mangles the luckless object of his indignation or derision, he knows how, with a lighter touch, to inflict a torture quite as maddening at the moment, and perhaps more difficult to heal. Neither has anything of the easy elegance, the simple natural grace, the most exquisite artifice simulating the absence of all art, of Horace; but the care, and dexterity, and superior refinement of Pope, his neatness, and concentration, and point, supply a better substitute for these charms than the ruder strength and more turbulent passion of Dryden. If Dryden, too, has more natural fire and force, and rises in his greater passages to a stormy grandeur to which the other does not venture to commit himself, Pope in some degree compensates for that by a dignity, a quiet, sometimes pathetic, majesty, which we find nowhere in Dryden's poetry. Dryden has translated the *Æneid*, and Pope the *Iliad*; but the two tasks would apparently have been better distributed if Dryden had chanced to have taken up Homer, and left Virgil to Pope. Pope's *Iliad*, in truth, whatever may be its merits of another kind, is, in spirit and style, about the most un-Homeric performance in the

whole compass of our poetry, as Pope had, of all our great poets, the most un-Homeric genius. He was emphatically the poet of the highly artificial age in which he lived; and his excellence lay in, or at least was fostered and perfected by, the accordance of all his tastes and talents, of his whole moral and intellectual constitution, with the spirit of that condition of things. Not touches of natural emotion, but the titillation of wit and fancy, — not tones of natural music, but the tone of good society, — make up the charm of his poetry; the polish, pungency, and brilliance of which, however, in its most happily executed passages leave nothing in that style to be desired. Pope, no doubt, wrote with a care and elaboration that were unknown to Dryden; against whom, indeed, it is a reproach made by his pupil, that, copious as he was, he

—— wanted or forgot

The last and greatest art — the art to blot.

And so, perhaps, although the expression is a strong and a startling one, may the said art, not without some reason, be called in reference to the particular species of poetry which Dryden and Pope cultivated, dependent as that is for its success in pleasing us almost as much upon the absence of faults as upon the presence of beauties. Such partial obscuration or distortion of the imagery as we excuse, or even admire, in the expanded mirror of a lake reflecting the woods and hills and overhanging sky, when its waters are ruffled or swayed by the fitful breeze, would be intolerable in a looking-glass, were it otherwise the most splendid article of the sort that upholstery ever furnished.

We shall not occupy much of our space with quotations from a writer whose works are so universally known, and may be supposed to be in the hands of most of our readers; but those most familiar with Pope's poetry will not object to having placed before them a single extract from each of two of his most perfect productions, in different styles, while, if there should be any to whom he is known chiefly by his fame, they may be induced, perhaps, by these short specimens to seek further acquaintance with what he has written. Here is one of the descriptions, full of life and light, from the Rape of the Lock: —

But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides;
While melting music steals upon the sky,

And softened sounds along the water die ;
 Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
 Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.
 All but the Sylph ; with careful thoughts oppressed,
 The impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
 He summons straight his denizens of air ;
 The lucid squadrons round the sail repair :
 Soft o'er the shrouds ærial whispers breathe,
 That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath
 Some to the sun their insect wings unfold,
 Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold ;
 Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
 Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light.
 Loose to the winds their airy garments flew,
 Thin glittering texture of the filmy dew,
 Dipped in the richest tinctures of the skies,
 Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
 Where every beam new transient colours flings,
 Colours that change whenc'er they wave their wings.
 Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
 Superior by the head, was Ariel placed ;
 His purple pinions opening to the sun,
 He raised his azure wand, and thus begun :
 " Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear ;
 Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Demons hear :
 Ye know the spheres and various tasks assigned
 By laws eternal to the ærial kind.
 Some in the fields of purest ether play,
 And bask and whiten in the blaze of day ;
 Some guide the course of wandering orbs on high,
 Or roll the planets through the boundless sky ;
 Some, less refined, beneath the moon's pale light
 Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
 Or seek the mists in grosser air below,
 Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
 Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
 Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
 Others on earth o'er human race preside,
 Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide :
 Of these the chief the care of nations own,
 And guard with arms divine the British throne.
 " Our humble province is to tend the fair,
 Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care ;

To save the powder from too rude a gale,
 Nor let the imprisoned essences exhale ;
 To draw fresh colours from the vernal flowers ;
 To steal from rainbows, ere they drop in showers,
 A brighter wash ; to curl their waving hairs,
 Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs ;
 Nay, oft in dreams invention we bestow,
 To change a flounce, or add a furbelow.

“ This day black omens threat the brightest fair
 That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care ;
 Some dire disaster, or by force or slight,
 But what, or where, the Fates have wrapped in **night**.
 Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
 Or some frail China jar receive a flaw ;
 Or stain her honour, or her new brocade,
 Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade ;
 Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball,
 Or whether heaven has doomed that Shock **Must fall**.
 Haste then, ye spirits, to your charge repair,
 The fluttering fan be Zephyretta's care ;
 The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign,
 And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine ;
 Do thou, Crispissa, tend her favourite lock ;
 Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

“ Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
 His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
 Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins ;
 Be stopped in vials, or transfixed with pins ;
 Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
 Or wedged whole ages in a bodkin's eye :
 Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
 While clogged he beats his silken wings in **vain** :
 Or alum styptics, with contracting power,
 Shrink his thin essence like a shrivelled flower ;
 Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
 The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
 In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
 And tremble at the sea that froths below ! ”

He spoke ; the spirits from the sails descend ;
 Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend ;
 Some thread the mazy ringlets of her hair ;
 Some hang upon the pendants of her ear ;

With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of fate.

Not less spirited or less highly finished, in a severer or grander manner, is the noble conclusion of the *Dunciad* : —

“ Oh,” cried the goddess,¹ for some pedant reign .
Some gentle James to bless the land again ;
To stick the doctor’s chair into the throne,
Give law to words, or war with words alone ;
Senates and courts with Greek and Latin rule,
And turn the council to a grammar-school !
For sure, if Dulness sees a grateful day,
’Tis in the shade of arbitrary sway.

O ! if my sons may learn one earthly thing,
Teach but that one, sufficient for a king ;
That which my priests, and mine alone, maintain,
Which, as it dies or lives, we fall or reign :
May you, my Cam and Isis, preach it long,
The right divine of kings to govern wrong.”

Prompt at the call, around the goddess roll
Broad hats, and hoods, and caps, a sable shoal :
Thick and more thick the black blockade extends,
A hundred head of Aristotle’s friends.
Nor wert thou, Isis, wanting to the day
(Though Christ-Church long kept prudishly away)
Each staunch polemic, stubborn as a rock,
Each fierce logician, still expelling Locke,
Came whip and spur, and dashed through thin and thick,
On German Crouzaz and Dutch Burgersdyck.
As many quit the streams that murmuring fall
To lull the sons of Margaret and Clare-hall,
Where Bentley late tempestuous went to sport
In troubled waters, but now sleeps in port.
Before them marched that awful Aristarch ;
Ploughed was his front with many a deep remark :
His hat, which never veiled to human pride,
Walker with reverence took, and laid aside.
Low bowed the rest ; he, kingly, did but nod :
So upright quakers please both man and God.
“ Mistress ! dismiss that rabble from your throne :
Avaunt ! — Is Aristarchus yet unknown ?
The mighty scholiast, whose unwearied pains

¹ Dulness.

Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strains.
 Turn what they will to verse, their toil is vain,
 Critics like me shall make it prose again.
 Roman and Greek grammarians ! know your better,
 Author of something yet more great than letter ;
 While towering o'er your alphabet, like Saul,
 Stands our Digamma, and o'ertops them all.
 'Tis true, on words is still our whole debate,
 Disputes of Me or Te, or Aut or At,
 To sound or sink in *cano* O or A,
 To give up Cicero to C or K.
 Let Freind affect to speak as Terence spoke,
 And Alsop never but like Horace joke :
 For me, what Virgil, Pliny may deny,
 Manilius or Solinus shall supply :
 For Attic phrase in Plato let them seek,
 I poach in Suidas for unlicensed Greek.
 In ancient sense if any needs will deal,
 Be sure I give them fragments, not a meal ;
 What Gellius or Stobaeus hashed before,
 Or chewed by blind old scholiasts o'er and o'er,
 The critic eye, that microscope of wit,
 Sees hairs and pores, examines bit by bit :
 How parts relate to parts, or they to whole,
 The body's harmony, the beaming soul,
 Are things which Kuster, Burman, Wasse shall see
 When man's whole frame is obvious to a flea.

.

Walker ! our hat " — nor more he deigned to say,
 But, stern as Ajax' spectre, strode away.

.

O muse ! relate (for you can tell alone ;
 Wits have short memories, and dunces none) ;
 Relate who first, who last resigned to rest ;
 Whose heads she partly, whose completely blessed ;
 What charms could faction, what ambition lull,
 The venal quiet, and entrance the dull ;
 Till drowned was sense, and shame, and right, and wrong ;
 O sing, and hush the nations with thy song !
 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.
 As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
 The sickening stars fade off the ethereal plain;
 As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand oppressed,
 Closed one by one to everlasting rest;
 Thus, at her felt approach, and secret might,
 Art after art goes out, and all is night.
 See skulking truth to her own cavern fled,
 Mountains of casuistry heaped o'er her head!
 Philosophy, that leaned on heaven before,
 Shrinks to her second cause and is no more.
 Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
 And Metaphysic calls for aid on sense!
 See Mystery to Mathematics fly!
 In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave and die.
 Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
 And unawares Morality expires.
 Nor public flame nor private dares to shine,
 Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
 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.

ADDISON AND STEELE.

NEXT to the prose of Swift and the poetry of Pope, perhaps the portion of the literature of the beginning of the last century that was both most influential at the time, and still lives most in the popular remembrance, is that connected with the names of Addison and Steele. These two writers were the chief boast of the Whig party, as Swift and Pope were of the Tories. Addison's poem, *The Campaign*, on the victory of Blenheim, his imposing but frigid tragedy of *Cato*, and some other dramatic productions;

besides various other writings in prose, have given him a reputation in many departments of literature ; and Steele also holds a respectable rank among our comic dramatists as the author of the *Tender Husband* and the *Conscious Lovers* ; but it is as the first, and on the whole the best, of our English essayists, the principal authors (in every sense) of the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the *Guardian*, that these two writers have sent down their names with most honor to posterity, and have especially earned the love and gratitude of their countrymen. Steele was in his thirty-ninth, and his friend Addison in his thirty-eighth year, when the *Tatler* was started by the former in April, 1709. The paper, published thrice a week, had gone on for about six weeks before Addison took any part in it ; but from that time he became, next to Steele, the chief contributor to it, till it was dropped in January, 1711. "I have only one gentleman," says Steele in his preface to the collected papers, "who will be nameless, to thank for any frequent assistance to me, which indeed it would have been barbarous in him to have denied to one with whom he has lived in an intimacy from childhood, considering the great ease with which he is able to dispatch the most entertaining pieces of this nature." The person alluded to is Addison. "This good office," Steele generously adds, "he performed with such force of genius, humour, wit, and learning, that 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." By far the greater part of the *Tatler*, however, is Steele's. Of 271 papers of which it consists, above 200 are attributed either entirely or in the greater part to him, while those believed to have been written by Addison are only about fifty. Among the other contributors Swift is the most frequent. The *Spectator* was begun within two months after the discontinuance of the *Tatler*, and was carried on at the rate of six papers a week till the 6th of December, 1712, on which day Number 555 was published. In these first seven volumes of the *Spectator*, Addison's papers are probably more numerous than Steele's ; and between them they wrote perhaps four fifths of the whole work. The *Guardian* was commenced on the 12th of March, 1713, and, being also published six times a week, had extended to 175 numbers, when it was brought to a close on the 1st of October in the same year. There is only one paper by Addison in the first volume of the *Guardian* ; but to the second

he was rather a more frequent contributor than Steele. This was the last work in which the two friends joined; for Addison, we believe, wrote nothing in the *Englishman*, the fifty-seven numbers of which were published, at the rate of three a week, between the 6th of October, 1713, and the 15th of February following; nor Steele any of the papers, eighty in number, forming the eighth volume of the *Spectator*, of which the first was published on the 18th of June, 1714, the last on the 20th of December in the same year, the rate of publication being also three times a week. Of these additional *Spectators* twenty-four are attributed to Addison. The friendship of nearly half a century which had united these two admirable writers was rent asunder by political differences some years before the death of Addison, in 1719: Steele survived till 1729.

Invented or introduced among us as the periodical essay may be said to have been by Steele and Addison, it is a species of writing, as already observed, in which perhaps they have never been surpassed, or on the whole equalled, by any one of their many followers. More elaboration and depth, and also more brilliancy, we may have had in some recent attempts of the same kind; but hardly so much genuine liveliness, ease, and cordiality, anything so thoroughly agreeable, so skilfully adapted to interest without demanding more attention than is naturally and spontaneously given to it. Perhaps so large an admixture of the speculative and didactic was never made so easy of apprehension and so entertaining, so like in the reading to the merely narrative. But, besides this constant atmosphere of the pleasurable arising simply from the lightness, variety, and urbanity of these delightful papers, the delicate imagination and exquisite humor of Addison, and the vivacity, warm-heartedness, and altogether generous nature of Steele, give a charm to the best of them, which is to be enjoyed, not described. We not only admire the writers, but soon come to love them, and to regard both them and the several fictitious personages that move about in the other little world they have created for us as among our best and best-known friends.¹

¹ By far the most elaborate tribute that has been paid to the genius of Addison, it need hardly be noticed, is Lord Macaulay's brilliant *Essay* originally published in the *Edinburgh Review*, for July, 1843.

SHAFTESBURY.

AMONG the prose works of the early part of the last century which used to have the highest reputation for purity and elegance of style, is that by Lord Shaftesbury, entitled *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Things*. Its author, Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury (grandson of the first Earl, the famous meteoric politician of the reign of Charles II.), was born in 1671 and died in 1713; and the *Characteristics*, which did not appear in its present form, or with that title, till after his death, consists of a collection of disquisitions on various questions in moral, metaphysical, and critical philosophy, most of which he had previously published separately. We have nothing to do here with the philosophical system of Lord Shaftesbury, of which, whatever may be its defects, the spirit is at least pure, lofty, and tolerant; but as a specimen of his style we will transcribe a single short passage from the most considerable of the treatises that form his first volume, that which he calls *Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author*, first printed in 1710. The passage we have selected will also be found curious as a sample of Shakspearian criticism at that day, and for the remarks it contains on the tragedy of Hamlet, about which so much has been written in more recent times:—

Let our authors or poets complain ever so much of the genius of our people, 'tis evident we are not altogether so barbarous or gothic as they pretend. We are naturally no ill soil, and have musical parts which might be cultivated with great advantage, if these gentlemen would use the art of masters in their composition. They have power to work upon our better inclinations, and may know by certain tokens that their audience is disposed to receive nobler subjects, and taste a better manner, than that which, through indulgence to themselves more than to the world, they are generally pleased to make their choice.

Besides some laudable attempts which have been made with tolerable success, of late years, towards a just manner of writing, both in the heroic and familiar style, we have older proofs of a right disposition in our people towards the moral and instructive way. Our old dramatic poet¹ may witness for our good ear and manly relish. Notwithstanding his natural rudeness, his unpolished style, his antiquated phrase and wit, his want of method and coherence, and his deficiency in almost all the graces and ornaments of this kind of writings; yet by the justness of his

¹ Shakspeare.

moral, the aptness of many of his descriptions, and the plain and natural turn of several of his characters, he pleases his audience, and often gains their ear, without a single bribe from luxury or vice. That piece of his ¹ which appears to have most affected English hearts, and has perhaps been oftenest acted of any which have come upon our stage, is almost one continued moral; a series of deep reflections, drawn from one mouth, upon the subject of one single accident and calamity, naturally fitted to move horror and compassion. It may be properly said of this play, if I mistake not, that it has only one character or principal part. It contains no adoration or flattery to the sex; no ranting at the gods; no blustering heroism; nor anything of that curious mixture of the fierce and tender which makes the hinge of modern tragedy, and nicely varies it between the points of love and honour.

Upon the whole, since in the two great poetic stations, the epic and dramatic, we may observe the moral genius so naturally prevalent; since our most approved heroic poem ² has neither the softness of language nor the fashionable turn of wit, but merely solid thought, strong reasoning, noble passion, and a continued thread of moral doctrine, piety, and virtue to recommend it; we may justly infer that it is not so much the public ear, as the ill hand and vicious manner of our poets, which needs redress.

And thus at last we are returned to our old article of advice; that main preliminary of self-study and inward converse, which we have found so much wanting in the authors of our time. They should add the wisdom of the heart to the talk and exercise of the brain, in order to bring proportion and beauty into their works. That their composition and vein of writing may be natural and free, they should settle matters in the first place with themselves. And, having gained a mastery here, they may easily, with the help of their genius, and a right use of art, command their audience, and establish a good taste.

MANDEVILLE.

BUT the most remarkable philosophical work of this time, at least in a literary point of view, is Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*. Bernard de Mandeville was a native of Holland, in which country he was born about the year 1670; but, after having studied medicine and taken his doctor's degree, he came over to England about the end of that century, and he resided here till his death in 1733

¹ The tragedy of Hamlet.

² Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

His Fable of the Bees originally appeared in 1708, in the form of a poem of 400 lines in octosyllabic verse, entitled *The Grumbling Hive, or Knaves turned Honest*, and it was not till eight years afterwards that he added the prose notes which make the bulk of the first volume of the work as we now have it. The second volume, or part, which consists of a series of six dialogues, was not published till 1729. The leading idea of the book is indicated by its second title, *Private Vices Public Benefits*;—in other words, that what are called and what really are vices in themselves, and in the individual indulging in them, are nevertheless, in many respects, serviceable to the community. Mandeville holds in fact, to quote the words in which he sums up his theory at the close of his first volume, “that neither the friendly qualities and kind affections that are natural to man, nor the real virtues he is capable of acquiring by reason and self-denial, are the foundation of society; but that what we call evil in this world, moral as well as natural, is the grand principle that makes us sociable creatures, the solid basis, the life and support, of all trades and employments without exception; that there we must look for the true origin of all arts and sciences; and that the moment evil ceases the society must be spoiled, if not totally destroyed.” The doctrine had a startling appearance thus nakedly announced; and the book occasioned a great commotion; but it is now generally admitted that, whatever may be the worth, or worthlessness, of the philosophical system propounded in it, the author’s object was not an immoral one. Independently altogether of its general principles and conclusions, the work is full both of curious matter and vigorous writing. As it is one of the books more talked of than generally known, we will make room for a few extracts. Our first shall be a part of the exposition of the evil and what is maintained to be also the good of gin-drinking,—an English popular vice which, we may just remark, was carried in that day to a much greater excess than at present, whatever certain modern indications, viewed by themselves, might lead us to think:—

Nothing is more destructive, either in regard to the health or the vigi-
-ance and industry of the poor, than the infamous liquor, the name of
which, derived from juniper berries in Dutch, is now by frequent use, and
the laconic spirit of the nation, from a word of middling length shrunk
into a monosyllable, intoxicating Gin, that charms the inactive, the des-
perate and crazy of either sex, and makes the starving not behold his rags

and nakedness with stupid indolence, or banter both in senseless laughter and more insipid jests; it is a fiery lake that sets the brain in flame, burns up the entrails, and scorches every part within; and at the same time a Lethe of oblivion, in which the wretch immersed drowns his most pinching cares, and, with his reason, all anxious reflection on brats that cry for food, hard winters, frosts, and horrid empty home.

In hot and adust tempers, it makes men quarrelsome, renders 'em brutes and savages, sets 'em on to fight for nothing, and has often been the cause of murder. It has broke and destroyed the strongest constitutions, thrown 'em into consumptions, and been the fatal and immediate occasion of apoplexies, frenzies, and sudden death. But as these latter mischiefs happen but seldom, they might be overlooked and connived at; but this cannot be said of the many diseases that are familiar to the liquor, and which are daily and hourly produced by it: such as loss of appetite, fevers, black and yellow jaundice, convulsions, stone and gravel, dropsies, and leucoplegmacies.

Among the doating admirers of this liquid poison, many of the meanest rank, from a sincere affection to the commodity itself, become dealers in it, and take delight to help others to what they love themselves. . . . But, as these starvelings commonly drink more than their gains, they seldom by selling mend the wretchedness of condition they laboured under whilst they were only buyers. In the fag-end and outskirts of the town, and all places of the vilest resort, it is sold in some part or other of almost every house, frequently in cellars, and sometimes in the garret. The petty traders in this Stygian comfort are supplied by others in somewhat higher station, that keep professed brandy shops, and are as little to be envied as the former; and among the middling people I know not a more miserable shift for a livelihood than their calling. Whoever would thrive in it must, in the first place, be of a watchful and suspicious as well as a bold and resolute temper, that he may not be imposed upon by cheats and sharpers, nor outbullied by the oaths and imprecations of hackney-coachmen and foot-soldiers; in the second, he ought to be a dabster at gross jokes and loud laughter, and have all the winning ways to allure customers, and draw out their money, and be well versed in the low jests and railleries the mob make use of to banter prudence and frugality. He must be affable and obsequious to the most despicable: always ready and officious to help a porter down with his load, shake hands with a basket-woman, pull off his hat to an oyster-wench, and be familiar with a beggar; with patience and good humour he must be able to endure the filthy actions and viler language of nasty drabs and the loudest rake-hells, and without a frown or the least aversion bear with all the stench and squalor, noise and impertinence, that the utmost indigence, laziness, and ebriety, can produce in the most shameless and abandoned vulgar.

The vast number of the shops I speak of throughout the city and suburbs are an astonishing evidence of the many seducers that in a lawful occupation are necessary to the introduction and increase of all the sloth, sottishness, want, and misery, which the abuse of strong waters is the immediate cause of, to lift above mediocrity perhaps half a score men that deal in the same commodity by wholesale; whilst among the retailers, though qualified as I required, a much greater number are broke and ruined, for not abstaining from the Circean cup they hold out to others, and the more fortunate are their whole life-time obliged to take the uncommon pains, endure the hardships, and swallow all the ungrateful and shocking things I named for little or nothing beyond a bare sustenance and their daily bread.

The short-sighted vulgar, in the chain of causes, can seldom see further than one link; but those who can enlarge their view, and will give themselves the leisure of gazing on the prospect of concatenated events, may, in a hundred places, see good spring up and pullulate from evil, as naturally as chickens do from eggs. The money that arises from the duties upon malt is a considerable part of the national revenue; and, should no spirits be distilled from it, the public treasure would prodigiously suffer on that head. But, if we would set in a true light the many advantages, and large catalogue of solid blessings, that accrue from and are owing to the evil I treat of, we are to consider the rents that are received, the ground that is tilled, the tools that are made, the cattle that are employed, and, above all, the multitude of poor that are maintained by the variety of labour required in husbandry, in malting, in carriage, and distillation, before we can have that produce of malt which we call Low Wines, and is but the beginning from which the various spirits are afterwards to be made.

Besides this, a sharp-sighted good-humoured man might pick up abundance of good from the rubbish which I have all flung away for evil. He would tell me, that whatever sloth and sottishness might be occasioned by the abuse of malt spirits, the moderate use of it was of inestimable benefit to the poor, who could purchase no cordials of higher prices; that it was a universal comfort, not only in cold and weariness, but most of the afflictions that are peculiar to the necessitous, and had often to the most destitute supplied the places of meat, drink, clothes, and lodging. That the stupid indolence in the most wretched condition occasioned by those composing draughts which I complained of, was a blessing to thousands; for that certainly those were the happiest who felt the least pain. As to diseases, he would say that, as it caused some, so it cured others, and that if the excess in those liquors had been sudden death to some few, the habit of drinking them daily prolonged the lives of many whom once it agreed with; that for the loss sustained from the insignificant quarrels it created

at home, we were overpaid in the advantage we received from it abroad, by upholding the courage of soldiers and animating the sailors to the combat; and that in the two last wars no considerable victory had been obtained without it.

This reasoning will probably not seem very forcible either to the moralists or the political economists of our day; and the passage is by no means to be taken as an example of the most ingenious and original strain of thinking to be found in the book. Its interest lies in the vividness with which it describes what is still unhappily a very remarkable feature of our social condition as it presented itself a century ago. The following remarks are more striking for their peculiarity and penetration:—

Clothes were originally made for two ends; to hide our nakedness, and to fence our bodies against the weather and other outward injuries. To these our boundless pride has added a third, which is ornament; for what else but an excess of stupid vanity could have prevailed upon our reason to fancy that ornamental which must continually put us in mind of our wants and misery beyond all other animals, that are ready-clothed by nature herself? It is indeed to be admired how so sensible a creature as man, that pretends to so many fine qualities of his own, should condescend to value himself upon what is robbed from so innocent and defenceless an animal as a sheep, or what he is beholden for to the most insignificant thing upon earth, a dying worm; yet, whilst he is proud of such trifling depredations, he has the folly to laugh at the Hottentots on the farthest promontory of Africa, who adorn themselves with the guts of their dead enemies, without considering that they are the ensigns of their valour those barbarians are fine with, the true *spolia opima*. and that, if their pride be more savage than ours, it is certainly less ridiculous, because they wear the spoils of the more noble animal. . . .

Whoever takes delight in viewing the various scenes of low life, may, on Easter, Whitsun, and other great holidays, meet with scores of people, especially women, of almost the lowest rank, that wear good and fashionable clothes: if, coming to talk with them, you treat them more courteously and with greater respect than what they are conscious they deserve, they'll commonly be ashamed of owning what they are; and often you may, if you are a little inquisitive, discover in them a most anxious care to conceal the business they follow, and the places they live in. The reason is plain. whilst they receive those civilities that are not usually paid them, and which they think only due to their betters, they have the satisfaction to imagine that they appear what they would be, which to weak minds is a pleasure almost as substantial as they could reap from the very accomplishments of their wishes; this golden dream they are unwilling to be

disturbed in ; and, being sure that the meanness of their condition, if it is known, must sink 'em very low in your opinion, they hug themselves in their disguise, and take all imaginable preeaution not to forfeit by a useless discovery the esteem which they flatter themselves that their good clothes have drawn from you.

The poorest labourer's wife in the parish, who scorns to wear a strong wholesome frieze, as she might, will half starve herself and her husband to purchase a second-hand gown and petticoat, that cannot do her half the service ; because, forsooth, it is more genteel. The weaver, the shoemaker, the tailor, the barber, and every mean working fellow that can set up with little, has the impudence, with the first money he gets, to dress himself like a tradesman of substance. The ordinary retailer, in the clothing of his wife, takes pattern from his neighbour, that deals in the same commodity by wholesale, and the reason he gives for it is, that twelve years ago the other had not a bigger shop than himself. The druggist, mercer, draper, and other creditable shopkeepers can find no difference between themselves and merchants, and therefore dress and live like them. The merchant's lady, who cannot bear the assurance of those mechanics, flies for refuge to the other end of the town, and scorns to follow any fashion but what she takes from thence. This haughtiness alarms the court ; the women of quality are frightened to see merchants' wives and daughters dressed like themselves ; this impudence of the city, they cry, is intolerable ; mantua-makers are sent for, and the contrivance of fashions becomes all their study, that they may have always new modes ready to take up as soon as those sauey cities shall begin to imitate those in being. The same emulation is continued through the several degrees of quality to an incredible expense, till at last the prince's great favourites, and those of the first rank of all, having nothing else left to outstrip some of their inferiors, are forced to lay out vast estates in pompous equipages, magnificent furniture, sumptuous gardens, and princely palaces.

The choleric city captain seems impatient to come to action, and, expressing his warlike genius by the firmness of his steps, makes his pike, for want of exercise, tremble at the valour of his arm : his martial finery, as he marches along, inspires him with an unusual elevation of mind, by which, endeavouring to forget his shop as well as himself, he looks up at the balconies with the fierceness of a Saracen conqueror ; whilst the phlegmatic alderman, now become venerable both for his age and his authority, contents himself with being thought a considerable man ; and, knowing no easier way to express his vanity, looks big in his coach, where, being known by his paltry livery, he receives, in sullen state, the homage that is paid him by the meaner sort of people.

The beardless ensign counterfeits a gravity above his years, and with a ridiculous assurance, strives to imitate the stern countenance of his colonel,

flattering himself all the while that by his daring mien you'll judge of his powers. The youthful fair, in a vast concern of being overlooked, by the continual changing of her posture betrays a violent desire of being observed, and, catching, as it were, at everybody's eyes, courts, with obliging looks, the admiration of her beholders. The conceited coxcomb, on the contrary, displaying an air of sufficiency, is wholly taken up with the contemplation of his own perfections, and in public places discovers such a disregard to others that the ignorant must imagine he thinks himself to be alone.

These and such like are all manifest, though different, tokens of pride, that are obvious to all the world; but man's vanity is not always so soon found out. When we perceive an air of humanity, and men seem not to be employed in admiring themselves, nor altogether unmindful of others, we are apt to pronounce 'em void of pride, when perhaps they are only fatigued with gratifying their vanity, and become languid from a satiety of enjoyments. That outward show of peace within, and drowsy composure of careless negligence, with which a great man is often seen in his plain chariot to roll at ease, are not always so free from art as they may seem to be. *Nothing is more ravishing to the proud than to be thought happy.*

The well-bred gentleman places his greatest pride in the skill he has of covering it with dexterity, and some are so expert in concealing this frailty, that when they are the most guilty of it the vulgar think them the most exempt from it. Thus, the dissembling courtier, when he appears in state, assumes an air of modesty and good humour; and, whilst he is ready to burst with vanity, seems to be wholly ignorant of his greatness; well knowing that those lovely qualities must heighten him in the esteem of others, and be an addition to that grandeur which the coronets about his coach and harnesses, with the rest of his equipage, cannot fail to proclaim without his assistance.

And, as in these pride is overlooked because industriously concealed, so in others again it is denied that they have any when they show, or at least seem to show, it in the most public manner. The wealthy parson, being, as well as the rest of his profession, debarred from the gaiety of laymen, makes it his business to look out for an admirable black and the finest cloth that money can purchase, and distinguishes himself by the fulness of his noble and spotless garment; his wigs are as fashionable as that form he is forced to comply with will admit of; but, as he is only stinted in their shape, so he takes care that for goodness of hair and colour few noblemen shall be able to match 'em; his body is ever clean, as well as his clothes: his sleek face is kept constantly shaved, and his handsome nails are diligently pared; his smooth white hand and a brilliant of the first water, mutually becoming, honour each other with double graces:

what linen he discovers is transparently curious, and he scorns ever to be seen abroad with a worse beaver than what a rich banker would be proud of on his wedding day ; to all these niceties in dress he adds a majestic gait, and expresses a commanding loftiness in his carriage ; yet common civility, notwithstanding the evidence of so many concurring symptoms, won't allow us to suspect any of his actions to be the result of pride ; considering the dignity of his office, it is only decency in him what would be vanity in others ; and, in good manners to his calling, we ought to believe that the worthy gentleman, without any regard to his reverend person, put himself to all this trouble and expense merely out of a respect which is due to the divine order he belongs to, and a religious zeal to preserve his holy function from the contempt of scoffers. With all my heart : nothing of all this shall be called pride ; let me only be allowed to say that to our human capacities it looks very like it.

But, if at last I should grant that there are men who enjoy all the fineries of equipage and furniture, as well as clothes, and yet have no pride in them, it is certain that, if all should be such, that emulation I spoke of before must cease, and consequently trade, which has so great a dependence upon it, suffer in every branch. For to say that, if all men were truly virtuous, they might, without any regard to themselves, consume as much out of zeal to serve their neighbours and promote the public good, as they do now out of self-love and emulation, is a miserable shift and an unreasonable supposition. As there have been good people in all ages, so, without doubt, we are not destitute of them in this ; but let us inquire of the perwig-makers and tailors in what gentlemen, even of the greatest wealth and highest quality, they ever could discover such public-spirited views ? Ask the lacemen, the mercers, and the linen-drappers, whether the richest, and if you will, the most virtuous, ladies, if they buy with ready money, or intend to pay in any reasonable time, will not drive from shop to shop, to try the market, make as many words, and stand as hard with them to save a groat or sixpence in a yard, as the most necessitous jilts in town. If it be urged that, if there are not, it is possible there might be such people, I answer that it is possible that cats, instead of killing rats and mice, should feed them, and go about the house to suckle and nurse their young ones ; or that a kite should call the hens to their meat, as the cock does, and sit brooding over their chickens instead of devouring 'em ; but if they should all do so, they would cease to be cats and kites : it is inconsistent with their natures ; and the species of creatures which now we mean when we name cats and kites would be extinct as soon as that could come to pass.

Mandeville, it will be perceived, is no flatterer of human nature ; his book, indeed, is written throughout in a spirit not only satirical,

but cynical. Every page, however, bears the stamp of independent thinking; and many of the remarks he throws out indicate that he had at least glimpses of views which were not generally perceived or suspected at that day. It would probably be found that the Fable of the Bees has been very serviceable in the way of suggestion to various subsequent writers who have not adopted the general principles of the work. The following paragraphs, for example, are remarkable as an anticipation of a famous passage in the *Wealth of Nations*:—

If we trace the most flourishing nations in their origin, we shall find, that, in the remote beginnings of every society, the richest and most considerable men among them were a great while destitute of a great many comforts of life that are now enjoyed by the meanest and most humble wretches; so that many things which were once looked upon as the inventions of luxury are now allowed even to those that are so miserably poor as to become the objects of public charity, nay counted so necessary that we think no human creature ought to want them. . . . A man would be laughed at that should discover luxury in the plain dress of a poor creature that walks along in a thick parish gown, and a coarse shirt underneath it: and yet what a number of people, how many different trades, and what a variety of skill and tools must be employed to have the most ordinary Yorkshire cloth! What depth of thought and ingenuity, what toil and labour, and what length of time must it have cost, before man could learn from a seed to raise and prepare so useful a product as linen! — Remark T. vol. i. pp. 182–183 (edit. of 1724).

What a bustle is there to be made in several parts of the world before a fine scarlet or crimson cloth can be produced; what multiplicity of trades and artificers must be employed! Not only such as are obvious, as wool-combers, spinners, the weaver, the cloth-worker, the scourer, the dyer, the setter, the drawer, and the packer; but others that are more remote, and might seem foreign to it,—as the mill-wright, the pewterer, and the chemist, which yet are all necessary, as well as a great number of other handicrafts, to have the tools, utensils, and other implements belonging to the trades already named. But all these things are done at home, and may be performed without extraordinary fatigue or danger; the most frightful prospect is left behind, when we reflect on the toil and hazard that are to be undergone abroad, the vast seas we are to go over, the different climates we are to endure, and the several nations we must be obliged to for their assistance. Spain alone, it is true, might furnish us with wool to make the finest cloth; but what skill and pains, what experience and ingenuity, are required to dye it of those beautiful colours! How widely are the drugs and other ingredients dispersed through the universe that

are to meet in one kettle! Alum, indeed, we have of our own; argot we might have from the Rhine, and vitriol from Hungary: all this is in Europe. But then for saltpetre in quantity we are forced to go as far as the East Indies. Cochenil, unknown to the ancients, is not much nearer to us, though in a quite different part of the earth; we buy it, 'tis true, from the Spaniards: but, not being their product, they are forced to fetch it for us from the remotest corner of the new world in the West Indies. Whilst so many sailors are broiling in the sun and sweltered with heat in the East and West of us, another set of them are freezing in the North to fetch potashes from Russia. — Search into the Nature of Society (appended to the second edition), pp. 411–413.

In another place, indeed (Remark Q, pp. 213–216), Mandeville almost enunciates one of the great leading principles of Smith's work: after showing how a nation might be undone by too much money, he concludes, "Let the value of gold and silver either rise or fall, the enjoyment of all societies will ever depend upon the fruits of the earth and the *labour* of the people; both which joined together are a more certain, a more inexhaustible, and a more real treasure than the gold of Brazil or the silver of Potosi." It might be conjectured also from some of his other writings that Smith was a reader of Mandeville: the following sentence, for instance (Remark C, p. 55), may be said almost to contain the germ of the Theory of the Moral Sentiments: — "That we are often ashamed and blush for others . . . is nothing else but that sometimes we make the case of others too nearly our own; — so people shriek out when they see others in danger: — whilst we are reflecting with too much earnest on the effect which such a blameable action, if it was ours, would produce in us, the spirits, and consequently the blood, are insensibly moved after the same manner as if the action was our own, and so the same symptoms must appear."



GAY. ARBUTHNOT. ATTERBURY.

ALONG with Pope, as we have seen, Swift numbers among those who would most mourn his death, Gay and Arbuthnot. He survived them both, Gay having died, in his forty-fourth year, in 1732, and Arbuthnot at a much more advanced age in 1735.

John Gay, the author of a considerable quantity of verse and of above a dozen dramatic pieces, is now chiefly remembered for his *Beggar's Opera*, his *Fables*, his mock-heroic poem of *Trivia*, or the *Art of Walking the Streets of London*, and some of his ballads. He has no pretensions to any elevation of genius, but there is an agreeable ease, nature, and sprightliness in everything he has written; and the happiest of his performances are animated by an archness, and light but spirited raillery, in which he has not often been excelled. His celebrated English opera, as it was the first attempt of the kind, still remains the only one that has been eminently successful. Now, indeed, that much of the wit has lost its point and application to existing characters and circumstances, the dialogue of the play, apart from the music, may be admitted to owe its popularity in some degree to its traditionary fame; but still what is temporary in it is intermixed with a sufficiently diffused, though not very rich, vein of general satire, to allow the whole to retain considerable piquancy. Even at first the *Beggar's Opera* was probably indebted for the greater portion of its success to the music; and that is so happily selected that it continues still as fresh and as delightful as ever.

Dr. John Arbuthnot, a native of Scotland, besides various professional works of much ability, is generally regarded as the author of the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, printed in the works of Pope and Swift, and said to have been intended as the commencement of a general satire on the abuses of learning, of which, however, nothing more was ever written except Pope's treatise already mentioned on the *Bathos*, and one or two shorter fragments. The celebrated political satire, entitled *The History of John Bull*, which has been the model of various subsequent imitations, but of none in which the fiction is at once so apposite and so ludicrous, is also attributed to Arbuthnot. Pope's highly wrought and noble Prologue to his *Satires*, which is addressed to Arbuthnot, or rather in which the latter figures as the poet's interlocutor, will forever preserve both the memory of their friendship, and also some traits of the character and manner of the learned, witty, and kind-hearted physician.

The commencement of the reign of the Whigs at the accession of the House of Hanover, which deprived Arbuthnot of his appointment of one of the physicians extraordinary — leaving him, however, in the poet's words,

social, cheerful, and serene,

And just as rich as when he served a queen —

was more fatal to the fortunes of another of Pope's Tory or Jacobite friends, Francis Atterbury, the celebrated Bishop of Rochester, already mentioned as the principal author of the reply to Bentley's Dissertation on Phalaris. Atterbury also took a distinguished part in the professional controversies of his day, and his sermons and letters, and one or two short copies of verse by him, are well known; but his fervid character probably flashed out in conversation in a way of which we do not gather any notion from his writings. Atterbury was deprived and outlawed in 1722; and he died abroad in 1731, in his sixty-ninth year.

PRIOR. PARNELL.

MATTHEW PRIOR is another distinguished name in the band of the Tory writers of this age, and he was also an associate of Pope and Swift, although we hear less of him in their epistolary correspondence than of most of their other friends. Yet perhaps no one of the minor wits and poets of the time has continued to enjoy higher or more general favor with posterity. Much that he wrote, indeed, is now forgotten; but some of the best of his comic tales in verse will live as long as the language, which contains nothing that surpasses them in the union of ease and fluency with sprightliness and point, and in all that makes up the spirit of humorous and graceful narrative. They are our happiest examples of a style that has been cultivated with more frequent success by French writers than by our own. In one poem, his *Alma*, or *The Progress of the Mind*, extending to three cantos, he has even applied this light and airy manner of treatment with remarkable felicity to some of the most curious questions in mental philosophy. In another still longer work, again, entitled *Solomon on the Vanity of the World*, in three Books, leaving his characteristic archness and pleasantry, he emulates not unsuccessfully the dignity of Pope, not without some traces of natural eloquence and picturesqueness of expression which are all his own. Prior, who was born in 1664, commenced poet before the Revolution, by the publication in 1688

of his *City Mouse and Country Mouse*, written in concert with Charles Montagu, afterwards Earl of Halifax, in ridicule of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*; and he continued a Whig nearly to the end of the reign of William; but he then joined the most extreme section of the Tories, and acted cordially with that party down to his death in 1721. Such also was the political course of Parnell, only that, being a younger man, he did not make his change of party till some years after Prior. The Rev. Dr. Thomas Parnell was born at Dublin in 1679, and left his original friends the Whigs at the same time with Swift, on the ejection of Lord Godolphin's ministry, in 1710. He died in 1718. Parnell is always an inoffensive and agreeable writer; and sometimes, as, for example, in his *Nightpiece on Death*, which probably suggested Gray's more celebrated *Elegy*, he rises to considerable impressiveness and solemn pathos. But, although his poetry is uniformly fluent and transparent, and its general spirit refined and delicate, it has little warmth or richness, and can only be called a sort of water-color poetry. One of Parnell's pieces, we may remark, — his *Fairy Tale of Edwin and Sir Topaz*, — may have given some hints to Burns for his *Tam o' Shanter*.



BOLINGBROKE.

THE mention of Prior naturally suggests that of his friend and patron, and also the friend of Swift and Pope, — Henry St. John, better known by his title of the Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, although his era comes down to a later date, for he was not born till 1678, and he lived to 1751. Bolingbroke wrote no poetry, but his collected prose works fill five quarto volumes (without including his letters), and would thus entitle him by their quantity alone to be ranked as one of the most considerable writers of his time; of which we have abundant testimony that he was one of the most brilliant orators and talkers, and in every species of mere cleverness one of the most distinguished figures. His writings, being principally on subjects of temporary politics, have lost much of their interest; but a few of them, especially his *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, his *Idea of a Patriot King*, and his

account and defence of his own conduct in his famous Letter to Sir William Windham, will still reward perusal even for the sake of their matter, while in style and manner almost everything he has left is of very remarkable merit. Bolingbroke's style, as we have elsewhere observed, "was a happy medium between that of the scholar and that of the man of society, — or rather it was a happy combination of the best qualities of both, heightening the ease, freedom, fluency, and liveliness of elegant conversation with many of the deeper and richer tones of the eloquence of formal orations and of books. The example he thus set has probably had a very considerable effect in moulding the style of popular writing among us since his time."¹

Bolingbroke's elaborate defence of his own political course in his Letter to Sir William Windham (which is of great length, making a volume of above 300 pages) involves the wholesale condemnation of every person with whom or in whose service he had ever acted, beginning with the Earl of Oxford (Harley) and ending with the Pretender. The following is part of what he says of the former : —

These were in general the views of the Tories [in 1710]; and for the part I acted in the prosecution of them, as well as of all the measures accessory to them, I may appeal to mankind. To those who had the opportunity of looking behind the curtain I may likewise appeal for the difficulties which lay in my way, and for the particular discouragements which I met with. A principal load of parliamentary and foreign affairs in their ordinary course lay upon me: the whole negotiation of the peace, and of the troublesome invidious steps preliminary to it, as far as they could be transacted at home, were thrown upon me. I continued in the House of Commons during that important session which preceded the peace; and which, by the spirit shown through the whole course of it, and by the resolutions taken in it, rendered the conclusion of the treaties practicable. After this I was dragged into the House of Lords, in such a manner as to make my promotion a punishment, not a reward; and was there left to defend the treaties almost alone.

It would not have been hard to have forced the Earl of Oxford to use me better. His good intentions began to be very much doubted of: the truth is, no opinion of his sincerity had ever taken root in the party; and, which was worse perhaps for a man in his station, the opinion of his capacity began to fall apace. He was so hard pushed in the House of Lords in the beginning of one thousand seven hundred and twelve, that

¹ Article on Bolingbroke in Penny Cyclopædia, v. 78.

he had been forced, in the middle of the session, to persuade the queen to make a promotion of twelve peers at once; which was an unprecedented and invidious measure, to be excused by nothing but the necessity, and hardly by that. In the House of Commons his credit was low, and my reputation very high. You know the nature of that assembly: they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged. . . . I thought my mistress treated me ill: but the sense of that duty which I owed her came in aid of other considerations, and prevailed over my resentment. These sentiments, indeed, are so much out of fashion, that a man who avows them is in danger of passing for a bubble in the world: yet they were, in the conjuncture I speak of, the true motives of my conduct; and you saw me go on as cheerfully in the troublesome and dangerous work assigned me as if I had been under the utmost satisfaction. I began, indeed, in my heart, to renounce the friendship which till that time I had preserved inviolable for Oxford. I was not aware of all his treachery, nor of the base and little means which he employed then, and continued to employ afterwards, to ruin me in the opinion of the queen, and everywhere else. I saw, however, that he had no friendship for anybody, and that, with respect to me, instead of having the ability to render that merit which I endeavoured to acquire an addition of strength to himself, it became the object of his jealousy, and a reason for undermining me. . . . He was the first spring of all our motion by his credit with the queen, and his concurrence was necessary to every thing we did by his rank in the state: and yet this man seemed to be sometimes asleep, and sometimes at play. He neglected the thread of business; which was carried on for that reason with less despatch and less advantage in the proper channels; and he kept none in his own hands. He negotiated, indeed, by fits and starts, by little tools and indirect ways; and thus his activity became as hurtful as his indolence; of which I could produce some remarkable instances. . . . Whether this man ever had any determined view besides that of raising his family, is, I believe, a problematical question in the world. My opinion is, that he never had any other. The conduct of a minister who proposes to himself a great and noble object, and who pursues it steadily, may seem for a while a riddle to the world; especially in a government like ours, where numbers of men, different in their characters, and different in their interests, are at all times to be managed; where public affairs are exposed to more accidents and greater hazards than in other countries; and where, by consequence, he who is at the head of business will find himself often distracted by measures which have no relation to his purpose, and obliged to bend himself to things which are in some degree contrary to his main design. The ocean which environs us is an emblem of our government; and the pilot and the minister are in similar circum-

stances. It seldom happens that either of them can steer a direct course, and they both arrive at their port by means which frequently seem to carry them from it. But, as the work advances, the conduct of him who leads it on with real abilities clears up, the appearing inconsistencies are reconciled, and, when it is once consummated, the whole shows itself so uniform, so plain, and so natural, that every dabbler in politics will be apt to think he could have done the same. But, on the other hand, a man who proposes no such object, who substitutes artifice in the place of ability, who, instead of leading parties, and governing accidents, is eternally agitated backwards and forwards by both, who begins every day something new and carries nothing on to perfection, may impose a while on the world; but a little sooner or a little later the mystery will be revealed, and nothing will be found to be couched under it but a thread of pitiful expedients, the ultimate end of which never extended farther than living from day to day.

The following are some passages from the concluding portion of the Letter: —

The exile of the royal family, under Cromwell's usurpation, was the principal cause of all those misfortunes in which Britain has been involved, as well as of many of those which have happened to the rest of Europe, during more than half a century.

The two brothers, Charles and James, became then infected with popery to such degrees as their different characters admitted of. Charles had parts; and his good understanding served as an antidote to repel the poison. James, the simplest man of his time, drank off the whole chalice. The poison met, in his composition, with all the fear, all the credulity, and all the obstinacy of temper proper to increase its virulence, and to strengthen its effect. The first had always a wrong bias upon him: he connived at the establishment, and indirectly contributed to the growth, of that power, which afterwards disturbed the peace and threatened the liberty of Europe so often; but he went no farther out of the way. The opposition of his parliaments and his own reflections stopped him here. The prince and the people were indeed mutually jealous of one another, from which much present disorder flowed, and the foundation of future evils was laid; but, his good and his bad principles combating still together, he maintained, during a reign of more than twenty years, in some tolerable degree, the authority of the crown and the flourishing estate of the nation. The last, drunk with superstitious and even enthusiastic zeal, ran headlong into his own ruin whilst he endeavoured to precipitate ours. His parliament and his people did all they could to save themselves by winning him. But all was vain: he had no principle on which they could take hold. Even his good qualities worked against

them, and his love of his country went halves with his bigotry. How he succeeded we have heard from our fathers. The revolution of one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight saved the nation, and ruined the king.

Now the Pretender's education has rendered him infinitely less fit than his uncle, and at least as unfit as his father, to be king of Great Britain. Add to this, that there is no resource in his understanding. Men of the best sense find it hard to overcome religious prejudices, which are of all the strongest; but he is a slave to the weakest. The rod hangs like the sword of Damocles over his head, and he trembles before his mother and his priest. What, in the name of God, can any member of the Church of England promise himself from such a character? Are we by another revolution to return into the same state from which we were delivered by the first? Let us take example from the Roman Catholics, who act very reasonably in refusing to submit to a Protestant prince. Henry the Fourth had at least as good a title to the throne of France as the Pretender has to ours. His religion alone stood in his way, and he had never been king if he had not removed that obstacle. Shall we submit to a popish prince, who will no more imitate Henry the Fourth in changing his religion, than he will imitate those shining qualities which rendered him the honestest gentleman, the bravest captain, and the greatest prince of his age?

It may be said, and it has been urged to me, that if the Chevalier was restored, the knowledge of his character would be our security; *foenum habet in cornu*;¹ there would be no pretence for trusting him, and by consequence it would be easy to put such restrictions on the exercise of the regal power as might hinder him from invading and sapping our religion and liberty. But this I utterly deny. Experience has shown us how ready men are to court power and profit; and who can determine how far either the Tories or the Whigs would comply in order to secure to themselves the enjoyment of all the places in the kingdom? Suppose, however, that a majority of true Israelites should be found whom no temptation could oblige to bow the knee to Baal; in order to preserve the government on one hand, must they not destroy it on the other? The necessary restrictions would in this case be so many, and so important, as to leave hardly the shadow of a monarchy if he submitted to them; and, if he did not submit to them, these patriots would have no resource left but in rebellion. Thus, therefore, the affair would turn, if the Pretender was restored. We might most probably lose our religion and liberty by the bigotry of the prince and the corruption of the people. We should have no chance of preserving them, but by an entire change of the whole frame of our government, or by another revolution. What reasonable man would voluntarily reduce himself to the necessity of making an option among such melancholy alternatives?

¹ He has a wisp of straw (the mark of a vicious animal) on his horn. — *Horace*.

Whilst the Pretender and his successors forbore to attack the religion and liberty of the nation, we should remain in the condition of those people who labour under a broken constitution, or who carry about with them some chronic distemper. They feel a little pain at every moment; or a certain uneasiness, which is sometimes less tolerable than pain, hangs continually on them, and they languish in the constant expectation of dying, perhaps in the severest torture.

But, if the fear of hell should dissipate all other fears in the Pretender's mind, and carry him, which is frequently the effect of that passion, to the most desperate undertakings; if among his successors a man bold enough to make the attempt should arise, the condition of the British nation would be still more deplorable. The attempt succeeding, we should fall into tyranny; for a change of religion could never be brought about by consent; and the same force that would be sufficient to enslave our consciences would be sufficient for all other purposes of arbitrary power. The attempt failing, we should fall into anarchy, for there is no medium when disputes between a prince and his people are arrived at a certain point: he must either be submitted to or deposed.



GARTH. BLACKMORE.

IN one of the passages in which he commemorates the friendship of Swift, Atterbury, and Bolingbroke, Pope records also the encouragement his earliest performances in rhyme received from a poet and man of wit of the opposite party, "well-natured Garth."¹ Sir Samuel Garth, who was an eminent physician and a zealous Whig, is the author of various poetical pieces published in the reigns of William and Anne, of which the one of greatest pretension is that entitled *The Dispensary*, a mock epic, in six short cantos, on the quarrels of his professional brethren, which appeared in 1699. The wit of this slight performance may have somewhat evaporated with age, but it cannot have been at any time very pungent. A much more voluminous, and also more ambitious, Whig poet of this Augustan age, as it is sometimes called, of our literature, was another physician, Sir Richard Blackmore. Blackmore made his *Debut* as a poet so early as the year 1696, by the publication of his *Prince Arthur*, which was followed by a succession of other epics,

¹ See Prologue to the *Satires*, 135, &c.

or long poems of a serious kind, each in six, ten, or twelve books, under the names of King Arthur, King Alfred, Eliza, the Redeemer, the Creation, &c., besides a Paraphrase of the Book of Job, a new version of the Psalms, a Satire on Wit, and various shorter effusions both in verse and prose. The indefatigable rhymester — “the everlasting Blackmore,” as Pope calls him — died at last in 1729. Nothing can be conceived wilder or more ludicrous than this incessant discharge of epics; but Blackmore, whom Dryden charged with writing “to the rumbling of his coach’s wheels,” may be pronounced, without any undue severity, to have been not more a fool than a blockhead. His *Creation*, indeed, has been praised both by Addison and Johnson; but the politics of the author may be supposed to have blinded or mollified the one critic, and his piety the other; at least the only thing an ordinary reader will be apt to discover in this his *chef-d’œuvre*, that is not the flattest commonplace, is an occasional outbreak of the most ludicrous extravagance and bombast. Altogether this knight, droning away at his epics for above a quarter of a century, is as absurd a phenomenon as is presented to us in the history of literature. Pope has done him no more than justice in assigning him the first place among the contending “brayers” at the immortal games instituted by the goddess of the Dunciad: —

But far o'er all, sonorous Blackmore's strain :
 Walls, steeples, skies, bray back to him again.
 In Tot'nam fields the brethren, with amaze,
 Prick all their ears up, and forget to graze ;
 Long Chancery-lane retentive rolls the sound,
 And courts to courts return it round and round ;
 Thames wafts it thence to Rufus' roaring hall,
 And Hungerford re-echoes bawl for bawl.
 All hail him victor in both gifts of song,
 Who sings so loudly and who sings so long.

DEFOE.

THE Whigs, however, had to boast of one great writer of prose fiction, if, indeed, one who, although taking a frequent and warm

part in the discussion of political subjects, really stood aloof from and above all parties, and may be said to have been in enlargement of view far in advance of all the public men of his time, can be properly claimed by any party. Nor does Daniel Defoe seem to have been recognized as one of themselves by the Whigs of his own day. He stood up, indeed, from first to last, for the principles of the Revolution against those of the Jacobites; but in the alternating struggle between the Whig and Tory parties for the possession of office he took little or no concern; he served and opposed administrations of either color without reference to anything but their measures: thus we find him in 1706 assisting Godolphin and his colleagues to compass the union with Scotland; and in 1713 exerting himself with equal zeal in supporting Harley and Bolingbroke in the attempt to carry through their commercial treaty with France. He is believed to have first addressed himself to his countrymen through the press in 1683, when he was only in his twenty-third year. From this time for a space of above thirty years he may be said never to have laid down his pen as a political writer; his publications in prose and verse, which are far too numerous to be here particularized, embracing nearly every subject which either the progress of events made of prominent importance during that time, or which was of eminent popular or social interest independently of times and circumstances. Many of these productions, written for a temporary purpose, or on the spur of some particular occasion, still retain a considerable value, even for their matter, either as directories of conduct or accounts of matters of fact; some, indeed, such as his *History of the Union*, are the works of highest authority we possess respecting the transactions to which they relate; all of them bear the traces of a sincere, earnest, manly character, and of an understanding unusually active, penetrating, and well-informed. Evidence enough there often is, no doubt, of haste and precipitation, but it is always the haste of a full mind: the subject may be rapidly and somewhat rudely sketched out, and the matter not always very artificially disposed, or set forth to the most advantage; but Defoe never wrote for the mere sake of writing, or unless when he really had something to state which he conceived it important that the public should know. He was too thoroughly honest to make a trade of politics.

Defoe's course and character as a political writer bear a consid-

erable resemblance in some leading points to those of one of the most remarkable men of our own day, the late William Cobbett, who, however, had certainly much more passion and wilfulness than Defoe, whatever we may think of his claims to as much principle. But Defoe's political writings make the smallest part of his literary renown. At the age of fifty-eight — an age when other writers, without the tenth part of his amount of performance to boast of, have usually thought themselves entitled to close their labors — he commenced a new life of authorship with all the spirit and hopeful alacrity of five-and-twenty. A succession of works of fiction, destined, some of them, to take and keep the highest rank in that department of our literature, and to become popular books in every language of Europe, now proceeded from his pen with a rapidity evincing the easiest flow as well as the greatest fertility of imagination. *Robinson Crusoe* appeared in 1719; the *Dumb Philosopher*, the same year; *Captain Singleton*, in 1720; *Duncan Campbell*, the same year; *Moll Flanders*, in 1721; *Colonel Jacque*, in 1722; the *Journal of the Plague*, and probably, also, the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (to which there is no date), the same year; the *Fortunate Mistress*, or *Roxana*, in 1724; the *New Voyage Round the World*, in 1725; and the *Memoirs of Captain Carleton*, in 1728. But these effusions of his inventive faculty seem to have been, after all, little more than the amusements of his leisure. In the course of the twelve years from 1719 to his death in 1731, besides his novels, he produced about twenty miscellaneous works, many of them of considerable extent. It may be pretty safely affirmed that no one who has written so much has written so well. No writer of fictitious narrative has ever excelled him in at least one prime excellence — the air of reality which he throws over the creations of his fancy; an effect proceeding from the strength of conception with which he enters into the scenes, adventures, and characters he undertakes to describe, and his perfect reliance upon his power of interesting the reader by the plainest possible manner of relating things essentially interesting. Truth and nature are never either improved by flowers of speech in Defoe, or smothered under that sort of adornment. In some of his political writings there are not wanting passages of considerable height of style, in which, excited by a fit occasion, he employs to good purpose the artifices of rhetorical embellishment and modulation; but in his works of imagination his almost constant characteristic is a simplic-

ity and plainness, which, if there be any affectation about it at all, is chargeable only with that of a homeliness sometimes approaching to rusticity. His writing, however, is always full of idiomatic nerve, and in a high degree graphic and expressive : and even its occasional slovenliness, whether the result of carelessness or design, aids the illusion by which the fiction is made to read so like a matter of fact. The truthful air of Defoe's fictions, we may just remark, is of quite a different character from that of Swift's, in which, although there is also much of the same vivid conception, and therefore minutely accurate delineation, of every person and thing introduced, a discerning reader will always perceive a smile lurking beneath the author's assumed gravity, telling him intelligibly enough that the whole is a joke. It is said, indeed, that, as the *Journal of the Plague* is quoted as an authentic narrative by Dr. Mead, and as Lord Chatham was, in all simplicity, in the habit of recommending the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* to his friends as the best account of the Civil Wars, and as those of Captain Carleton were read even by Samuel Johnson without a suspicion of their being other than a true history, so some Irish bishop was found with faith enough to believe in *Gulliver's Travels*, although not a little amazed by some things stated in the book. But it is not probable that there ever was any second instance, even on the Irish episcopal bench, of so much simplicity.



DRAMATIC WRITERS.

To this age, also, belong three of the greatest of our comic dramatists. Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar were born in the order in which we have named them, and also, we believe, successively presented themselves before the public as writers for the stage in the same order, although they reversed it in making their exits from the stage of life, — Farquhar dying in 1707 at the age of twenty-nine, Vanbrugh in 1726 at that of fifty-four, Congreve not till 1729 in his fifty-ninth or sixtieth year.

Congreve's first play, *The Old Bachelor*, was brought out in 1693, the author having already, two or three years before, made himself known in the literary world by a novel called *The Incognita*, or *Love and Duty Reconciled*. *The Old Bachelor* was fol-

lowed by *The Double Dealer* in 1694, and by *Love for Love* in 1695; the tragedy of *The Mourning Bride* was produced in 1697; and the comedy of *The Way of the World*, in 1700: a masquerade and an opera, both of slight importance, were the only dramatic pieces he wrote during the rest of his life. The comedy of Congreve has not much character, still less humor, and no nature at all; but blazes and crackles with wit and repartee, for the most part of an unusually pure and brilliant species, — not quaint, forced, and awkward, like what we find in some other attempts, in our dramatic literature and elsewhere, at the same kind of display, but apparently as easy and spontaneous as it is pointed, polished, and exact. His plots are also constructed with much artifice.

Sir John Vanbrugh is the author of ten or twelve comedies, of which the first, *The Relapse*, was produced in 1697, and of which *The Provoked Wife*, *The Confederacy*, and *The Journey to London* (which last, left unfinished by the author, was completed by Colley Cibber), are those of greatest merit. The wit of Vanbrugh flows rather than flashes; but its copious stream may vie in its own way with the dazzling fire-shower of Congreve's; and his characters have much more of real flesh and blood in their composition, coarse and vicious as almost all the more powerfully drawn among them are.

George Farquhar, the author of *The Constant Couple* and *The Beaux' Stratagem*, and of five or six other comedies, was a native of Ireland, in which country Congreve also spent his childhood and boyhood. Farquhar's first play, his *Love in a Bottle*, was brought out with great success at Drury Lane in 1698; *The Beaux' Stratagem*, his last, was in the midst of its run when the illness during which it had been written terminated in the poor author's early death. The thoughtless and volatile, but good-natured and generous, character of Farquhar is reflected in his comedies, which, with less sparkle, have more natural life and airiness, and are animated by a finer spirit of whim, than those of either Vanbrugh or Congreve. His morality, like theirs, is abundantly free and easy; but there is much more heart about his proflicacy than in theirs, as well as much less grossness or hardness.

To these names may be added that of Colley Cibber, who has, however, scarcely any pretensions to be ranked as one of our classic dramatists, although, of about two dozen comedies, tragedies, and other pieces of which he is the author, his *Careless Husband*

and one or two others may be admitted to be lively and agreeable Cibber, who was born in 1671, produced his first play, the comedy of *Love's Last Shift*, in 1696, and was still an occasional writer for the stage after the commencement of the reign of George II. one of his productions, indeed, his tragedy entitled *Papal Tyranny*, was brought out so late as the year 1745, when he himself performed one of the principal characters; and he lived till 1757. His well-known account of his own life, or his *Apology for his Life*, as he modestly or affectedly calls it, is an amusing piece of something higher than gossip; the sketches he gives of the various celebrated actors of his time are many of them executed, not perhaps with the deepest insight, but yet with much graphic skill in so far as regards those mere superficial characteristics that meet the ordinary eye.

The chief tragic writer of this age was Nicholas Rowe, the author of *The Fair Penitent* and *Jane Shore*, of five other tragedies, one comedy, and a translation in rhyme of *Lucan's Pharsalia*. Rowe, who was born in 1673, and died in 1718, was esteemed in his own day a great master of the pathetic, but is now regarded as little more than a smooth and occasionally sounding versifier.



MINOR POETS.

THE age of the first two Georges, if we put aside what was done by Pope, or consider him as belonging properly to the preceding reign of Anne, was not very prolific in poetry of a high order; but there are several minor poets belonging to this time whose names live in our literature, and some of whose productions are still read. Matthew Green's poem entitled *The Spleen* originally appeared, we believe, in his lifetime in the first volume of Dodsley's *Collection*,—although his other pieces, which are few in number and of little note, were only published by his friend Glover after the death of the author in 1737, at the age of forty-one. *The Spleen*, a reflective effusion in octosyllabic verse, is somewhat striking from an air of originality in the vein of thought, and from the labored concentration and epigrammatic point of the

language; but, although it was much cried up when it first appeared, and the laudation has continued to be duly echoed by succeeding formal criticism, it may be doubted if many readers could now make their way through it without considerable fatigue, or if it be much read in fact at all. With all its ingenious or energetic rhetorical posture-making, it has nearly as little real play of fancy as charm of numbers, and may be most properly characterized as a piece of bastard or perverted Hudibrastic,—an imitation of the manner of Butler to the very dance of his verse, only without the comedy,—the same antics, only solemnized or made to carry a moral and serious meaning. The *Grongar Hill* of Dyer was published in 1726, when its author was in his twenty-seventh year; and was followed by *The Ruins of Rome* in 1740, and his most elaborate performance, *The Fleece*, in 1757, the year before his death. Dyer's is a natural and true note, though not one of much power or compass. What he has written is his own; not borrowed from or suggested by "others' books," but what he has himself seen, thought, and felt. He sees, too, with an artistic eye, while at the same time his pictures are full of the moral inspiration which alone makes description poetry. There is also considerable descriptive power in Somervile's blank verse poem of *The Chase*, in four Books, which was first published in 1735. Somervile, who was a Warwickshire squire, and the intimate friend of Shenstone, and who, besides his *Chase*, wrote various other pieces, now for the most part forgotten, died in 1742. Tickell, Addison's friend, who was born in 1686 and lived till 1740, is the author of a number of compositions, of which his *Elegy on Addison* and his ballad of *Colin and Lucy* are the best known. The ballad Gray has called "the prettiest in the world,"—and if prettiness, by which Gray here probably means a certain easy simplicity and trimness, were the soul of ballad poetry, it might carry away a high prize. Nobody writes better grammar than Tickell. His style is always remarkably clear and exact, and the mere appropriateness and judicious collocation of the words, aided by the swell of the verse in his more elaborate or solemn passages, have sometimes an imposing effect. Of his famous *Elegy*, the most opposite opinions have been expressed. Goldsmith has called it "one of the finest in our language"; and Johnson has declared that "a more sublime or elegant funeral poem is not to be found in the whole compass of English literature." So Lord Macaulay:—"Tickell be

wailed his friend in an Elegy which would do honor to the greatest name in our literature, and which unites the energy and magnificence of Dryden to the tenderness and purity of Cowper.”¹ Steele on the other hand has denounced it as being nothing more than “prose in rhyme.” And it must be admitted that it is neither very tender nor very imaginative; yet rhyme too is part and parcel of poetry, and solemn thoughts, vigorously expressed and melodiously enough versified, which surely we have here, cannot reasonably be refused that name, even though the informing power of passion or imagination may not be present in any very high degree. One of Tickell’s most spirited performances is perhaps his imitation or parody of Horace’s Prophecy of Nereus (Book i. Ode 15), which he thus applied at the time to the Jacobite outbreak of 1715:—

As Mar his round one morning took
 (Whom some call Earl and some call Duke),
 And his new brethren of the blade,
 Shivering with fear and frost, surveyed,
 On Perth’s bleak hills he chanced to spy
 An aged wizard six feet high,
 With bristled hair and visage blighted,
 Wall-eyed, bare-haunched, and second sighted.

The grisly sage in thought profound
 Beheld the chief with back so round,
 Then rolled his eye-balls to and fro
 O’er his paternal hills of snow;
 And into these tremendous speeches
 Broke forth the prophet without breeches:—

“Into what ills betrayed by thee
 This ancient kingdom do I see!
 Her realms unpeopled and forlorn!
 Woe’s me! that ever thou wert born;
 Proud English loons (our clans o’ercome)
 On Scottish pads shall amble home:
 I see them drest in bonnets blue
 (The spoils of thy rebellious crew);
 I see the target cast away,
 And checkered plaid, become their prey—
 The checkered plaid to make a gown
 For many a lass in London town.

¹ Essay on Addison.

“ In vain thy hungry mountaineers
 Come forth in all their warlike geers,
 The shield, the pistol, dirk and dagger,
 In which they daily wont to swagger,
 And oft have sallied out to pillage
 The hen-roosts of some peaceful village,
 Or, while their neighbours were asleep,
 Have carried off a lowland sheep.

“ What boots thy highborn host of **beggars**,
 Macleans, Mackenzies, and Macgregors,
 With popish cut-throats, perjured ruffians,
 And Foster's troop of ragamuffins ?

“ In vain thy lads around thee bandy,
 Inflamed with bag-pipe and with brandy.
 Doth not bold Sutherland the trusty,
 With heart so true, and voice so rusty,
 (A loyal soul) thy troops affright,
 While hoarsely he demands the fight ?
 Dost thou not generous Ilay dread,
 The bravest hand, the wisest head ?
 Undaunted dost thou hear the alarms
 Of hoary Athol sheathed in arms ?

“ Douglas, who draws his lineage down
 From thanes and peers of high renown,
 Fiery, and young, and uncontrolled,
 With knights, and squires, and barons **bold**,
 (His noble household-band) advances,
 And on the milk-white courser prances.
 Thee Forfar to the combat dares,
 Grown swarthy in Iberian wars ;
 And Monroe, kindled into rage,
 Sourly defies thee to engage ;
 He'll rout thy foot, though ne'er so **many**,
 And horse to boot — if thou hast any.

“ But see Argyle, with watchful eyes,
 Lodged in his deep entrenchments lies ;
 Couched like a lion in thy way,
 He waits to spring upon his prey ;
 While, like a herd of timorous deer,
 Thy army shakes and pants with fear,
 Led by their doughty general's skill
 From frith to frith, from hill to hill.

“ Is thus thy haughty promise paid

That to the Chevalier was made,
 When thou didst oaths and duty barter
 For dukedom, generalship, and garter?
 Three moons thy Jemmy shall command,
 With Highland sceptre in his hand,
 Too good for his pretended birth —
 Then down shall fall the King of Perth.”

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The notorious Richard Savage is the author of several poetical compositions, published in the last fifteen or twenty years of his tempestuous and unhappy life, which he closed in Bristol jail in 1743, at the age of forty-six. Savage's poem called *The Bastard* has some vigorous lines, and some touches of tenderness as well as bursts of more violent passion; but, as a whole, it is crude, spasmodic, and frequently wordy and languid. His other compositions, some of which evince a talent for satire, of which assiduous cultivation might have made something, have all passed into oblivion. The personal history of Savage, which Johnson's ardent and expanded narrative has made universally known, is more interesting than his verse; but even that owes more than half its attraction to his biographer. He had, in fact, all his life, apparently, much more of another kind of madness than he ever had of that of poetry.

Fenton and Broome — the former of whom died in 1730 at the age of forty-seven, the latter in 1745, at what age is not known — are chiefly remembered as Pope's coadjutors in his translation of the *Odyssey*. Johnson observes, in his *Life of Fenton*, that the readers of poetry have never been able to distinguish their Books from those of Pope; but the account he has given here and in the *Life of Broome* of the respective shares of the three, on the information, as he says, of Mr. Langton, who had got it from Spence, may be reasonably doubted. It differs, indeed, in some respects from that given in Spence's *Anecdotes*, since published. A critical reader will detect very marked varieties of style and manner in the different parts of the work. It is very clear, for instance, that the nineteenth and twentieth Books are not by Pope, and have not even received much of his revision: they are commonly attributed to Fenton, and we should think rightly. But it is impossible to believe, on the other hand, that the translator of these two Books is also the translator of the whole of the fourth Book, which is

likewise assigned to Fenton in Johnson's statement. Could any one except Pope have written the following lines, which occur in that Book? —

But, oh, beloved by heaven, reserved to thee,
 A happier lot the smiling fates decree ;
 Free from that law, beneath whose mortal sway
 Matter is changed, and varying forms decay,
 Elysium shall be thine ; the blissful plain
 Of utmost earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns.
 Joys ever young, unmixed with pain or fear,
 Fill the wide circle of the eternal year :
 Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime,
 The fields are florid with unfading prime ;
 From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,
 Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow ;
 But from the breezy deep the bless'd inhale
 The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.
 This grace peculiar will the Gods afford
 To thee, the son of Jove, the beautiful Helen's lord.

Pope, indeed, may have inserted this and other passages in this and other Books, of which he did not translate the whole. Broome was a much more dexterous versifier than Fenton, and would come much nearer to Pope's ordinary manner : still we greatly doubt if the twenty-third Book in particular (which passes for Broome's) be not entirely Pope's, and also many parts of the second, the eighth, the eleventh, and the twelfth. On the other hand, the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and twenty-fourth seem to us to be throughout more likely to be by him than by Pope. Pope himself seems to have looked upon Broome as rather a clever mimic of his own manner than as anything much higher. When they had quarrelled a few years after this, he introduced his old associate in the *Dunciad*, in a passage which originally ran : —

See under Ripley rise a new Whitehall,
 While Jones and Boyle's united labours fall ;
 While Wren with sorrow to the grave descends,
 Gay dies unpensioned with a hundred friends ;
 Hibernian politics, O Swift, thy doom,
 And Pope's, translating ten whole years with Broome.

It was pretended, indeed, in a note, that no harm was meant to poor Broome by this delicate crucifixion of him. Yet he is under

stood to be the W. B. who, in the sixth chapter of the *Art of Sinking in Poetry*, entitled "Of the several kinds of geniuses in the Profound, and the marks and characters of each," heads the list of those described as "the Parrots, that repeat another's words in such a hoarse, odd voice, as makes them seem their own." And Broome, as Johnson has observed, is quoted more than once in the treatise as a proficient in the Bathos. Johnson adds, "I have been told that they were afterwards reconciled; but I am afraid their peace was without friendship." The couplet in the *Dunciad*, at least, was ultimately altered to —

Hibernian politics, O Swift! thy fate,
And Pope's, ten years to comment and translate.

Both Broome and Fenton published also various original compositions in verse, but nothing that the world has not very willingly let die. Fenton, however, although his contributions to the translation of the *Odyssey* neither harmonize well with the rest of the work, nor are to be commended taken by themselves, had more force and truth of poetical feeling than many of his verse-making contemporaries: one of his pieces, his ode to Lord Gower, is not unmusical, nor without a certain lyric glow and elevation.

Another small poet of this age is Ambrose Philips, whose Six Pastorals and tragedy of *The Distressed Mother* brought him vast reputation when they were first produced, but whose name has been kept in the recollection of posterity, perhaps, more by Pope's vindictive satire. An ironical criticism on the Pastorals in the *Guardian*, which took in Steele, who published it in the 40th number of that paper (for 27th April, 1713), was followed long afterwards by the unsparing ridicule of the *Treatise on the Art of Sinking in Poetry*, in which many of the illustrations are taken from the rhymes of poor Philips, who is held up in one place as the great master both of the infantine and the inane in style, and is elsewhere placed at the head of the clan of writers designated the Tortoises, who are described as slow and dull, and, like pastoral writers, delighting much in gardens: "they have," it is added, "for the most part, a fine embroidered shell, and underneath it a heavy lump."¹ Philips, in some of his later effusions, had gone, in

¹ According to Johnson, Gay's Pastorals were written at Pope's instigation, in ridicule of those of Philips; "but," it is added, "the effect of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to show them grovelling and

pursuit of what he conceived to be nature and simplicity, into a style of writing in short verses with not overmuch meaning, which his enemies parodied under the name of *Namby-pamby*. On the whole, however, he had no great reason to complain: if his poetry was laughed at by Pope and the Tories, it was both lauded, and very substantially rewarded, by the Whigs, who not only made Philips a lottery commissioner and a justice of peace for Westminster, but continued to push him forward till he became member for the county of Armagh in the Irish parliament, and afterwards judge of the Irish Prerogative Court. His success in life is alluded to in the same part of the *Dunciad* where Broome is brought in, — in the line,

Lo! Ambrose Philips is preferred for wit!

This *Namby-pamby* Philips, who was born in 1671 and lived till 1749, must not be confounded with John Philips, the author of the mock-heroic poem of *The Splendid Shilling* (published in 1703), and also of a poem in two books, in serious blank verse, entitled *Cider*, which has the reputation of being a good practical treatise on the brewing of that drink. John Philips, who published likewise a poem on the battle of Blenheim, in rivalry of Addison, was a Tory poet, and the affectation of simplicity, at least, cannot be laid to his charge, for what he aims at imitating or appropriating is not what is called the language of nature, but the swell and pomp of Milton. His serious poetry, however, is not worth much, at least as poetry. John Philips was born in 1676, and died in 1708.

Two or three more names may be merely mentioned. Leonard Welsted, who was born in 1689, and died in 1747, also, like Ambrose Philips, figures in the *Dunciad* and in the *Treatise of Martinus Scriblerus*, and produced a considerable quantity both of verse and prose, all now utterly forgotten. Thomas Yalden, who died a Doctor of Divinity in 1736, was a man of wit as well as the writer of a number of odes, elegies, hymns, fables, and other compositions in verse, of which one, entitled a *Hymn to Darkness*, is warmly praised by Dr. Johnson, who has given the author a place in his *Lives of the Poets*. In that work, too, may be found an account of Hammond, the author of the *Love Elegies*,

degraded. These Pastorals became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations, by those who had no interest in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical dispute." — *Life of Gay*

who died in 1742, in his thirty-second year, driven mad, and eventually sent to his grave, it is affirmed, by the inexorable cruelty of the lady, a Miss Dashwood, who, under the name of Delia, is the subject of his verses, and who, we are told, survived him for thirty-seven years without finding any one else either to marry or fall in love with her. The character, as Johnson remarks, that Hammond bequeathed her was not likely to attract courtship. Hammond's poetry, however, reflects but coldly the amorous fire which produced all this mischief; it is correct and graceful, but languid almost to the point of drowsiness. Gilbert West was born about 1705, and died in 1756: besides other verse, he published a translation of a portion of the odes of Pindar, which had long considerable reputation, but is not very Pindaric, though a smooth and sonorous performance. The one of his works that has best kept its ground is his prose tract entitled *Observations on the Resurrection*, a very able and ingenious disquisition, for which the University of Oxford made West a Doctor of Laws. Aaron Hill, who was born in 1685 and died in 1750, and who lies buried in Westminster Abbey, was at different periods of his life a traveller, a projector, a theatrical manager, and a literary man. He is the author of no fewer than seventeen dramatic pieces, original and translated, among which his versions of Voltaire's *Zaire* and *Merope* long kept possession of the stage. His poetry is in general both pompous and empty enough; and of all he has written, almost the only passage that is now much remembered is a satiric sketch of Pope, in a few lines, which have some imitative smartness, but scarcely any higher merit. Pope had offended him by putting him in the *Dunciad*, though the way in which he is mentioned is really complimentary to Hill. A good view of the character of Aaron Hill, who was an amiable and honorable man, although he overrated his own talents and importance, is to be got from the published correspondence of Richardson the novelist, in the first of the six volumes of which Hill's letters, extending from the year 1730 to 1748, fill about 130 pages. Mrs. Barbauld, by whom the collection was prepared for the press, was not aware that in publishing two of these letters of Hill's, those inserted at pp. 53 and 55, she was letting out a literary secret. The letters, as given by her, are mutilated; but they are in part the same with those published by Richardson himself at the head of the second edition of his *Pamela*, as from "a gentleman of the most distinguished taste and abilities," —

“an incomparable writer,” &c., in which both that work and its author are extolled in a way that must have left the most inordinate vanity nothing to desire. The laudation, however, as we see, was liberally repaid on Richardson’s part: if Pamela was unequalled among books, Pamela’s critic was incomparable among writers: there was a fair interchange between the parties. Perhaps, however, if it had been announced that the incomparable critic and fine writer was only Aaron Hill, the effect designed to be produced on the public mind might have been somewhat damaged.



COLLINS. SHENSTONE. GRAY.

By far the greatest of all the poetical writers of this age who, from the small quantity of their productions, or the brevity of each of them separately considered, are styled minor poets, is Collins. William Collins, born in 1720, died at the early age of thirty-six, and nearly all his poetry had been written ten years before his death. His volume of Odes, descriptive and allegorical, was published in 1746; his Oriental Eclogues had appeared some years before, while he was a student at Oxford. Only his unfinished Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders was found among his papers after his death, and it is dated 1749. The six or seven last years of his short life were clouded with a depression of spirits which made intellectual exertion impossible. All that Collins has written is full of imagination, pathos, and melody. The defect of his poetry in general is that there is too little of earth in it: in the purity and depth of its beauty it resembles the bright blue sky. Yet Collins had genius enough for anything; and in his ode entitled *The Passions*, he has shown with how strong a voice and pulse of humanity he could, when he chose, animate his verse, and what extensive and enduring popularity he could command.

Gray and Shenstone were both born before Collins, though they both outlived him, — Shenstone dying at the age of fifty in 1763, Gray at that of fifty-five in 1771. Shenstone is remembered for his Pastoral Ballad, his Schoolmistress, and an elegy or two; but there was very little potency of any kind in the music of his slender

oaten pipe. Gray's famous Elegy written in a Country Church-yard, his two Pindarics, his Ode on Eton College, his Long Story, some translations from the Norse and Welsh, and a few other short pieces, which make up his contributions to the poetry of his native language, are all admirable for their exquisite finish, nor is a true poetical spirit ever wanting, whatever may be thought of the form in which it is sometimes embodied. When his two celebrated compositions, *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*, appeared together in 1757, Johnson affirms that "the readers of poetry were at first content to gaze in mute amazement"; and, although the difficulty or impossibility of understanding them which was then, it seems, felt and confessed, is no longer complained of, much severe animadversion has been passed on them on other accounts. Still, whatever objections may be made to the artificial and unnatural character and over-elaboration of their style, the gorgeous brocade of the verse does not hide the true fire and fancy beneath, or even the real elegance of taste that has arrayed itself so ambitiously. But Gray often expresses himself, too, as naturally and simply in his poetry as he always does in his charming Letters and other writings in prose: the most touching of the verses in his Ode to Eton College, for instance, are so expressed; and in his Long Story he has given the happiest proof of his mastery over the lightest graces and gayeties of song.

YOUNG. THOMSON.

OF the remaining poetical names of this age the two most considerable are those of Young and Thomson. Dr. Edward Young, the celebrated author of the *Night Thoughts*, was born in 1681 and lived till 1765. He may be shortly characterized as, at least in manner, a sort of successor, under the reign of Pope and the new style established by him and Dryden, of the *Donnes* and the *Cowleys* of a former age. He had nothing, however, of *Donne's* subtle fancy, and as little of the gayety and playfulness that occasionally break out among the quibbles and contortions of *Cowley*. On the other hand, he has much more passion and pathos than *Cowley*, and, with less elegance, perhaps makes a nearer approach

in some of his greatest passages to the true sublime. But his style is radically an affected and false one; and of what force it seems to possess, the greater part is the result not of any real principle of life within it, but of mere strutting and straining. Nothing can be more unlike the poetry of the Night Thoughts than that of the Seasons. If Young is all art and effort, Thomson is all negligence and nature; so negligent, indeed, that he pours forth his unpremeditated song apparently without the thought ever occurring to him that he could improve it by any study or elaboration, any more than if he were some winged warbler of the woodlands, seeking and caring for no other listener except the universal air which the strain made vocal. As he is the poet of nature, so his poetry has all the intermingled rudeness and luxuriance of its theme. There is no writer who has drunk in more of the inmost soul of his subject. If it be the object of descriptive poetry to present us with pictures and visions the effect of which shall vie with that of the originals from which they are drawn, then Thomson is the greatest of all descriptive poets; for there is no other who surrounds us with so much of the truth of Nature, or makes us feel so intimately the actual presence and companionship of all her hues and fragrances. His spring blossoms and gives forth its beauty like a daisied meadow; and his summer landscapes have all the sultry warmth and green luxuriance of June; and his harvest fields and his orchards "hang the heavy head" as if their fruitage were indeed embrowning in the sun; and we see and hear the driving of his winter snows, as if the air around us were in confusion with their uproar. The beauty and purity of imagination, also, diffused over the melodious stanzas of the *Castle of Indolence*, make that poem one of the gems of the language. Thomson, whose *Winter*, the first portion of his *Seasons*, was published in 1726, died in 1748, in his forty-eighth year. Two years before had died his countryman, the Rev. Robert Blair, born in 1699, the author of the well-known poem in blank verse called *The Grave*, said to have been first published in 1743. It is remarkable for its masculine vigor of thought and expression, and for the imaginative solemnity with which it invests the most familiar truths; and it has always been one of our most popular religious poems.

ARMSTRONG. AKENSIDE. WILKIE. GLOVER.

AMONG the more eminent, again, of the second-rate writers of longer poems about this date, the latter part of the reign of George II., immediately after the death of Pope, may be noticed Dr. John Armstrong, who was born in Scotland in 1709, and whose *Art of Preserving Health*, published in 1744, has the rare merit of an original and characteristic style, distinguished by raciness and manly grace; and Dr. Mark Akenside, likewise a physician, the author, at the age of twenty-three, of *The Pleasures of Imagination*, published in the same year with Armstrong's poem, and giving another example of the treatment of a didactic subject in verse with great ingenuity and success. Akenside's rich, though diffuse, eloquence, and the store of fanciful illustration which he pours out, evidence a wonderfully full mind for so young a man. Neither Akenside nor Armstrong published any more verse after the accession of George III.; though the former lived till 1770, and the latter till 1779. Wilkie, the author of the rhyming epic called *The Epigoniad*, who was a Scotch clergyman and professor of natural philosophy at St. Andrews, would also appear from the traditionary accounts we have of him to have been a person of some genius as well as learning, though in composing his said epic he seems not to have gone much farther for his model or fount of inspiration than to the more sonorous passages of Pope's *Homer*. *The Epigoniad*, published in 1753, can scarcely be said to have in any proper sense of the word long survived its author, who died in 1772. Nor probably was Glover's blank verse epic of *Leonidas*, which appeared so early as 1737, much read when he himself passed away from among men, in the year 1785, at the age of seventy-four, although it had had a short day of extraordinary popularity, and is a performance of considerable rhetorical merit. Glover, who was a merchant of London, and distinguished as a city political leader on the liberal side (a circumstance which helped the temporary success of his epic), also wrote two tragedies: *Boadicea*, which was brought out in 1753; *Medea*, which appeared in 1761: they have the reputation of being cold and declamatory, and have both been long ago consigned to oblivion. He is best remembered for his ballad of *Admiral Hosier's Ghost*, which he wrote when he was seven-and-twenty, and was accus

tomed, it seems, to sing to the end of his life, — though Hannah More, who tells us she heard him sing it in his last days, is mistaken in saying that he was then past eighty.

SCOTTISH POETRY.

THOMSON was the first Scotsman who won any conspicuous place for himself in English literature. He had been preceded, indeed, in the writing of English by two or three others of his countrymen; by Drummond of Hawthornden, who has been mentioned in a preceding page, and his contemporaries — the Earl of Stirling, who is the author of several rhyming tragedies and other poems, well versified, but not otherwise of much poetical merit, published between 1603 and 1637, the Earl of Ancrum, by whom we have some sonnets and other short pieces, and Sir Robert Ayton, to whom is commonly attributed the well-known song, “I do confess thou’rt smooth and fair,” and who is also the author of a considerable number of other similar effusions, many of them of superior polish and elegance.¹ At a later date, too, Sir George Mackenzie, as already noticed, had written some English prose; as, indeed, Drummond had also done, besides his poetry. But none of these writers, belonging to the century that followed the union of the crowns, can be considered as having either acquired any high or diffused reputation in his own time, or retained much hold upon posterity. Even Drummond is hardly remembered as anything more than a respectable sonneteer; his most elaborate work, his prose *History of the Jameses*, has passed into as complete general oblivion as the tragedies and epics of Lord Stirling and the *Essays* of Sir George Mackenzie. If there be any other writer born in Scotland of earlier date than Thomson, who has still a living and considerable name among English authors, it is Bishop Burnet; but those of his literary performances by which he continues to be chiefly remembered, however important for the facts

¹ Large additions have been made to the previously known poetry of this writer by the discovery, some years ago, of a manuscript volume of his compositions, the contents of which have since been given to the world through the press by its possessor, Dr. J. Roger, of Denino, Fifeshire.

they contain, have scarcely any literary value. Leighton, the eloquent archbishop of Glasgow, although of Scotch descent, was himself born in London. The poetry of Thomson was the first produce of the next era, in which the two countries were really made one by their union under one legislature, and English became the literary language of the one part of the island as much as of the other.

The Scottish dialect, however, still continued to be employed in poetry. The great age of Scottish poetry, as we have seen, extends from about the beginning of the fifteenth to about the middle of the sixteenth century, the succession of distinguished names comprehending, among others, those of James I., and Henderson, and Holland, and Henry the Minstrel, and Gawin Douglas, and Dunbar, and Sir David Lyndsay.¹ It is remarkable that this space of a hundred and fifty years exactly corresponds to the period of the decay and almost extinction of poetry in England which intervenes between Chaucer and Surrey. On the other hand, with the revival of English poetry in the latter part of the sixteenth century the voice of Scottish song almost died away. The principal names of the writers of Scottish verse that occur for a hundred and fifty years after the death of Lyndsay are those of Alexander Scot, who was Lyndsay's contemporary, but probably survived him, and who is the author of several short amatory compositions, which have procured him from Pinkerton the designation of the Scottish Anacreon; Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington, who died at a great age in 1586, and is less memorable as a poet than as a collector and preserver of poetry, the two famous manuscript volumes in the Pepysian Library, in which are found the only existing copies of so many curious old pieces, having been compiled under his direction, although his own compositions, which have, with proper piety, been printed by the Maitland Club at Glasgow, are also of some bulk, and are creditable to his good feeling and good sense; Captain Alexander Montgomery, whose allegory of *The Cherry and the Slae*, published in 1597, is remarkable for the facility and flow of the language, and long continued a popular favorite, its peculiar metre (which, however, is of earlier origin than this poem) having been on several occasions adopted by Burns; and Alexander Hume, who was a clergyman and died in 1609, having published a volume of *Hymns, or Sacred*

¹ See vol. i. pp. 339-353, and 403-414.

Songs, in his native dialect, in 1599. Other Scottish poets of the sixteenth century, of whom nothing or next to nothing is known except the names, and a few short pieces attributed to some of them, are John Maitland Lord Thirlstane (second son of Sir Richard), Alexander Arbuthnot, who was a clergyman, Clapper-ton, Flemyng, John Blyth, Moffat, Fethy, Balnavis, Sempil, Norral, Allan Watson, George Bannatyne (the writer of the Bannatyne manuscript in the Advocates' Library), who was a canon of the cathedral of Moray, and Wedderburn, the supposed author of the *Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Songs*, of which the first edition in all probability appeared in the latter part of this century, and also, according to one theory, of *The Complaint of Scotland*, published in 1548.¹ But it is possible that some of these names may belong to a date anterior to that of Lyndsay. King James, also, before his accession to the English throne, published in Edinburgh two collections of Scottish verse by himself: the first, in 1585, entitled *The Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesy*; the other, in 1591, *His Majesty's Poetical Exercises at vacant hours*; but the royal inspiration is peculiarly weak and flat.

In the whole course, we believe, of the seventeenth century not even the name of a Scottish poet or versifier occurs. The next that appeared was Allan Ramsay, who was the contemporary of Thomson, and must be accounted the proper successor of Sir David Lyndsay, after the lapse of more than a century and a half. Ramsay was born in 1686, and lived till 1758. He belongs to the order of self-taught poets, his original profession having been that of a barber; his first published performance, his clever continuation of the old poem of *Christ's Kirk on the Green* (attributed by some to James I. of Scotland, by others to James V.) appeared in 1712; his *Gentle Shepherd*, in 1725; and he produced besides numerous songs and other shorter pieces from time to time. Ramsay's verse is in general neither very refined nor very imaginative, but it has always more or less in it of true poetic life. His lyrics, with all their frequent coarseness, are many of them full of rustic hilarity and humor; and his well-known pastoral, though its dramatic pretensions otherwise are slender enough, for nature and truth both in the characters and manners may rank with the happiest compositions of its class.

¹ See vol. i. p. 446.

To this same age of the revival of Scottish poetry also belongs nearly the whole of that remarkable body of national song known as the Jacobite minstrelsy, forming altogether as animated and powerful an expression of the popular feeling, in all its varieties of pathos, humor, indignation, and scorn, as has anywhere else been embodied in verse. It is almost all anonymous, too, as if it had actually sprung from the general heart of the people, or formed itself spontaneously in the air of the land. Probably some of the many other Scottish songs and ballads no authors of which are known may have been produced among the peasantry themselves even during the long interval of the first hundred years after the union of the crowns, to which there belongs no name of a Scottish poet, nor any poetry written or printed in that dialect. It is reasonable to suppose that Allan Ramsay must have had a line of predecessors of his own class, and that in this way the stream of native song flowed as it were underground, or hidden among the herbage, from its disappearance with Lyndsay till it reëmerged in him. But it was the exile of the old royal family, followed by the two successive romantic attempts of their adherents to restore them to the throne, that first blew again into a blaze the fire of poetry that lived in the national heart, and enabled it to break through the rigorous incrustment under which it had been oppressed and all but extinguished ever since the Reformation. This was the first decided revolt of the spirit of poetry against that of presbytery.

And to the earlier part of the last century, too, it would appear, we are in all probability to assign the best and most celebrated of those tragic ballads of Scotland which ever since the publication of Percy's *Reliques*, in which some of them were inserted, have engaged so much attention, and, more especially since they have been more carefully collected and illustrated by Sir Walter Scott and succeeding editors, have been generally held to constitute the chief glory of the ancient popular minstrelsy of that country. Of one of them, indeed, and that perhaps the most renowned of them all, the ballad of *Hardyknute*, the alleged antiquity was questioned very early after its first appearance in Percy's work. Even Pinkerton, who reprinted it in his *Select Ballads* (1781), and is indignant that any one should suppose it to be of more recent origin than the fifteenth century, admits that "at the same time the language must convince us that many strokes have been bestowed by modern hands." In our day the genuineness of this production as

a relique of antiquity has been almost universally given up; Scott himself, although he continued to the end of his life to admire it enthusiastically as an imitation, admits it in the Introduction to his *Minstrelsy of the Border* to be "evidently modern." But in this case there was positive external evidence of the recent production of the poem. If doubts were ever expressed in regard to any of the other ballads, they were founded solely on some expressions which were indisputably modern; and any suspicions thence arising were held to apply only to the particular verses or lines in which the non-antique phraseology occurred. These were corruptions, or possibly interpolations; that was all. But the question has lately been taken up by Mr. Chambers, and placed in quite a new light.¹ Mr. Chambers has not only, by a much more thorough examination of the principal ballads than they had ever before been subjected to, shown to how great an extent their language is only an imitation of the antique; he has further, by comparing them with one another, detected such a similarity, and such a pervading peculiarity of character, in all of them, in respect both of the diction and of the manner in which the subject is treated in each, as goes far to make it probable that they are all the production of one age and even of one and the same author. His conclusion is, that Sir Patrick Spence, Gill Maurice, Young Waters, Fause Foudrage, and others, were in all likelihood composed, either entirely or in some instances, it may be, on the basis of a comparatively rude and slight original, by the same Elizabeth Lady Wardlaw (wife of Sir Henry Wardlaw, Baronet, of Pitreavie, in Fifeshire, and daughter of Sir Charles Halket, Baronet, of Pitfirran, in the same county), to whom it has long been generally acknowledged that we owe Hardyknute, and who died, at the age of fifty, so lately as in 1727. Mr. David Laing had, in a note to the reprint of Johnson's *Scots' Musical Museum* (1839), intimated a suspicion that Hardyknute and Sir Patrick Spence were by the same author. But the newest and perhaps the most striking part of Mr. Chambers's argument is that in which he urges, in confutation of the alleged antiquity of these and the other ballads, not only the traces which they everywhere present of the fashionable poetical phraseology of the early part of the last century, but the remarkable fact that we have not a particle of positive evidence for their existence

¹ *Edinburgh Papers*, by Robert Chambers, F. R. S. E., &c. *The Romantic Scottish Ballads: their Epoch and Authorship*. 8vo, Edin. 1859, pp. 46.

before that date — no copies of them either in print or in manuscript, nor so much as a mention of or allusion to any one of them in our earlier literature. “They are not,” it is forcibly observed, “in the style of old literature. They contain no references to old literature. As little does old literature contain any references to them.” This is the more extraordinary when we consider the vast amount of attention they have attracted since they were first brought forward by Percy in his *Reliques*. They may not very unreasonably be thought, Mr. Chambers remarks, to have done more to make the popularity of that collection than all its other contents. It has been common to attribute to Percy’s book a large share in the new inspiration which soon after its appearance began to show itself in our poetry. Mr. Chambers winds up with a more pointed deduction. “If,” he says, “there be any truth or force in this speculation, I shall be permitted to indulge in the idea that a person lived a hundred years before Scott, who, with his feeling for Scottish history, and the features of the past generally, constructed out of these materials a similar romantic literature. In short, Scotland appears to have had a Scott a hundred years before the actual person so named. And we may well believe that, if we had not had the first, we either should not have had the second, or he would have been something considerably different, for, beyond question, Sir Walter’s genius was fed and nurtured on the ballad literature of his native country. From his *Old Mortality* and *Waverley* back to his *Lady of the Lake* and *Marmion*; from these to his *Lay of the Last Minstrel*; from that to his *Eve of St. John* and *Glenfinlas*; and from these, again, to the ballads which he collected, mainly the produce (as I surmise) of an individual precursor, is a series of steps easily traced, and which no one will dispute. Much significance there is, indeed, in his own statement that *Hardyknute* was the first poem he ever learned, and the last he should forget. Its author — if my suspicion be correct — was his literary foster-mother, and we probably owe the direction of his genius, and all its fascinating results, primarily to her.”

THE NOVELISTS, — RICHARDSON, FIELDING, SMOLLETT.

A VERY remarkable portion of the literature of the middle of the last century is the body of prose fiction, the authors of which we familiarly distinguish as the modern English novelists, and which in some respects may be said still to stand apart from everything in the language produced either before or since. If there be any writer entitled to step in before Richardson and Fielding in claiming the honor of having originated the English novel, it is Daniel Defoe. But, admirable as Defoe is for his inventive power and his art of narrative, he can hardly be said to have left us any diversified picture of the social life of his time, and he is rather a great *raconteur* than a novelist, strictly and properly so called. He identifies himself, indeed, as perfectly as any writer ever did, with the imaginary personages whose adventures he details; — but still it is adventures he deals with rather than either manners or characters. It may be observed that there is seldom or ever anything peculiar or characteristic in the language of his heroes and heroines: some of them talk, or write, through whole volumes, but all in the same style; in fact, as to this matter, every one of them is merely a repetition of Defoe himself. Nor even in professed dialogue is he happy in individualizing his characters by their manner of expressing themselves; there may be the employment occasionally of certain distinguishing phrases, but the adaptation of the speech to the speaker seldom goes much beyond such mere mechanical artifices; the heart and spirit do not flash out as they do in nature; we may remember Robinson Crusoe's man Friday by his broken English, but it is in connection with the fortunes of their lives only, of the full stream of incident and adventure upon which they are carried along, of the perils and perplexities in which they are involved, and the shifts they are put to, that we think of Colonel Jacque, or Moll Flanders, or even of Robinson Crusoe himself. What character they have to us is all gathered from the circumstances in which they are placed; very little or none of it from either the manner or the matter of their discourses. Even their conduct is for the most part the result of circumstances; any one of them acts, as well as speaks, very nearly as any other would have done similarly situated. Great and original as he is in his proper line, and admirable as the fictions with which he has en-

riched our literature are for their other merits, Defoe has created no character which lives in the national mind — no Squire Western, or Trulliber, or Parson Adams, or Strap, or Pipes, or Trunnion, or Lesmahago, or Corporal Trim, or Uncle Toby. He has made no attempt at any such delineation. It might be supposed that a writer able to place himself and his readers so completely in the midst of the imaginary scenes he describes would have excelled in treating a subject dramatically. But, in truth, his genius was not at all dramatic. With all his wonderful power of interesting us by the air of reality he throws over his fictions, and carrying us along with him whithersoever he pleases, he has no faculty of passing out of himself in the dramatic spirit, of projecting himself out of his own proper nature and being into those of the creations of his brain. However strong his conception was of other things, he had no strong conception of character. Besides, with all his imagination and invention, he had little wit and no humor — no remarkable skill in any other kind of representation except merely that of the plain literal truth of things. Vivid and even creative as his imagination was, it was still not poetical. It looked through no atmosphere of ideal light at anything; it saw nothing adorned, beautified, elevated above nature; its gift was to see the reality, and no more. Its pictures, therefore, partake rather of the character of fac-similes than that of works of art in the true sense.

On turning our eyes from his productions to those either of Fielding or Richardson, we feel at once the spell of quite another sort of inventive or creative power. Yet no two writers could well be more unlike than the two we have mentioned are to one another both in manner and in spirit. Intellectually and morally, by original constitution of mind as well as in the circumstances of their training and situation, the two great contemporary novelists stood opposed the one to the other in the most complete contrast. Fielding, a gentleman by birth, and liberally educated, had been a writer for the public from the time he was twenty: Richardson, who had nearly attained that age before Fielding came into the world (the one was born in 1689, the other in 1707), having begun life as a mechanic, had spent the greater part of it as a tradesman, and had passed his fiftieth year before he became an author. Yet, after they had entered upon the same new field of literature almost together, they found themselves rivals upon that ground for

as long as either continued to write. To Richardson certainly belongs priority of date as a novelist: the first part of his *Pamela* was published in 1740, the conclusion in 1741; and Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, originally conceived with the design of turning Richardson's work into ridicule, appeared in 1742. Thus, as if their common choice of the same species of writing, and their antipathies of nature and habit, had not been enough to divide them, it was destined that the two founders of the new school of fiction should begin their career by having a personal quarrel. For their works, notwithstanding all the remarkable points of dissimilarity between those of the one and those of the other, must still be considered as belonging to the same school or form of literary composition, and that a form which they had been the first to exemplify in our language. Unlike as *Joseph Andrews* was to *Pamela*, yet the two resembled each other more than either did any other English work of fiction. They were still our two first novels properly so called — our two first artistically constructed epics of real life. And the identity of the species of fictitious narrative cultivated by the two writers became more apparent as its character was more completely developed by their subsequent publications, and each proceeded in proving its capabilities in his own way, without reference to what had been done by the other. Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* appeared in 1743; Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe* — the greatest of his works — was given to the world in 1748; and the next year the greatest birth of Fielding's genius — his *Tom Jones* — saw the light. Finally, Fielding's *Amelia* was published in 1751; and Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* in 1753. Fielding died at Lisbon in 1754, at the age of forty-seven; Richardson survived till 1761, but wrote nothing more.

Meanwhile, however, a third writer had presented himself upon the same field — Smollett, whose *Roderick Random* had appeared in 1748, his *Peregrine Pickle* in 1751, and his *Count Fathom* in 1754, when the energetic Scotsman was yet only in his thirty-fourth year. His *Sir Launcelot Greaves* followed in 1762, and his *Humphrey Clinker* in 1771, in the last year of the author's active life. Our third English novelist is as much a writer *sui generis* as either of his two predecessors, as completely distinguished from each of them in the general character of his genius as they are from each other. Of the three, Richardson had evidently by far the richest natural soil of mind; his defects sprung

from deficiency of cultivation ; his power was his own in the strictest sense ; not borrowed from books, little aided even by experience of life, derived almost solely from introspection of himself and communion with his own heart. He alone of the three could have written what he did without having himself witnessed and lived through the scenes and characters described, or something like them which only required to be embellished and heightened, and otherwise artistically treated, in order to form an interesting and striking fictitious representation. His fertility of invention, in the most comprehensive meaning of that term, is wonderful, — supplying him on all occasions with a copious stream both of incident and of thought that floods the page, and seems as if it might so flow on and diffuse itself forever. Yet it must be confessed that he has delineated for us rather human nature than human life — rather the heart and its universal passions, as modified merely by a few broad distinctions of temperament, of education, of external circumstances, than those subtler idiosyncrasies which constitute what we properly call character. Many characters, no doubt, there are set before us in his novels, very admirably drawn and discriminated : Pamela, her parents, Mr. B., Mrs. Jewkes, Clarissa, Lovelace, Miss Howe, Sir Charles Grandison, Miss Byron, Clementina, are all delineations of this description for the most part natural, well worked out, and supported by many happy touches ; but (with the exception, perhaps, of the last-mentioned) they can scarcely be called original conceptions of a high order, creations at once true to nature and new to literature ; nor have they added to that population of the world of fiction among which every reader of books has many familiar acquaintances hardly less real to his fancy and feelings than any he has met with in the actual world, and for the most part much more interesting. That which, besides the story, interests us in Richardson's novels, is not the characters of his personages but their sentiments, — not their modes but their motives of action, — the anatomy of their hearts and inmost natures, which is unfolded to us with so elaborate an inquisition and such matchless skill. Fielding, on the other hand, has very little of this, and Smollett still less. They set before us their pictures of actual life in much the same way as life itself would have set them before us if our experience had chanced to bring us into contact with the particular situations and personages delineated ; we see, commonly, merely what we should have seen as lookers-on,

not in the particular confidence of any of the figures in the scene there are they all, acting or talking according to their various circumstances, habits, and humors, and we are welcome to look at them and listen to them as attentively as we please ; but, if we want to know anything more of them than what is visible to all the world, we must find it out for ourselves in the best way we can, for neither they nor the author will ordinarily tell us a word of it. What both these writers have given us in their novels is for the most part their own actual experience of life, irradiated, of course, by the lights of fancy and genius, and so made something much more brilliant and attractive than it was in the reality, but still in its substance the product not of meditation but of observation chiefly. Even Fielding, with all his wit, or at least pregnancy of thought and style, — for the quality in his writings to which we allude appears to be the result rather of elaboration than of instinctive perception, — would probably have left us nothing much worth preserving in the proper form of a novel, if he had not had his diversified practical knowledge of society to draw upon, and especially his extensive and intimate acquaintance with the lower orders of all classes, in painting whom he is always greatest and most at home. Within that field, indeed, he is the greatest of all our novelists. Yet he has much more refinement of literary taste than either Smollett or Richardson ; and, indeed, of the works of all the three, his alone can be called classical works in reference to their formal character. Both his style and the construction of his stories display a care and artifice altogether unknown to the others, both of whom, writing on without plan or forethought, appear on all occasions to have made use alike of the first words and the first incidents that presented themselves. Smollett, a practised writer for the press, had the command, indeed, of a style the fluency of which is far from being without force, or rhetorical parade either ; but it is animated by no peculiar expressiveness, by no graces either of art or of nature. His power consists in the cordiality of his conception and the breadth and freedom of his delineation of the humorous, both in character and in situation. The feeling of the humorous in Smollett always overpowers, or at least has a tendency to overpower, the merely satirical spirit ; which is not the case with Fielding, whose humor has generally a sly vein of satire running through it, even when it is most gay and genial.

STERNE.

BUT he to whom belongs the finest spirit of whim among all our writers of this class is the immortal author of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. Sterne, born in Ireland in 1713, had already published one or two unregarded sermons when the first and second volumes of his most singular novel were brought out at York in the year 1759. The third and fourth volumes followed in 1761; the fifth and sixth in 1762; the seventh and eighth not till 1765; the ninth in 1767. The six volumes of his *Yorick's Sermons* had also come out in pairs in the intervals; his *Sentimental Journey* appeared in 1768; and his death took place the same year. Sterne has been charged with imitation and plagiarism; but surely originality is the last quality that can be denied to him. To dispute his possession of that is much the same as it would be to deny that the sun is luminous because some spots have been detected upon its surface. If Sterne has borrowed or stolen some few things from other writers, at least no one ever had a better right to do so in virtue of the amount that there is in his writings of what is really his own. If he has been much indebted to any predecessor, it is to Rabelais; but, except in one or two detached episodes, he has wholly eschewed the extravagance and grotesqueness in which the genius of Rabelais loves to disport itself, and the tenderness and humanity that pervade his humor are quite unlike anything in the mirth of Rabelais. There is not much humor, indeed, anywhere out of Shakspeare and Cervantes which resembles or can be compared with that of Sterne. It would be difficult to name any writer but one of these two who could have drawn *Uncle Toby* or *Trim*. Another common mistake about Sterne is, that the mass of what he has written consists of little better than nonsense or rubbish, — that his beauties are but grains of gold glittering here and there in a heap of sand, or, at most, rare spots of green scattered over an arid waste. Of no writer could this be said with less correctness. Whatever he has done is wrought with the utmost care, and to the highest polish and perfection. With all his apparent caprices of manner, his language is throughout the purest idiomatic English; nor is there, usually, a touch in any of his pictures that could be spared without injury to the effect. And, in his great work, how completely brought out, how exquisitely

finished, is every figure, from Uncle Toby, and Brother Shandy, and Trim, and Yorick, down to Dr. Slop, and Widow Wadman, and Mrs. Bridget, and Obadiah himself! Who would resign any one of them, or any part of any one of them?

GOLDSMITH.

It has been observed, with truth, that, although Richardson has on the whole the best claim to the title of inventor of the modern English novel, he never altogether succeeded in throwing off the inflation of the French romance, and representing human beings in the true light and shade of human nature. Undoubtedly the men and women of Fielding and Smollett are of more genuine flesh and blood than the elaborate heroes and heroines who figure in his pages. But both Fielding and Smollett, notwithstanding the fidelity as well as spirit of their style of drawing from real life, have for the most part confined themselves to some two or three departments of the wide field of social existence, rather abounding in strongly marked peculiarities of character than furnishing a fair representation of the common national mind and manners. And Sterne also, in his more ærial way, deals rather with the oddities and quaintnesses of opinion and habit that are to be met with among his countrymen than with the broad general course of our English way of thinking and living. Our first genuine novel of domestic life is Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, written in 1761, when its author, born in Ireland in 1728, was as yet an obscure doer of all work for the booksellers, but not published till 1766, when his name had already obtained celebrity by his poem of *The Traveller*. Assuming the grace of confession, or the advantage of the first word, Goldsmith himself introduces his performance by observing, that there are a hundred faults in it; adding, that a hundred things might be said to prove them beauties. The case is not exactly as he puts it: the faults may have compensating beauties, but are incontrovertibly faults. Indeed, if we look only to what is more superficial or external in the work, to the construction and conduct of the story, and even to much of the exhibition of manners and character, its faults are unexampled and astounding

Never was there a story put together in such an inartificial, thoughtless, blundering way. It is little better than such a "concatenation accordingly" as satisfies one in a dream. It is not merely that everything is brought about by such sudden apparitions and transformations as only happen at the call of Harlequin's wand. Of this the author himself seems to be sensible, from a sort of defence which he sets up in one place: "Nor can I go on," he observes, after one of his sharp turns, "without a reflection on those accidental meetings which, though they happen every day, seldom excite our surprise but upon some extraordinary occasion. To what a fortuitous occurrence do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives! How many seeming accidents must unite before we can be clothed or fed! The peasant must be disposed to labor, the shower must fall, the wind fill the merchant's sail, or numbers must want the usual supply." But, in addition to this, probability, or we might almost say possibility, is violated at every step with little more hesitation or compunction than in a fairy tale. Nothing happens, nobody acts, as things would happen, and as men and women would naturally act, in real life. Much of what goes on is entirely incredible and incomprehensible. Even the name of the book seems an absurdity. The Vicar leaves Wakefield in the beginning of the third chapter, and, it must be supposed, resigns his vicarage, of which we hear no more; yet the family is called the family of Wakefield throughout. This is of a piece with the famous bull that occurs in the ballad given in a subsequent chapter:—

The dew, the blossoms on the tree,
 With charms *inconstant* shine;
 Their charms were his, but, woe to me,
 Their *constancy* was mine.

But why does the vicar, upon losing his fortune, give up his vicarage? Why, in his otherwise reduced circumstances, does he prefer a curacy of fifteen pounds to a vicarage of thirty-five? Are we expected to think this quite a matter of course (there is not a syllable of explanation), upon the same principle on which we are called upon to believe that he was overwhelmed with surprise at finding his old friend Wilmot not to be a monogamist?—the said friend being at that time actually courting a fourth wife. And it is all in the same strain. The whole story of the two Thornhills,

the uncle and nephew, is a heap of contradictions and absurdities. Sir William Thornhill is universally known; and yet in his assumed character of Burchell, without even, as far as appears, any disguise of his person, he passes undetected in a familiar intercourse of months with the tenantry of his own estate. If, indeed, we are not to understand something even beyond this — that, while all the neighbors know him to be Sir William, the Primroses alone never learn that fact, and still continue to take him for Mr. Burchell. But what, after all, is Burchell's real history? Nothing that is afterwards stated confirms or explains the intimation he is made unintentionally to let fall in one of the commencing chapters, about his early life. How, by the by, does the vicar come to know, a few chapters afterwards, that Burchell has really been telling his own story in the account he had given of Sir William Thornhill? Compare chapters third and sixth. But, take any view we will, the uncle's treatment of his nephew remains unaccounted for. Still more unintelligible is his conduct in his self-adopted capacity of lover of one of the vicar's daughters, and guardian of the virtue and safety of both. The plainest, easiest way of saving them from all harm and all danger stares him in the face, and for no reason that can be imagined he leaves them to their fate. As for his accidental rescue of Sophia afterwards, the whole affair is only to be matched for wildness and extravagance in Jack the Giant-killer or some other of that class of books. It is beyond even the Doctor of Divinity appearing at the fair with his horse to sell, and in the usual forms putting him through all his paces. But it is impossible to enumerate all the improbabilities with which the story is filled. Every scene, without any exception, in which the squire appears involves something out of nature or which passes understanding; — his position in reference to his uncle in the first place, the whole of his intercourse with the clergyman's family, his dining with them attended by his two women and his troop of servants in their one room, at other times his association there with young farmer Williams (suddenly provided by the author when wanted as a suitor for Olivia), the unblushing manner in which he makes his infamous proposals, the still more extraordinary indulgence with which they are forgiven and forgotten, or rather forgotten without his ever having asked or dreamt of asking forgiveness, all his audacious ruffianism in his attempts to possess himself of the two sisters at once, and finally, and above all, his defence of

himself to his uncle at their meeting in the prison, which surely out-rants anything ever before attempted in decent prose or rhyme. Nor must that superlative pair of lovers, the vicar's eldest son George and Miss Arabella Wilmot, be overlooked, with the singularly cool and easy way in which they pass from the most violent affection to the most entire indifference, and on the lady's part even transference of hand and heart to another, and back again as suddenly to mutual transport and confidence. If Goldsmith intended George for a representation of himself (as their adventures are believed to have been in some respects the same), we should be sorry to think the likeness a good one; for he is the most disagreeable character in the book. His very existence seems to have been entirely forgotten by his family, and by the author, for the first three years after he left home; and the story would have been all the better if he had never chanced to turn up again, or to be thought of, at all. Was ever such a letter read as the one he is made in duty and affection to write to his father in the twenty-eighth chapter! Yet there is that in the book which makes all this comparatively of little consequence: the inspiration and vital power of original genius, the charm of true feeling, some portion of the music of the great hymn of nature made audible to all hearts. Notwithstanding all its improbabilities, the story not only amuses us while we read, but takes root in the memory and affections as much almost as any story that was ever written. In truth, the critical objections to which it is obnoxious hardly affect its real merits and the proper sources of its interest. All of it that is essential lies in the development of the characters of the good vicar and his family, and they are one and all admirably brought out. He himself, simple and credulous, but also learned and clear-headed, so guileless and affectionate, sustaining so well all fortunes, so great both in suffering and in action, altogether so unselfish and noble-minded; his wife, of a much coarser grain, with her goose-berry-wine, and her little female vanities and schemes of ambition, but also made respectable by her love and reverence for her husband, her pride in, if not affection for, her children, her talent of management and housewifery, and the fortitude and resignation with which she too bears her part in their common calamities; the two girls, so unlike and yet so sister-like; the inimitable Moses, with his black ribbon, and his invincibility in argument and bargain-making; nor to be omitted the chubby-cheeked rogue little

Bill, and the "honest veteran" Dick; the homely happiness of that fireside, upon which worldly misfortune can cast hardly a passing shadow; their little concerts, their dances; neighbor Flam-borough's two rosy daughters, with their red top-knots; Moses's speculation in the green spectacles, and the vicar's own subsequent adventure (though running somewhat into the extravaganza style) with the same venerable arch-rogue, "with grey hair, and no flaps to his pocket-holes"; the immortal family picture; and, like a sudden thunderbolt falling in the sunshine, the flight of poor passion-driven Olivia, her few distracted words as she stepped into the chaise, "O! what will my poor papa do when he knows I am undone!" and the heart-shivered old man's cry of anguish—"Now, then, my children, go and be miserable; for we shall never enjoy one hour more";—these, and other incidents and touches of the same kind, are the parts of the book that are remembered; all the rest drops off, as so much mere husk, or other extraneous enwrapment, after we have read it; and out of these we reconstruct the story, if we will have one, for ourselves, or, what is better, rest satisfied with the good we have got, and do not mind though so much truth and beauty will not take the shape of a story, which is after all the source of pleasure even in a work of fiction which is of the lowest importance, for it scarcely lasts after the first reading. Part of the charm of this novel of Goldsmith's too consists in the art of writing which he has displayed in it. The style, always easy, transparent, harmonious, and expressive, teems with felicities in the more heightened passages. And, finally, the humor of the book is all good-humor. There is scarcely a touch of ill-nature or even of satire in it from beginning to end—nothing of either acrimony or acid. Johnson has well characterized Goldsmith in his epitaph as *sive risus essent movendi sive lacrymæ, affectuum potens at lenis dominator*—a ruler of our affections, and mover alike of our laughter and our tears, as gentle as he is prevailing. With all his lovable qualities, he had also many weaknesses and pettinesses of personal character; but his writings are as free from any ingredient of malignity, either great or small, as those of any man. As the author, too, of the Traveller and the Deserted Village, published in 1765 and 1771, Goldsmith, who lived till 1774, holds a distinguished place among the poetical writers of the middle portion of the last century. He had not the skyeey fancy of his predecessor Collins, but there is an earnestness

and cordiality in his poetry which the school of Pope, to which, in its form at least, it belongs, had scarcely before reached, and which make it an appropriate prelude to the more fervid song that was to burst forth among us in another generation.

CHURCHILL.

BUT perhaps the writer who, if not by what he did himself, yet by the effects of his example, gave the greatest impulse to our poetry at this time, was Churchill. Charles Churchill, born in 1731, published his first poem, *The Rosciad*, in 1761; and the rest of his pieces, his *Apology to the Critical Reviewers*—his epistle to his friend Lloyd, entitled *Night—The Ghost*, eventually extended to four Books—*The Prophecy of Famine*—his *Epistle to Hogarth*—*The Conference*—*The Duellist*—*The Author*—*Gotham*, in three Books—*The Candidate*—*The Farewell*—*The Times*—*Independence*—all within the next three years and a half. He was suddenly carried off by an attack of fever in November, 1764. If we put aside Thomson, Churchill, after all deductions, may be pronounced, looking to the quantity as well as the quality of his productions, to be the most considerable figure that appears in our poetry in the half-century from Pope to Cowper. But that is, perhaps, rather to say little for the said half-century than much for Churchill. All that he wrote being not only upon topics of the day, but addressed to the most sensitive or most excited passions of the mob of readers, he made an immense impression upon his contemporaries, which, however, is now worn very faint. Some looked upon him as Dryden come to life again, others as a greater than Dryden. As for Pope, he was generally thought to be quite outshone or eclipsed by the new satirist. Yet Churchill, in truth, with great rhetorical vigor and extraordinary fluency, is wholly destitute of either poetry or wit of any high order. He is only, at the most, a better sort of Cleveland, not certainly having more force or pungency than that old writer, but a freer flow and broader sweep in his satire. Of the true fervor and fusing power of Dryden he has nothing, any more than he has of what is best and most characteristic in Pope, to whose wit his stands in the relation or

contrast of a wooden pin to a lancet. The most successful ten continuous lines he ever wrote in the same style are certainly not worth the ten worst of Pope's. But, indeed, he scarcely has anywhere ten lines, or two lines, without a blemish. In reading Pope, the constant feeling is that, of its kind, nothing could be better, in reading Churchill, we feel that nearly everything might be better, that, if the thought is good, the setting is defective, but generally that, whatever there may be of merit in either, there are flaws in both. Instead of there being nothing to be mended, everything might be mended. The ore, indeed, is hardly ever purified or properly extracted from the clay and gravel; in no other poetry is there such an intermixture of the prosaic. But much even of the poetry is nothing more than an echo — an unscrupulous appropriation and parroting — of the phrases of preceding writers, often of such as had become universally current and familiar. What best suited Churchill was, for the most part, whatever came readiest to hand. Yet there was a fine animal spirit about him; and, as we have said, his example probably contributed a good deal to give more freedom and cordiality to our poetry. But it was much as the adventurousness of a drunken man may sometimes inspire those who are sober. Cowper, who was at school with Churchill, and had a high admiration of his writings (some of which, however, that he praises most he can hardly be supposed to have looked into from the time of their first appearance), seems to have made him his model in some respects.¹



FALCONER. BEATTIE. ANSTEY. J. H. STEVENSON. MASON.

To the present date belongs Falconer's pleasing descriptive poem, *The Shipwreck*, the truth, nature, and pathos of which, without much imaginative adornment, have made it a general favorite. It was first published in 1762, and its author, who was a native of Scotland, was lost at sea in 1769, in his thirty-ninth

¹ For a much higher estimate of Churchill's poetry than we have been able to form the reader may be referred to an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, No. elxiii., which is especially interesting for its eloquent and generous survey of the life of Churchill. See also Southey's *Life of Cowper*, vol. i. pp. 45-105.

year. Another poem of this age, by a countryman of Falconer's, is Beattie's *Minstrel*, the first book of which was published in 1770, the second in 1774. The *Minstrel* is an harmonious and eloquent composition, glowing with poetical sentiment; but its inferiority in the highest poetical qualities may be felt by comparing it with Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, which is perhaps the other work in the language which it most nearly resembles, but which yet it resembles much in the same way as gilding does solid gold, or as colored water might be made to resemble wine. Everybody knows that, besides this and other pieces in verse, Beattie, who survived till 1803, wrote an *Essay on Truth*, and some other prose works, which everybody has long given up reading. The *New Bath Guide*, by Anstey, who lived till 1805, and wrote a considerable quantity of more verse, may be noticed as another of the poetical productions of this time which for a season enjoyed great popularity, though now neglected. It first appeared in 1766, and the edition before us, printed in 1772, is the eighth. The *New Bath Guide* does not rise or aspire to rise above a rattling vivacity, and has been far surpassed in brilliancy by later productions in the same style; but it is entitled to be remembered as the earliest successful attempt of its class. Among the lighter versifiers of this time may be mentioned John Hall Stevenson, the author of the *Crazy Tales*, and other collections of satiric pieces, which are impregnated by a much airier spirit of wit and humor than those of Anstey. We may here also notice the celebrated *Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers*, which, with several other effusions in the same vein, appeared in 1773, and is now known to have been, what it was always suspected to be, the composition of Gray's friend, Mason, who commenced poet so early as 1748 by the publication of a satire on the University of Oxford, entitled *Isis*, and afterwards produced his tragedies of *Elfrida* in 1752 and *Caractacus* in 1759, and the four Books of his *English Garden* in 1772, 1777, 1779, and 1781, besides a number of odes and other shorter pieces, some of them not till towards the close of the century. Mason, who died, at the age of seventy-two, in 1797, enjoyed in his day a great reputation, which is now become very small. His satiric verse is in the manner of Pope, but without the wit; and the staple of the rest of his poetry too is mostly words.

THE WARTONS. PERCY. CHATTERTON. MACPHERSON.

THERE is much more of fancy and true poetry, though less sound and less pretension, in the compositions of Thomas Warton, who first made himself known by a spirited reply to Mason's *Isis* in 1749, when he was only a young man of twenty-one, and afterwards produced many short pieces, all evidencing a genuine poetic eye and taste. Thomas Warton, however, who lived till 1790, chiefly owes the place he holds in our literature to his prose works — his *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, his edition of the *Minor Poems of Milton*, and, above all, his admirable *History of English Poetry*, which, unfinished as it is, is still perhaps our greatest work in the department of literary history. Of the three quarto volumes the first appeared in 1774, the second in 1778, the last in 1781. Dr. Joseph Warton, the elder brother of Thomas, is also the writer of some agreeable verses; but the book by which his name will live is his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, the first volume of which was published, anonymously, in 1756, the second not till 1782. He died in 1800, in his seventy-eighth year.

The Wartons may be regarded as the founders of a new school of poetic criticism in this country, which, romantic rather than classical in its spirit (to employ a modern nomenclature), and professing to go to nature for its principles instead of taking them on trust from the practice of the Greek and Roman poets, or the cautions of their commentators, assisted materially in guiding as well as strengthening the now reviving love for our older national poetry. But perhaps the publication which was as yet at once the most remarkable product of this new taste, and the most effective agent in its diffusion, was Percy's celebrated *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, which first appeared in 1765. The reception of this book was the same that what is natural and true always meets with when brought into fair competition with the artificial; that is to say, when the latter is no longer new any more than the former: —

“As one who, long in populous city pent,
 Forth issuing on a summer's morn to breathe
 Among the pleasant villages and farms
 Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight,

The smell of grain, or teded grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound ;”

such pleasure took the reader of those rude old ballads in their simplicity, directness, and breezy freshness and force, thus suddenly coming upon him after being sated with mere polish and ornament And connected with the same matter is the famous imposture of Rowley's poems, by which a boy of seventeen, the marvellous Chatterton, deceived in the first instance a large portion of the public, and, after the detection of the fraud, secured to himself a respectable place among the original poets of his country. Chatterton, who terminated his existence by his own hand in August, 1770, produced the several imitations of ancient English poetry which he attributed to Thomas Rowley, a monk of the fifteenth century, in that and the preceding year. But this was the age of remarkable forgeries of this description; Chatterton's poems of Rowley having been preceded, and perhaps in part suggested, by Macpherson's poems of Ossian. The first specimens of the latter were published in 1760, under the title of *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*, collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language; and they immediately excited both an interest and a controversy, neither the one nor the other of which has quite died away even to the present hour. One circumstance, which has contributed to keep up the dispute about Ossian so much longer than that about Rowley, no doubt, is, that there was some small portion of truth mixed up with Macpherson's deception, whereas there was none at all in Chatterton's; but the Ossianic poetry, after all that has been said about its falsehood of style and substance as well as of pretension, making it out to be thus a double lie, must still have some qualities wonderfully adapted to allure the popular taste. Both Chatterton and Macpherson wrote a quantity of modern English verse in their own names; but nothing either did in this way was worth much: they evidently felt most at ease in their masks.

DRAMATIC WRITERS.

THE dramatic literature of the earlier part of the reign of George III. is very voluminous, but consists principally of comedies

and farces of modern life, all in prose. Home, indeed, the author of *Douglas*, which came out in 1757, followed that first successful effort by about half a dozen other attempts in the same style, the last of which, entitled *Alfred*, was produced in 1778; but they were all failures. Horace Walpole's great tragedy, the *Mysterious Mother*, although privately printed in 1768, was never acted, and was not even published till many years after. The principal writers whose productions occupied the stage were Goldsmith, Garrick, and Foote, who all died in the earlier part of the reign of George III.; and Macklin, Murphy, Cumberland, Colman, Mrs. Cowley, and Sheridan, who mostly survived till after the commencement of the present century. Goldsmith's two capital comedies of the *Good-Natured Man*, and *She Stoops to Conquer*, were brought out, the former in 1768, the latter in 1773. To Garrick, a miracle of an actor, but no more than a smartish man of talent off the boards, we owe, besides many alterations and adaptations of the works of Shakspeare and other preceding dramatic writers, the lively farces of *The Lying Valet* and *Miss in her Teens*, both, however, produced before 1760; and he is also commonly stated to have been in part the author of the excellent comedy of *The Clandestine Marriage*, brought out in 1766, which was principally written by Colman.¹ The still favorite farce of *High Life Below Stairs*, first acted in 1759, which used also to be attributed to Garrick, is now understood to have been written by the Rev. James Townley, assisted by Dr. Hoadly, the author of *The Suspicious Husband*. Foote produced twenty-two comic pieces, mostly farcical and satirical, between 1752 and 1778; of which *The Minor* (1760), *The Liar* (1761), and *The Mayor of Garratt* (1763), still keep the stage. He was by nature a mimic, and a somewhat coarse one, rather than a wit.² Macklin, also an actor as well as Garrick and Foote, is the author of the very clever and effective comedy of *The Man of the World*, which was brought out in Ireland, his native country, in 1764, under the name of *The Free*

¹ In a copy of Baker's *Biographia Dramatica*, edit. of 1782, we find the following MS. note appended to the notice of this play, at p. 57 of vol. ii.: — "Garrick composed two acts, which he sent Mr. Colman, desiring him to put them together, or to what he would with them. *I did put them together*, said Mr. Colman; *for I put them in the fire, and wrote the play myself*. I had this anecdote from Mr. Colman's mouth. J. W."

² See, however, a much higher estimate of Foote in an article, equally lively and learned, in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 490, for Sept. 1854.

Born Scotchman, although the daring delineation of the principal character, the renowned Sir Pertinax Maccyphont, debarred it for many years from the English stage. Macklin, who did not die till 1797, is remarkable for having lived till the age of a hundred and seven, and for, what is still more unexampled, having continued his appearances on the stage almost till he was a hundred. Colman, an accomplished scholar, and well known for his translations of the Plays of Terence and Horace's Art of Poetry, and for various other literary performances, commenced dramatist in 1760, by the production of a clever and successful little piece, which he entitled Polly Honeycombe, a Dramatic Novel; and between twenty and thirty more comedies, farces, and alterations of older plays proceeded from his pen before 1780, among which his comedy of The Jealous Wife, produced in 1761, ranks as the best along with that of The Clandestine Marriage, already mentioned. Colman lived till 1794. Murphy, also an elegant scholar, and the translator of Tacitus and Sallust, is the author, among other dramatic productions of less note, of the farce of The Upholsterer (1758), of the comedies of The Way to Keep Him (1760), All in the Wrong (1761), Know your Own Mind (1777), and of the tragedy of The Grecian Daughter (1772). Murphy died in 1805, in his eighty-fifth year. Cumberland, a voluminous poet, or versifier, novelist, pamphleteer, essayist, critic, &c., &c., as well as a dramatist, began to write for the stage so early as 1761, and, amid much of what he did that is forgotten, will continue to be remembered for his striking comedies of The West Indian, The Fashionable Lover, The Jew, and The Wheel of Fortune. This somewhat overweening and superficial but still ingenious and not unamiable man died in 1811, at the age of seventy-nine. Mrs. Cowley's pleasant comedy of The Belle's Stratagem was brought out with great success in 1780: this lady, whose first play, The Runaway, appeared in 1776, wrote also a number of long poems, now all forgotten, and survived till 1809. But the most brilliant contributions made to our dramatic literature in this age were Sheridan's celebrated comedies of The Rivals, brought out in 1775, when the author was only in his twenty-fifth year, The Duenna, which followed the same year, and The School for Scandal, which crowned the reputation of the modern Congreve, in 1777. After all that had been written, indeed, meritoriously enough in many instances, by his contemporaries and immediate

predecessors, these plays of Sheridan's were the only additions that had yet been made to the classic comedy of Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar; and perhaps we may say that they are still the last it has received. Sheridan's wit is as polished as Congreve's, and its flashes, if not quite so quick and dazzling, have a softer, a more liquid light; he may be said to stand between the highly artificial point and concentration of Congreve and the Irish ease and gayety of Farquhar, wanting, doubtless, what is most characteristic of either, but also combining something of each. Sheridan had likewise produced all his other dramatic pieces — *The Trip to Scarborough*, *The Critic*, &c. — before 1780; although he lived for thirty-six years after that date.

FEMALE WRITERS.

THE direction of so large a portion of the writing talent of this age to the comic drama is an evidence of the extended diffusion of literary tastes and accomplishments among the class most conversant with those manners and forms of social life which chiefly supply the materials of modern comedy. To this period has been sometimes assigned the commencement of the pursuit of literature as a distinct profession in England; now, too, we may say, began its domestic cultivation among us — the practice of writing for the public as the occupation and embellishment of a part of that leisure which necessarily abounds in an advanced state of society, not only among persons possessing the means of living without exertion of any kind, but almost throughout the various grades of those who are merely raised above the necessity of laboring with their hands. Another indication of the same thing is the great increase that now took place in the number of female authors. Among the writers of plays, novels, and poetry, besides Mrs. Cowley, mentioned above, may be noticed Mrs. Sheridan (originally Miss Frances Chamberlayne), — the admirable mother of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, for whose sake Samuel Johnson was contented to keep on terms, so long as she lived, with the vain, gasconading, mercurial projector and adventurer, her husband, — the authoress of the two comedies of *The Discovery*, brought out with great success in 1763,

and *The Dupe*, which was produced in 1765, and which, although it failed on the stage, owing, it is said, to a conspiracy of some hostile parties, was also well received by the public from the press, and of the novels of Sidney Bidulph and Nourjahad, all written in the darkest hours of a life of struggle and disappointment, which a complication of diseases terminated in 1766, at the age of forty-two; Mrs. Brooke (whose maiden name was Miss Frances Moore), the authoress of the novels of *Lady Juliet Mandeville* and *Emily Montague*, and of the musical drama of *Rosina*, as well as of some tragedies and other compositions in prose and verse, — among the rest, a periodical work called *The Old Maid*, which appeared weekly from November, 1755, to July, 1756; Miss Jane Marshall, an Edinburgh lady, of whom there remain the novels of *Clarinda Cathcart* and *Alicia Montague*, which had considerable success on their first appearance, in 1765 and 1767, and the comedy of *Sir Harry Gaylove*, printed in 1772, although never acted, but whose most interesting production is a *Series of Letters*, in two volumes, Edinburgh, 1788, in which she gives a naïve and lively account of the mischances of her literary career; Mrs. Lennox (originally Miss Charlotte Ramsay, a native of New York), whose *Memoirs of Harriet Stuart* appeared in 1751, her *Female Quixote, or Adventures of Arabella*, to which Johnson wrote the dedication, in 1752, her *Shakespeare Illustrated* in 1753, her novel of *Sophia* in 1761, her comedy of *The Sister* in 1769, and who did not cease to write till near the end of the century; Miss Sophia Lee, whose two first performances, her amusing comedy of *The Chapter of Accidents*, and her popular romance of *The Recess*, were produced, the former in 1780, the latter in 1783; and Miss Frances Burney, afterwards *Madame D'Arblay*, whose two first novels of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* appeared, the former in 1777, the latter in 1782.¹ To these names may be added, as distinguished in other

¹ Along with, perhaps, a higher appreciation of the literary merits of Miss Burney's two early novels than has been expressed by any recent critic, Lord Macaulay has, in an article published in the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1843, claimed for her the honor of being the true founder of the modern school of female novel-writers. "Her appearance," he observes, "is an important epoch in our literary history. *Evelina* was the first tale written by a woman, and purporting to be a picture of life and manners, that lived, or deserved to live. . . . Miss Burney did for the English novel what *Jeremy Collier* did for the English Drama; and she did it in a better way. She first showed that a tale might be written in which both the fashionable and the vulgar life of London might be exhibited with great force, and with broad comic humor, and which yet should not contain a single line incon-

kinds of writing, blind Anna Williams, Dr. Johnson's friend, whose volume of Miscellanies in prose and verse was published in 1766; the learned Miss Elizabeth Carter, whose translation of Epictetus, however, and we believe all her other works, had appeared before the commencement of the reign of George III., although she lived till the year 1806; her friend Miss Catherine Talbot, the writer of a considerable quantity both of prose and verse, now forgotten; Mrs. Montagu (originally Miss Elizabeth Robinson), the pupil of Dr. Conyers Middleton, and the founder of the Blue Stocking Club, whose once famous *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare* was published in 1769, and who survived till the year 1800; Mrs. Chapone (Miss Hester Mulso), another friend of Miss Carter, and the favorite correspondent of Samuel Richardson, whose *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* appeared in 1773; Mrs. Macaulay (originally Miss Catherine Sawbridge, finally Mrs. Graham), the notorious republican historian and pamphleteer, whose *History of England from the Accession of James I. to the Restoration* was published in a succession of volumes between the years 1763 and 1771, and then excited much attention, though now neglected; and the other female democratic writer, Miss Helen Maria Williams, who did not, however, begin to figure as a politician till after the French Revolution, her only publications that fall to be noticed in this place being some volumes of verse which she gave to the world in 1782 and the two or three following years. Mrs. Hannah More, Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Charlotte Smith, Mrs. Inchbald, and some other female writers who did not obtain the height of their reputation till a later date, had also entered upon the career of authorship within the first quarter of a century of the reign of George III. And to the commencement of that reign is to be assigned perhaps the most brilliant contribution from

sistent with rigid morality, or even with virgin delicacy. She took away the reproach which lay on a most useful and delightful species of composition. She vindicated the right of her sex to an equal share in a fair and noble province of letters. Several accomplished women have followed in her track. At present the novels which we owe to English ladies form no small part of the literary glory of our country. No class of works is more honorably distinguished by fine observation, by grace, by delicate wit, by pure moral feeling. Several among the successors of Madame D'Arblay have equalled her; two, we think, have surpassed her. But the fact that she has been surpassed gives her an additional claim to our respect and gratitude; for, in truth, we owe to her not only *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, and *Camilla* [published in 1796], but also *Mansfield Park* [Miss Austen] and *The Absentee* [Miss Edgeworth]."

a female pen that had yet been added to our literature, the collection of the Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, which, although written many years before, were first published in 1763, about a year after Lady Mary's death. The fourth volume, indeed, did not appear till 1767.

PERIODICAL ESSAYISTS.

To the latter part of the reign of George II. belongs the revival of the Periodical Essay, which formed so distinguishing a feature of our literature in the age of Anne. Political writing, indeed, in this form had been carried on from the era of the Examiner, and the Englishman, and the Freeholder, and Defoe's Review and Mercator, and the British Merchant, with little, if any intermission, in various publications; the most remarkable being The Craftsman, in which Bolingbroke was the principal writer, and the papers of which, as first collected and reprinted in seven volumes, extend from the 5th of December, 1726, to the 22d of May, 1731; nor was the work dropped till it had gone on for some years longer. Some attempts had even been made during this interval to supply the place of the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian, by periodical papers, ranging, in the same strain, over the general field of morals and manners: Ambrose Philips, for instance, and a number of his friends, in the year 1718 began the publication of a paper entitled "The Free-thinker, or Essays on Ignorance, Superstition, Bigotry, Enthusiasm, Craft, &c., intermixed with several pieces of wit and humour designed to restore the deluded part of mankind to the use of reason and common sense," which attracted considerable attention at the time, and was kept up till the numbers made a book of three volumes, which were more than once reprinted. The Museum was another similar work, which commenced in 1746, and also ran to three volumes, — Horace Walpole, Akenside, the two Wartons, and other eminent writers being among the contributors; but nothing of this kind that was then produced has succeeded in securing for itself a permanent place in our literature. The next of our periodical works after The Guardian that is recognized as one of the classics of the language is The Rambler, the first num-

ber of which appeared on Tuesday, the 20th of March, 1750, the last (the 208th) on Saturday, the 14th of March, 1752, and all the papers of which, at the rate of two a week, with the exception only of three or four, were the composition of Samuel Johnson, who may be said to have first become generally known as a writer through this publication. The Rambler was succeeded by The Adventurer, edited and principally written by Dr. Hawkesworth, which was also published twice a week, the first number having appeared on Tuesday, the 7th of November, 1752, the last (the 139th) on Saturday, the 9th of March, 1754. Meanwhile The World, a weekly paper, had been started under the conduct of Edward Moore, the author of the Fables for the Female Sex, the tragedy of The Gamester and other dramatic productions, assisted by Lord Lyttelton, the Earls of Chesterfield, Bath, and Cork, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, and other contributors: the first number appeared on Thursday, the 4th of January, 1753; the 209th, and last, on the 30th of December, 1756. And contemporary with The World, during a part of this space, was The Connoisseur, established and principally written by George Colman, in conjunction with Bonnell Thornton, a writer possessed of considerable wit and humor, which, however, he dissipated for the most part upon ephemeral topics, being only now remembered for his share in a translation of Plautus, also undertaken in concert with his friend Colman, the first two of the five volumes of which were published in 1766, two years before his death, at the age of forty-four. The Connoisseur was, like The World, a weekly publication, and it was continued in 140 numbers, from Thursday, the 31st of January, 1754, to the 30th of September, 1756. We have already mentioned Mrs. Frances Brooke's weekly periodical work entitled The Old Maid, which subsisted from November, 1755, to July in the following year; but it is not usually admitted into the collections of the English essayists. The next publication of this class which can be said still to hold a place in our literature is Johnson's Idler, which appeared once a week from Saturday, the 15th of April, 1758, to Saturday, the 5th of April, 1760. And with The Idler closes what may be called the second age of the English periodical essayists, which commences with The Rambler, and extends over the ten years from 1750 to 1760, the concluding decade of the reign of George II. After this occurs another long interval, in which that mode of writing was dropped, or at least no

longer attracted either the favor of the public or the ambition of the more distinguished literary talent of the day; for no doubt attempts still continued to be made, with little or no success, by obscure scribblers, to keep up what had lately been so popular and so graced by eminent names: thus, Hugh Kelly, the author of *The School for Wives*, and some other second-rate dramas, produced during this interval a series of papers in a flashy, juvenile style under the title of *The Babbler*, which were afterwards collected in two small volumes; Miss Marshall, the Edinburgh novelist, who has been already mentioned, about the close of the year 1770 set up a periodical paper in London, in which, she tells us, she had the assistance of several gentlemen of known literary merit, although the sale proved insufficient to enable her to go on with it;¹ and there were of course many more such instances. But we have no series of periodical papers of this time, of the same character with those already mentioned, that is still reprinted and read. Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, occupied as it is with the adventures and observations of an individual, placed in very peculiar circumstances, partakes more of the character of a novel than of a succession of miscellaneous papers; and both the letters composing that work and the other delightful essays of the same writer were published occasionally, not periodically or at regular intervals, and

¹ Letters, vol. ii. pp. 202, 229. The very title of this forgotten work is probably now irrecoverable, as well as the names of the meritorious literati who were to lend it the aid of their reputation and abilities. Its ingenious, sensible, and good-humored projector says: "From a grateful sense of the Duchess of Northumberland's goodness [her first novel had been presented to the queen by the duchess], I sent her grace the introductory paper in manuscript, begging the favour of being allowed the honour of dedicating the work to her grace; and next day I was waited on by a gentleman, probably one of her suite, who informed me that her grace not only accepted the dedication, and would most cheerfully patronize the work, but would also furnish me with some anecdotes which might be useful in the publication. But whether this gentleman, displeased with my *je ne sais quoi*, or disgusted at my Scots accent, had prejudiced her grace against me; or whether my not waiting on the duchess to receive the anecdotes, I cannot say; but I never had the good fortune to hear from my patroness again." In reply to an application she made to Lord Lyttelton for his advice as to whether she should continue the publication, his lordship wrote — "On considering the question you do me the honour to put to me, my answer is this: if you write for fame, go on; if for money, desist, unless the Duchess of Northumberland or Lord Chesterfield will enable you to bear the expense of continuing the paper till it becomes so well known as to support itself. This they surely could do without any inconvenience to their opulent fortunes; and this I would do, if I were in their circumstances, with great pleasure."

only as contributions to the newspapers or other journals of the day, — not by themselves, like the numbers of the *Spectator*, the *Rambler*, and the other works of that description that have been mentioned. Our next series of periodical essays, properly so called, was that which began to be published at Edinburgh, under the name of *The Mirror*, on Saturday, the 23d of January, 1779, and was continued at the rate of a number a week till the 27th of May, 1780. The conductor and principal writer of *The Mirror* was the late Henry Mackenzie, who died in Edinburgh, at the age of eighty-six, in 1831, the author of *The Man of Feeling*, published anonymously in 1771, *The Man of the World*, 1773, and *Julia de Roubigné*, 1777, novels after the manner of Sterne, which are still universally read, and which have much of the grace and delicacy of style as well as of the pathos of that great master, although without any of his rich and peculiar humor. *The Mirror* was succeeded, after an interval of a few years, by *The Lounger*, also a weekly paper, the first number of which appeared on Saturday, the 5th of February, 1785, Mackenzie being again the leading contributor; the last (the 101st) on the 6th of January, 1787. But with these two publications the spirit of periodical essay-writing, in the style first made famous by Steele and Addison, expired also in Scotland, as it had already done a quarter of a century before in England.



POLITICAL WRITING.—WILKES. JUNIUS.

A HOTTER excitement, in truth, had dulled the public taste to the charms of those ethical and critical disquisitions, whether grave or gay, which it had heretofore found sufficiently stimulating; the violent war of parties, which, after a lull of nearly twenty years, was resumed on the accession of George III., made political controversy the only kind of writing that would now go down with the generality of readers; and first Wilkes's famous *North Briton*, and then the yet more famous *Letters of Junius*, came to take the place of the *Ramblers* and *Idlers*, the *Adventurers* and *Connoisseurs*. The *North Briton*, the first number of which appeared on Saturday, the 5th of June, 1762, was started in opposition to *The*

Briton, a paper set up by Smollett in defence of the government on the preceding Saturday, the 29th of May, the day on which Lord Bute had been nominated first lord of the Treasury. Smollett and Wilkes had been friends up to this time; but the opposing papers were conducted in a spirit of the bitterest hostility, till the discontinuance of *The Briton* on the 12th of February, 1763, and the violent extinction of *The North Briton* on the 23d of April following, fifteen days after the resignation of Bute, with the publication of its memorable "No. Forty-five." The celebrity of this one paper has preserved the memory of the *North Briton* to our day, in the same manner as in its own it produced several reimpressions of the whole work, which otherwise would probably have been as speedily and completely forgotten as the rival publication, and as the *Auditors and Monitors*, and other organs of the two factions, that in the same contention helped to fill the air with their din for a season, and then were heard of no more than any other quieted noise. Wilkes's brilliancy faded away when he proceeded to commit his thoughts to paper, as if it had dissolved itself in the ink. Like all convivial wits, or shining talkers, he was of course indebted for much of the effect he produced in society to the promptitude and skill with which he seized the proper moment for saying his good things, to the surprise produced by the suddenness of the flash, and to the characteristic peculiarities of voice, action, and manner with which the jest or repartee was set off, and which usually serve as signals or stimulants to awaken the sense of the ludicrous before its expected gratification comes; in writing, little or nothing of all this could be brought into play: but still some of Wilkes's colloquial impromptus that have been preserved are so perfect, considered in themselves, and without regard to the readiness with which they may have been struck out,—are so true and deep, and evince so keen a feeling at once of the ridiculous and of the real,—that one wonders at finding so little of the same kind of power in his more deliberate efforts. In all his published writings that we have looked into—and, what with essays, and pamphlets of one kind and another, they fill a good many volumes—we scarcely recollect anything that either in matter or manner rises above the veriest commonplace, unless perhaps it be a character of Lord Chatham, occurring in a letter addressed to the Duke of Grafton, some of the biting things in which are impregnated with rather a subtle venom. A few of

his verses also have some fancy and elegance, in the style of Carew and Waller. But even his private letters, of which two collections have been published, scarcely ever emit a sparkle. And his House of Commons speeches, which he wrote beforehand and got by heart, are equally unenlivened. It is evident, indeed, that he had not intellectual lung enough for any protracted exertion or display. The soil of his mind was a hungry, unproductive gravel, with some gems embedded in it. The author of the Letters of Junius made his *début* about four years after the expiration of *The North Briton*, what is believed to be his first communication having appeared in the *Public Advertiser* on the 28th of April, 1767; but the letters, sixty-nine in number, signed Junius, and forming the collection with which every reader is familiar, extend only over the space from the 21st of January, 1769, to the 2d of November, 1771.¹ Thus it appears that this celebrated writer had been nearly two years before the public before he attracted any considerable attention; a proof that the polish of his style was not really the thing that did most to bring him into notoriety; for, although we may admit that the composition of the letters signed Junius is more elaborate and sustained than that of the generality of his contributions to the same newspaper under the name of Brutus, Lucius, Atticus, and Mnemon, yet the difference is by no means so great as to be alone sufficient to account for the prodigious sensation at once excited by the former, after the slight regard with which the latter had been received for so long a time. What, in the first instance at least, more than his rhetoric, made the unknown Junius the object of universal interest, and of very general terror, was undoubtedly the quantity of secret intelligence he showed himself to be possessed of, combined with the unscrupulous boldness with which he was evidently prepared to use it. As has been observed, "ministers found, in these letters, proofs of some enemy, some spy, being amongst them."² It was imme-

¹ The 69th Letter, addressed to Lord Camden, is without a date; and there are other private letters, of undisputed authenticity, to Woodfall, the printer of the *Public Advertiser*, the last two of which are dated 10th May, 1772, and 19th January, 1773.

² See an ingenious and striking article by Mr. De Quincy, originally published in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* for December, 1840. Mr. De Quincy, proceeding upon the consideration noticed in the text, places in a new and strong light the identification of Junius with the late Sir Philip Francis, first suggested by Mr. John Taylor in his volume published in 1816, and long very generally thought to be as nearly estab-

duately perceived in the highest circle of political society that the writer was either actually one of the members of the government,

lished as anything ever was by merely circumstantial evidence. People were, indeed, to be met with who doubted or disbelieved; but they might be classed, for the most part, with those crotchety old ladies and gentlemen who, long after the case was clear enough to all persons of any sense or insight, used to go about arguing for the claims of sundry captains, clergymen, and women to the authorship of the Waverley novels, till Scott's own confession silenced them, — if, indeed, they were all put down even by that. They were mostly persons capable of attending to only one consideration at a time, — such as that Mr. Burke was skilled in imitating the styles of other writers and disguising his own, — that Lord George Germaine was a man of a bad, or at least of a warm, temper, — that William Gerard Hamilton evinced in his single speech a faculty of eloquence which, if he was not the author of the Letters of Junius, nobody can imagine what he did with for many years afterwards; as if fifty such insulated facts or fancies as these could outweigh the long unbroken chain of evidence extending over the whole history of Sir Philip Francis, and corroborated, we might almost say, in every way, excepting only by his own confession, in which it was possible that it should be corroborated, — by many peculiarities of expression common to the letters and the acknowledged writings of their suspected author, by strong general similarity of style, by apparent identity of handwriting, nor least of all by the silence of Francis to his dying day (broken only by a solitary, faint equivocation, still more expressive than silence) under an ascription which, whether he might have regarded it as an imputation or as an honor, it is difficult to believe that a man of his temper would have submitted to thus tranquilly if it had not been true. If the humiliation and baseness of such an acquiescence would not have revolted the self-love and pride of a man like Sir Philip Francis, at any rate he was not a fool, and the mere risk of detection and deplumation, which might have happened any day, would have prevented him from enduring his false feathers. It was a case for an affidavit in a court of justice, if nothing less strenuous would serve the purpose; but there were many other ways by which, if he could not effectually put down the suspicion, he might at any rate have completely relieved himself from the charge of countenancing or encouraging it. We may remark, that the identification of the handwriting of Junius and Sir Philip Francis has been considerably strengthened by some comparative specimens published along with the Correspondence of Lord Chatham, 4 vols. 8vo, Lond. 1839.

Much, nevertheless, has also appeared within the last few years, which would throw doubts on the *Franciscan* theory. Especial reference may be made to the republication, in 1841, with a Preface, by Mr. N. W. Simons, of the British Museum, of a Letter to an Honourable Brigadier-General (the Hon. George Townshend, afterward the first Marquis Townshend), originally published in 1760, when Francis was only nineteen, between the style of which and that of Junius Mr. Simons points out many remarkable resemblances, — the late Mr. John Britton's curious volume, entitled the Authorship of the Letters of Junius Elucidated, 1848, in which Colonel Barré is maintained to be both Junius and the writer of the Letter to Townshend, — the statement by Sir David Brewster, in the North British Review, No. 19, for November, 1848, of the claims of Colonel Lachlan Maclean, together with a subsequent article, apparently by the same writer, in No. 38, for August, 1853, — the elaborate argument of Mr. W. J. Smith in support of the claims of Earl Temple in the third volume of the Grenville Papers, 1852, — and an important series of papers published in the Athenæum in 1853. On the other hand, very recently a fresh vein of investigation has been opened, which seems to hold out a promise, if

or a person who by some means or other had found access to the secrets of the government. And this suspicion, generally diffused, would add tenfold interest to the mystery of the authorship of the letters, even where the feeling which it had excited was one of mere curiosity, as it would be, of course, with the mass of the public. But, although it was not his style alone, or even chiefly, that made Junius famous, it is probably that, more than anything else, which has preserved his fame to our day. More even than the secret, so long in being penetrated, of his real name: that might have given occasion to abundance of conjecture and speculation, like the problem of the Iron Mask and other similar enigmas; but it would not have prompted the reproduction of the letters in innumerable editions, and made them, what they long were, one of the most popular and generally read books in the language, retaining their hold upon the public mind to a degree which perhaps never was equalled by any other literary production having so special a reference, in the greater part of it, to topics of a temporary nature. The history of literature attests, as has been well remarked, that power of expression is a surer preservative of a writer's popularity than even strength of thought itself; that a book in which the former exists in a remarkable degree is almost sure to live, even if it should have very little else to recommend it. The style of Junius is wanting in some of the more exquisite qualities of eloquent writing; it has few natural graces, little variety, no picturesqueness; but still it is a striking and peculiar style, combining the charm of high polish with great nerve and animation, clear and rapid, and at the same time sonorous, — masculine enough, and yet making a very imposing display of all the artifices of antithetical rhetoric. As for the spirit of these famous compositions, it is a remarkable attestation to the author's power of writing

pursued, of the positive conviction of Francis. See a paper in the third number of the Cornhill Magazine, for March, 1860. When this new evidence was explained to Lord Macanlay, a very short time before his death, he at once saw all its importance (provided only further research should establish what was as yet only highly probable), and he remarked to his informant, "Depend on it, you have caught Junius in the fact." Even the North British Reviewer of 1853, although he had set out (p. 482) with describing the claims of Francis as having been based principally on certain habits of expression found in his writings and also in those of Junius, concludes his elaborate investigation by admitting (p. 517) that, of all the persons to whom the authorship has been attributed, "Sir Philip Francis and Colonel Lachlan Macleanne have the highest claims." After all, it is quite possible that the true Junius has never yet been named.

that they were long universally regarded as dictated by the very genius of English liberty, and as almost a sort of Bible, or heaven-inspired exposition, of popular principles and rights. They contain, no doubt, many sound maxims, tersely and vigorously expressed; but of profound or far-sighted political philosophy, or even of ingenious disquisition having the semblance of philosophy, there is as little in the Letters of Junius as there is in the Diary of Dodington or of Pepys; and, as for the writer's principles, they seem to be as much the product of mere temper, and of his individual animosities and spites, as even of his partisan habits and passions. He defends the cause of liberty itself in the spirit of tyranny; there is no generosity, or even common fairness, in his mode of combating; the newest lie, or private scandal, of the day serves as well, and as frequently, as anything else to point his sarcasm, or to arm with its vivid lightning the thunder of declamatory invective that resounds through his pages. Indeed, much of the popularity long enjoyed by these letters, as well as of the impression they made when they first appeared, is probably to be attributed to the singular fact that they supply, besides what other matter they may contain, a tolerably abundant *chronique scandaleuse* of the time, — that this great public writer, the eloquent expounder and vindicator of constitutional principles and popular rights, is at the same time the chief recorder and preserver, at least in decent language, of the amours of the Duke of Grafton and Lord Irnham, and of the most piquant passages in the lives of Miss Kennedy, Miss Davis, and Nancy Parsons.



JOHNSON.

THE character of Junius was drawn, while the mysterious shadow was still occupying the public gaze with its handwriting upon the wall, by one of the most distinguished of his contemporaries, in a publication which made a considerable noise at the time, but is now very much forgotten: — “Junius has sometimes made his satire felt; but let not injudicious admiration mistake the venom of the shaft for the vigor of the bow. He has sometimes sported with lucky malice; but to him that knows his company it is not hard to be sarcastic in a mask. While he walks, like Jack

the Giant-killer, in a coat of darkness, he may do much mischief with little strength. . . . Junius burst into notice with a blaze of impudence which has rarely glared upon the world before, and drew the rabble after him as a monster makes a show. When he had once provided for his safety by impenetrable secrecy, he had nothing to combat but truth and justice — enemies whom he knows to be feeble in the dark. Being then at liberty to indulge himself in all the immunities of invisibility; out of the reach of danger, he has been bold; out of the reach of shame, he has been confident. As a rhetorician, he has had the art of persuading when he seconded desire; as a reasoner, he has convinced those who had no doubt before; as a moralist, he has taught that virtue may disgrace; and, as a patriot, he has gratified the mean by insults on the high. Finding sedition ascendant, he has been able to advance it; finding the nation combustible, he has been able to inflame it. . . . It is not by his liveliness of imagery, his pungency of periods, or his fertility of allusions that he detains the cits of London and the boors of Middlesex. Of style and sentiment they take no cognizance: they admire him for virtues like their own, for contempt of order and violence of outrage, for rage of defamation and audacity of falsehood. . . . Junius is an unusual phenomenon, on which some have gazed with wonder, and some with terror; but wonder and terror are transitory passions. He will soon be more closely viewed, or more attentively examined; and what folly has taken for a comet, that from his flaming hair shook pestilence and war, inquiry will find to be only a meteor formed by the vapors of putrefying democracy, and kindled into flame by the effervescence of interest struggling with conviction; which, after having plunged its followers into a bog, will leave us inquiring why we regard it." Thus wrote, in his ponderous but yet vigorous way, Samuel Johnson, in his pamphlet entitled *Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*, published in 1771, in answer, as is commonly stated, to Junius's Forty-second Letter, dated the 30th of January in that year. Junius, although he continued to write for a twelvemonth longer, never took any notice of this attack; and Mrs. Piozzi tells us that Johnson "often delighted his imagination with the thoughts of having destroyed Junius." The lively lady, however, is scarcely the best authority on the subject of Johnson's *thoughts*, although we may yield a qualified faith to her reports of what he actually said and

did. He may, probably enough, have thought, and said to, that he had beaten or silenced Junius, referring to the question discussed in his unanswered pamphlet; although, on the other hand, it does not appear that Junius was in the habit of ever noticing such general attacks as this: he replied to some of the writers who addressed him in the columns of the *Public Advertiser*, the newspaper in which his own communications were published, but he did not think it necessary to go forth to battle with any of the other pamphleteers by whom he was assailed, any more than with Johnson.

The great lexicographer winds up his character of Junius by remarking that he cannot think his style secure from criticism, and that his expressions are often trite, and his periods feeble. The style of Junius, nevertheless, was probably to a considerable extent formed upon Johnson's own. It had some strongly marked features of distinction, but yet it resembles the Johnsonian style much more than it does that of any other writer in the language antecedent to Johnson. Born in 1709, Johnson, after having while still resident in the country commenced his connection with the press by some work in the way of translation and magazine writing, came to London along with his friend and pupil, the afterwards celebrated David Garrick, in March, 1737; and forthwith entered upon a career of authorship which extends over nearly half a century. His poem of *London*, an imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal, appeared in 1738; his *Life of Savage*, in a separate form, in 1744 (having been previously published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*); his poem entitled *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, an imitation of Juvenal's Tenth Satire, in 1749; his tragedy of *Irene* (written before he came up to London) the same year; *The Rambler*, as already mentioned, between March, 1750, and March, 1752; his *Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755; *The Idler* between April, 1758, and April, 1760; his *Rasselas* in 1759; his edition of *Shakspeare* in 1765; his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* in 1775; his *Lives of the Poets* in 1781; the intervals between these more remarkable efforts having given birth to many magazine articles, verses, and pamphlets, which cannot be here enumerated. His death took place on the 13th of December, 1784. All the works the titles of which have been given may be regarded as having taken and kept their places in our standard literature; and they form, in quantity at least, a

respectable contribution from a single mind. But Johnson's mind is scarcely seen at its brightest if we do not add to the productions of his own pen the record of his colloquial wit and eloquence preserved by his admirable biographer, Boswell, whose renowned work first appeared, in two volumes quarto, in 1790; having, however, been preceded by the *Journal of the Tour to the Hebrides*, which was published the year after Johnson's death. It has been remarked, with truth, that his own works and Boswell's *Life of him* together have preserved a more complete portraiture of Johnson, of his intellect, his opinions, his manners, his whole man inward and outward, than has been handed down from one age to another of any other individual that ever lived. Certainly no celebrated figure of any past time still stands before our eyes so distinctly embodied as he does. If we will try, we shall find that all others are shadows, or mere outlines, in comparison; or, they seem to skulk about at a distance in the shade, while he is there fronting us in the full daylight, so that we see not only his worsted stockings and the metal buttons on his brown coat, but every feature of that massive countenance, as it is solemnized by meditation or lighted up in social converse, as his whole frame rolls about in triumphant laughter, or, as Cumberland saw the tender-hearted old man, standing beside his friend Garrick's open grave, at the foot of Shakspeare's monument, and bathed in tears. A noble heroic nature was that of this Samuel Johnson, beyond all controversy: not only did his failings lean to virtue's side — his very intellectual weaknesses and prejudices had something in them of strength and greatness; they were the exuberance and excess of a rich mind, not the stinted growth of a poor one. There was no touch of meanness in him: rude and awkward enough he was in many points of mere demeanor, but he had the soul of a prince in real generosity, refinement, and elevation. Of a certain kind of intellectual faculty, also, his endowment was very high. His quickness of penetration, and readiness in every way, were probably as great as had ever been combined with the same solid qualities of mind. Scarcely before had there appeared so thoughtful a sage, and so grave a moralist, with so agile and sportive a wit. Rarely has so prompt and bright a wit been accompanied by so much real knowledge, sagacity, and weight of matter. But, as we have intimated, this happy union of opposite kinds of power was most complete, and only produced its full effect, in his collo-

quai displays, when, excited and unformalized, the man was really himself, and his strong nature forced its way onward without regard to anything but the immediate object to be achieved. In writing he is still the strong man, working away valiantly, but, as it were, with fetters upon his limbs, or a burden on his back; a sense of the conventionalities of his position seems to oppress him; his style becomes artificial and ponderous; the whole process of his intellectual exertion loses much of its elasticity and life; and, instead of hard blows and flashes of flame, there is too often, it must be confessed, a mere raising of clouds of dust and the din of inflated commonplace. Yet, as a writer, too, there is much in Johnson that is of no common character. It cannot be said that the world is indebted to him for many new truths, but he has given novel and often forcible and elegant expression to some old ones; the spirit of his philosophy is never other than manly and high-toned, as well as moral; his critical speculations, if not always very profound, are frequently acute and ingenious, and in manner generally lively, not seldom brilliant. Indeed, it may be said of Johnson, with all his faults and shortcomings, as of every man of true genius, that he is rarely or ever absolutely dull. Even his *Ramblers*, which we hold to be the most indigestible of his productions, are none of them mere leather or prunello; and his higher efforts, his *Rasselas*, his *Preface to Shakspeare*, and many passages in his *Lives of the Poets*, are throughout instinct with animation, and full of an eloquence which sometimes rises almost to poetry. Even his peculiar style, whatever we may allege against it, bears the stamp of the man of genius; it was thoroughly his own; and it not only reproduced itself, with variations, in the writings of some of the most distinguished of his contemporaries, from Junius's *Letters* to Macpherson's *Ossian*. but, whether for good or for evil, has perceptibly influenced our literature, and even in some degree the progress of the language, onwards to the present day. Some of the characteristics of the Johnsonian style, no doubt, may be found in older writers, but, as a whole, it must be regarded as the invention of Johnson. No sentence-making at once so uniformly clear and exact, and so elaborately stately, measured, and sonorous, had proceeded habitually from any previous English pen. The pomposity and inflation of Johnson's composition abated considerably in his own later writings, and, as the cumbering flesh fell off, the nerve and spirit increased: the most happily executed parts of the

Lives of the Poets offer almost a contrast to the oppressive rotundity of the Ramblers, produced thirty years before; and some eminent writers of a subsequent date, who have yet evidently formed their style upon his, have retained little or nothing of what, to a superficial inspection, seem the most marked characteristics of his manner of expression. Indeed, as we have said, there is perhaps no subsequent English prose-writer upon whose style that of Johnson has been altogether without its effect.¹

BURKE.

BUT the greatest, undoubtedly, of all our writers of this age was Burke, one of the most remarkable men of any age. Edmund Burke was born in Dublin, in 1730; but he came over in 1750 to the British metropolis, and from this time he mostly resided in England till his death, in 1797. In 1756 he published his celebrated *Vindication of Natural Society*, an imitation of the style, and a parody on the philosophy, of Lord Bolingbroke; and the same year his *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. In 1757 appeared anonymously his *Account of the European Settlements in America*. In 1759 came out the first volume of *The Annual Register*, of which he is known to have written, or superintended the writing of, the historical part for several years. His public life commenced in 1761, with the appointment of private secretary to the chief secretary for Ireland, an office which carried him back for about four years to his native country. In 1766 he became a member of the English House of Commons; and from that date almost to the hour of his death, besides his exertions as a front figure in the debates and other business of parliament, from which he did not retire till 1794, he continued to dazzle the world by a succession of political writings such as certainly had never before been equalled in brilliancy and power. We can mention only those of greatest note: — his *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, pub-

¹ Every reader who takes any interest in Johnson will remember the brilliant papers of Lord Macaulay in the *Edinburgh Review*, for September, 1831, and Mr Carlyle, in the twenty-eighth number of *Fraser's Magazine*, for April, 1832.

lished in 1770 ; his Reflections on the Revolution in France, published in 1790 ; his Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, in 1792 ; his Letter to a Noble Lord on his Pension, in 1796 ; his Letters on a Regicide Peace, in 1796 and 1797 ; his Observations on the Conduct of the Minority, in 1797 ; besides his several great speeches, revised and sent to the press by himself ; that on American Taxation, in 1774 ; that on Conciliation with America, in 1775 ; that on the Economical Reform Bill, in 1780 ; that delivered in the Guildhall at Bristol previous to his election, the same year ; that on Mr. Fox's India Bill, in 1783 ; and that on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts, in 1785. Those, perhaps the most splendid of all, which he delivered at the bar of the House of Lords in 1788 and 1789, on the impeachment of Mr. Hastings, have also been printed since his death from his own manuscript.¹

Burke was our first, and is still our greatest, writer on the philosophy of practical politics. The mere metaphysics of that science,

¹ See also the highly curious, interesting, and important official publication of the Speeches of the Managers and Counsel in the Trial of Warren Hastings, to be completed in 4 vols., of which two have already appeared (1859 and 1860), under the authority of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, and the judicious and careful superintendence of Mr. E. A. Bond, Assistant Keeper of the Manuscripts in the British Museum. It appears that the actual shorthand notes of the reporters from the office of Mr. Gurney, appointed at the time to attend every sitting of the Court by the Committee of Managers, have fortunately been preserved, and from these principally the new version of the speeches has been drawn. Although some mistakes may have been made by the reporters, it is evident that their task has been executed generally in a very superior manner ; and there can be no doubt that we have Burke's speeches here in a form considerably nearer to that in which they were actually delivered than as they are printed in the authentic edition of his works from his own papers. A comparison of the two texts shows the freedom Burke allowed himself in writing out what he had spoken, or intended to have spoken, and reducing it to the form in which he desired it to go down to posterity. "Not only," observes Mr. Bond (Introduction, xlii.), "is the language carefully revised, but the speech may be said to be remodelled. Many passages, in some instances containing charges of crimination, are suppressed, and new arguments and illustrations are freely introduced. The revised composition doubtless displays greater condensation of argument and refinement of diction, but is, I think, surpassed in energy of expression by the unaltered report of the words and ideas as they flowed from his imagination in the warmth of their first conception." At all events, we have here unquestionably by far the truest and most satisfactory evidence of what Burke's speaking really was ; and that alone would invest the new publication with the highest interest. It is a most important contribution at once to his biography and to the history of English oratory. Nay, taken in connection with his own reconstruction of the Speeches, it is not without value as throwing light upon the history of spoken eloquence generally, and more especially as an aid towards solving the question of in how far we probably have a true picture of the speaking of the great Greek and Roman orators in their recorded harangues.

or what we may call by that term for want of a better, meaning thereby all abstract speculation and theorizing on the general subject of government without reference to the actual circumstances of the particular country and people to be governed, he held from the beginning to the end of his life in undisguised, perhaps in undue, contempt. This feeling is as strongly manifested in his very first publication, his covert attack on Bolingbroke, as either in his writings and speeches on the contest with the American colonies or in those of the French Revolution. He was, as we have said, emphatically a practical politician, and, above all, an English politician. In discussing questions of domestic politics, he constantly refused to travel beyond the landmarks of the constitution as he found it established; and the views he took of the politics of other countries were as far as possible regulated by the same principle. The question of a revolution, in so far as England was concerned, he did not hold to be one with which he had anything to do. Not only had it never been actually presented to him by the circumstances of the time; he did not conceive that it ever could come before him. He was, in fact, no believer in the possibility of any sudden and complete reëdification of the institutions of a great country; he left such transformations to Harlequin's wand and the machinists of the stage; he did not think they could take place in a system so mighty and so infinitely complicated as that of the political organization of a nation. A constitution, too, in his idea, was not a thing, like a steam-engine, or a machine for threshing corn, that could be put together and set up in a few weeks or months, and that would work equally well wherever it was set up; he looked upon it rather as something that must in every case grow and gradually evolve itself out of the soil of the national mind and character, — that must take its shape in a great measure from the prevalent habits and feelings to which it was to be accommodated, — that would not work or stand at all unless it thus formed an integral part of the social system to which it belonged. The notion of a constitution artificially constructed, and merely as it were fastened upon a country by bolts and screws, was to him much the same as the notion of a human body performing the functions of life with no other than such a separable artificial head stuck upon it. A constitution was with him a thing of life. It could no more be set up of a sudden than a full-grown tree could be ordered from the manufacturer's and so set up

Like a tree, it must have its roots intertwined with the earth on which it stands, even as it has its branches extended over it. Or rather, the constitution is to him the earth itself—the one solid enduring basis on which alone any rational or useful speculation can be reared. At the least, it is his Bible, the great authoritative textbook of his political religion, which he no more looks for anything to contradict or supersede than the theologian looks for a new revelation. It may be remarked that Burke's peculiar faculties did not fit him, any more than his tastes, for nice and subtle inquisition into the essences of things; as may be perceived, to go no farther, from his early work on the *Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, which, elegant and ingenious as it is, must be deemed a failure in so far as respects its professed object, and the spirit of which, as has been observed, is, on the whole, certainly rather critical than metaphysical.¹ In the great fields of politics and religion, besides, occupied as they are with men's substantial interests, he regarded inquiries into first principles as worse than vain and worthless, as much more likely to mislead and pervert than to afford instruction or right guidance; and it is remarkable that this feeling, too, though deepened and strengthened by the experience of his after-life, and, above all, exasperated by the events to which his attention was most strongly directed in his latest days into an intense dread and horror of the confusion and wide-spread ruin that might be wrought by the assumption of so incompetent a power as mere human ratiocination to regulate all things according to its own conceit, was entertained and expressed by him with great distinctness at the outset of his career. It was in this spirit, indeed, that he wrote his *Vindication of Natural Society*, with the design of showing how anything whatever might be either attacked or defended with great plausibility by the method in which the highest and most intricate philosophical questions were discussed by Lord Bolingbroke. He "is satisfied," he says in his Preface, "that a mind which has no restraint from a sense of its own weakness, of its subordinate rank in the creation, and of the extreme danger of letting the imagination loose upon some subjects, may

¹ See art. on Burke in *Penny Cyclopædia*, vi. 31. See also an examination and refutation of Burke's theory in an article in the same work, vol. xxiii. pp. 186-189, on *Sublimity*, which is not only the best disquisition, at least in the English language, on the philosophy of that subject, but may almost be said to be the only one of any value.

very plausibly attack everything the most excellent and venerable; that it would not be difficult to criticize the Creation itself; and that, if we were to examine the divine fabrics by our ideas of reason and fitness, and to use the same method of attack by which some men have assaulted revealed religion, we might, with as good color, and with the same success, make the wisdom and power of God in his Creation appear to many no better than foolishness." But, on the other hand, within the boundary by which he conceived himself to be properly limited and restrained, there never was either a more ingenious and profound investigator or a bolder reformer than Burke. He had, indeed, more in him of the orator and of the poet than of the mere reasoner; but yet, like Bacon, whom altogether he greatly resembled in intellectual character, an instinctive sagacity and penetration generally led him to see where the truth lay, and then his boundless ingenuity supplied him readily with all the considerations and arguments which the exposition of the matter required, and the fervor of his awakened fancy with striking illustration and impassioned eloquence in a measure hardly to be elsewhere found intermingled and incorporated with the same profoundness, extent, and many-sidedness of view. For in this Burke is distinguished from nearly all other orators, and it is a distinction that somewhat interferes with his mere oratorical power, that he is both too reflective and too honest to confine himself to the contemplation of only one side of any question he takes up: he selects, of course, for advocacy and inculcation the particular view which he holds to be the sound one, and often it will no doubt be thought by those who dissent from him that he does not do justice to some of the considerations that stand opposed to his own opinion; but still it is not his habit to overlook such adverse considerations; he shows himself at least perfectly aware of their existence, even when he possibly underrates their importance. For the immediate effect of his eloquence, as we have said, it might have been better if his mind had not been so Argus-eyed to all the various conflicting points of every case that he discussed, — if, instead of thus continually looking before and after on all sides of him, and stopping, whenever two or more apparently opposite considerations came in his way, to balance or reconcile them, he could have surrendered himself to the one view with which his hearers were prepared strongly to sympathize, and carried them along with him in a whirlwind of passionate declamation. But,

“born for the universe,” and for all time, he was not made for such sacrifice of truth, and all high, enduring things, to the triumph of an hour. And he has not gone without his well-earned reward. If it was objected to him in his own day that, “too deep for his hearers,” he

“still went on refining,

And thought of convincing while they thought of dining,”

that searching philosophy which pervades his speeches and writings, and is there wedded in such happy union to glowing words and poetic imagery, has rescued them alone from the neglect and oblivion that have overtaken all the other oratory and political pamphleteering of that day, however more loudly lauded at the time, and has secured to them an existence as extended as that of the language, and to their eloquence and wisdom whatever admiration and whatever influence and authority they may be entitled to throughout all coming generations. The writings of Burke are, indeed, the only English political writings of a past age that continue to be read in the present. And they are now perhaps more studied, and their value, both philosophical and oratorical, better and more highly appreciated, than even when they were first produced. They were at first probably received, even by those who rated them highest and felt their power the most, as little more than mere party appeals, — which, indeed, to a considerable extent most of them were, for their author, from the circumstances of his position and of the time, was of necessity involved in the great battle of faction which then drew into its maelstrom everything littlest and greatest, meanest and loftiest, — and, as was his nature, he fought that fight, while that was the work to be done, like a man, with his whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. But it can hardly be said in prosaic verity, as it has been said in the liveliness and levity of verse, that he “to party gave up what was meant for mankind.” He gave up nothing to his party, except his best exertions for the time being, and for the end immediately in view, while he continued to serve under its banner. He separated himself from his party, and even from the friends and associates with whom he had passed his life, when, whether rightly or wrongly, he conceived that a higher duty than that of fidelity to his party-banner called upon him to take that course. For that Burke, in leaving the ranks of the opposition in the year 1790, or rather in declining to go along with the main body of the opposi-

tion in the view which they took at that particular moment of the French Revolution, acted from the most conscientious motives and the strongest convictions, we may assume to be now completely admitted by all whose opinions anybody thinks worth regarding. The notion that he was bought off by the ministry, — he who never to the end of his life joined the ministry, or ceased to express his entire disapprobation of their conduct of the war with France, — he, by whom, in fact, they were controlled and coerced, not he by them, — the old cry that he was paid to attack the French Revolution, by the pension, forsooth, that was bestowed upon him five years after, — all this is now left to the rabid ignorance of your mere pothouse politician. Those who have really read and studied what Burke has written know that there was nothing new in the views he proclaimed after the breaking out of that mighty convulsion, nothing differing from or inconsistent with the principles and doctrines on the subject of government he had always held and expressed. In truth, he could not have joined in the chorus of acclamation with which Fox and many of his friends greeted the advent of the French Revolution without abandoning the political philosophy of his whole previous life. As we have elsewhere observed, “his principles were altogether averse from a purely democratic constitution of government from the first. He always, indeed, denied that he was a man of aristocratic inclinations, meaning by that one who favored the aristocratic more than the popular element in the constitution: but he no more for all that ever professed any wish wholly to extinguish the former element than the latter. . . . The only respect in which his latest writings really differ from those of early date is, that they evince a more excited sense of the dangers of popular delusion and passion, and urge with greater earnestness the importance of those restraining institutions which the author conceives, and always did conceive, to be necessary for the stability of governments and the conservation of society. But this is nothing more than the change of topic that is natural to a new occasion.”¹ Or, as he has himself finely said, in defending his own consistency, — “A man, who, among various objects of his equal regard, is secure of some, and full of anxiety for the fate of others, is apt to go to much greater lengths in his preference of the objects of his immediate solicitude than Mr. Burke has ever done. A man so circumstanced often seems to

¹ Art. on Burke, in Penny Cyclopædia, vi. 35

undervalue, to vilify, almost to reprobate and disown, those that are out of danger. This is the voice of nature and truth, and not of inconsistency and false pretence. The danger of anything very dear to us removes, for the moment, every other affection from the mind. When Priam has his whole thoughts employed on the body of his Hector, he repels with indignation, and drives from him with a thousand reproaches, his surviving sons, who with an officious piety crowded about him to offer their assistance. A good critic would say that this is a master-stroke, and marks a deep understanding of nature in the father of poetry. He would despise a Zoilus, who would conclude from this passage that Homer meant to represent this man of affliction as hating, or being indifferent and cold in his affections to, the poor relics of his house, or that he preferred a dead carcase to his living children.”¹

We shall now proceed to illustrate, as far as our limited space will allow, both the variety and the progress of Burke's style by a series of extracts from his works; and we will begin with a passage from his earliest separate publication (so far as is known), his Letter on Natural Society, written in imitation of Lord Bolingbroke, which appeared, as already noticed, in 1756, two years after Bolingbroke's death, and when Burke was only twenty-six. The full title of this remarkable performance is A Vindication of Natural Society; or, A View of the Miseries and Evils arising to mankind from every species of Artificial Society; in a letter to Lord * * * By a late Noble Writer. In one respect at least it certainly does Bolingbroke no injustice; he never wrote anything superior, or we might safely say even equal, in mere expression to the best passages of this ingenious and brilliant declamation. In the original edition, of course, there is no intimation of the true authorship,² but the design with which it was written is distinctly

¹ Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.

² On the contrary, it is introduced by an Advertisement (afterwards withdrawn) in accordance with the title: — “The following Letter appears to have been written about the year 1748, and the Person to whom it is addressed need not be pointed out. As it is probable the Noble Writer had no Design that it should ever appear in Publick, this will account for his having kept no Copy of it, and consequently for it's not appearing amongst the rest of his Works. By what Means it came into the Hands of the Editor, is not at all material to the Publick, any farther than as such an Account might tend to authenticate the Genuineness of it; and for this it was thought it might safely rely on it's own internal Evidence.” Such a slight transparent veil, however, was evidently intended only to keep up appearances, and not to take in anybody. This first edition, now before us, is an octavo pamphlet

explained in the preface which accompanies it in all the editions of Burke's collected works, and a part of which we have quoted a page or two back. Having disposed of both despotic and aristocratical governments, it proceeds : —

Thus, my Lord, we have pursued *Aristocracy* through its whole progress ; we have seen the seeds, the growth, and the fruit. It could boast none of the advantages of a *despotism*, miserable as those advantages were, and it was overloaded with an exuberance of mischiefs unknown even to *despotism* itself. In effect, it is no more than a disorderly tyranny. This form, therefore, could be little approved, even in speculation, by those who were capable of thinking, and could be less borne in practice by any who were capable of feeling. However, the fruitful policy of man was not yet exhausted. He had yet another farthing candle to supply the deficiencies of the sun. This was the third form, known by political writers under the name of *Democracy*. Here the people transacted all public business, or the greater part of it, in their own persons : their laws were made by themselves, and, upon any failure of duty, their officers were accountable to themselves, and to them only. In all appearance they had secured by this method the advantages of order and good government, without paying their liberty for the purchase. Now, my Lord, we are come to the masterpiece of Grecian refinement and Roman solidity, a popular government. The earliest and most celebrated republic of this model was that of Athens. It was constructed by no less an artist than the celebrated poet and philosopher, Solon. But no sooner was this political vessel launched from the stocks, than it overset, even in the lifetime of the builder. A tyranny immediately supervened ; not by a foreign conquest, not by accident, but by the very nature and constitution of a *democracy*. An artful man became popular, the people had power in their hands, and they devolved a considerable share of their power upon their favourite ; and the only use he made of this power was to plunge those who gave it into slavery. Accident restored their liberty, and the same good fortune produced men of uncommon abilities and uncommon virtues amongst them. But these abilities were suffered to be of little service either to their possessors or to the state. Some of those men, for whose sakes alone we read their history, they banished ; others they imprisoned ; and all they treated with various circumstances of the most shameful ingratitude. Republics have many things in the spirit of absolute monarchy, but none more than this. A shining merit is ever hated or suspected in a popular assembly, as well as in a court ; and all services done the state are looked upon as dangerous to the rulers, whether sultans or senators. The *Ostracism* of Athens was

extending to 106 pages, the title-page describing it as "Printed for M Cooper in Paternoster Row, 1756. [Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]"

built upon this principle. The giddy people whom we have now under consideration, being elated with some flashes of success, which they owed to nothing less than any merit of their own, began to tyrannize over their equals, who had associated with them for their common defence. With their prudence, they renounced all appearance of justice. They entered into wars rashly and wantonly. If they were unsuccessful, instead of growing wiser by their misfortune, they threw the whole blame of their own misconduct on the ministers who had advised, and the generals who had conducted, those wars; until by degrees they had cut off all who could serve them in their councils or their battles. If at any time these wars had a happier issue, it was no less difficult to deal with them on account of their pride and insolence. Furious in their adversity, tyrannical in their successes, a commander had more trouble to concert his defence before the people than to plan the operations of the campaign. It was not uncommon for a general, under the horrid *despotism* of the Roman emperors, to be ill received in proportion to the greatness of his services. Agricola is a strong instance of this. No man had done greater things, nor with more honest ambition. Yet, on his return to Court, he was obliged to enter Rome with all the secrecy of a criminal. He went to the palace, not like a victorious commander who had merited, and might demand, the greatest rewards, but like an offender who had come to supplicate a pardon for his crimes. His reception was answerable. *Exceptusque brevi osculo et nullo sermone, turbæ servientium immixtus est.* Yet in that worst season of this worst of monarchical tyrannies, modesty, discretion, and coolness of temper formed some kind of security even for the highest merit. But at Athens, the wisest and best studied behaviour was not a sufficient guard for a man of great capacity. Some of their bravest commanders were obliged to fly their country, some to enter into the service of its enemies, rather than abide a popular determination on their conduct, lest, as one of them said, their giddiness might make the people condemn where they meant to acquit, — to throw in a black bean even when they intended a white one.

The Athenians made a very rapid progress to the most enormous excesses. The people, under no restraint, soon grew dissolute, luxurious, and idle. They renounced all labour, and began to subsist themselves from the public revenues. They lost all concern for their common honour or safety, and could bear no advice that tended to reform them. At this time truth became offensive to those lords, the people, and most highly dangerous to the speaker. The orators no longer ascended the *rostrum* but to corrupt them further with the most fulsome adulation. These orators were all bribed by foreign princes on the one side or the other. And, beside its own parties, in this city there were parties, and avowed ones too, for the Persians, Spartans, and Macedonians, supported each of them

by one or more demagogues pensioned and bribed to this iniquitous service. The people, forgetful of all virtue and public spirit, and intoxicated with the flatteries of their orators (these courtiers of republics, and endowed with the distinguishing characteristics of all other courtiers),— this people, I say, at last arrived at that pitch of madness, that they coolly and deliberately, by an express law, made it capital for any man to propose an application of the immense sums squandered in public shows even to the most necessary purposes of the state. When you see the people of this republic banishing and murdering their best and ablest citizens, dissipating the public treasure with the most senseless extravagance, and spending their whole time, as spectators or actors, in playing, fiddling, dancing, or singing, does it not, my Lord, strike your imagination with the image of a sort of complex Nero? And does it not strike you with the greater horror, when you observe, not one man only, but a whole city, grown drunk with pride and power, running with a rage of folly into the same mean and senseless debauchery and extravagance? But, if this people resembled Nero in their extravagance, much more did they resemble and even exceed him in cruelty and injustice. In the time of Pericles, one of the most celebrated times in the history of that commonwealth, a king of Egypt sent them a donation of corn. This they were mean enough to accept; and, had the Egyptian prince intended the ruin of this city of wicked bedlamites, he could not have taken a more effectual method to do it than by such an ensnaring largess. The distribution of this bounty caused a quarrel; the majority set on foot an inquiry into the title of the citizens, and upon a vain pretence of illegitimacy, newly and occasionally set up, they deprived of their share of the royal donation no less than five thousand of their own body. They went further; they disfranchised them; and, having once begun with an act of injustice, they could set no bounds to it. Not content with cutting them off from the rights of citizens, they plundered these unfortunate wretches of all their substance: and, to crown this master-piece of violence and tyranny, they actually sold every man of the five thousand as slaves in the public market. Observe, my Lord, that the five thousand we here speak of were cut off from a body of no more than nineteen thousand; for the entire number of citizens was no greater at that time. Could the tyrant who wished the Roman people but one neck — could the tyrant Caligula himself have done, nay could he scarcely wish for a greater mischief, than to have cut off at one stroke a fourth of his people? Or has the cruelty of that series of sanguine tyrants, the Cæsars, ever presented such a piece of flagrant and extensive wickedness? The whole history of this celebrated republic is but one tissue of rashness, folly, ingratitude, injustice, tumult, violence, and tyranny — and, indeed, of every species of wickedness that can well be imagined. This was a city of wise men, in which a minister could not

exercise his functions ; a warlike people, amongst whom a general did not dare either to gain or lose a battle ; a learned nation, in which a philosopher could not venture on a free inquiry. This was the city which banished Themistocles, starved Aristides, forced into exile Miltiades, drove out Anaxagoras, and poisoned Socrates. This was a city which changed the form of its government with the moon ; eternal conspiracies, revolutions daily, nothing fixed and established. A republic, as an ancient philosopher has observed, is no one species of government, but a magazine of every species : here you find every sort of it, and that in the worst form. As there is a perpetual change, one rising and the other falling, you have all the violence and wicked policy by which a beginning power must always acquire its strength, and all the weakness by which falling states are brought to a complete destruction.

In some respects this early composition may stand a comparison with anything its author ever afterwards wrote. In free and musical flow his style had already nothing further to acquire ; and we have also here not a little of the fulness and hurry of illustration, the splendor of coloring, and the impassioned fervor of his latest eloquence. In its next stage his manner became rather less brilliant and impetuous ; what he now for a time chiefly aimed at appears to have been precision and force. The following is from his admirable exposition of the principles of his political party, entitled *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, published in 1770, or fourteen years after the *Vindication of Natural Society* :

The House of Commons was supposed originally to be no part of the standing government of this country. It was considered as a controul, issuing immediately from the people, and speedily to be resolved into the mass from whence it arose. In this respect it was in the higher part of government what juries are in the lower. The capacity of a magistrate being transitory, and that of a citizen permanent, the latter capacity it was hoped would of course preponderate in all discussions, not only between the people and the standing authority of the crown, but between the people and the fleeting authority of the House of Commons itself. It was hoped, that, being of a middle nature between subject and government, they would feel with a more tender and a nearer interest every thing that concerned the people than the other remoter and more permanent parts of legislature.

Whatever alterations time, and the necessary accommodation of business, may have introduced, this character can never be sustained unless the House of Commons shall be made to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large. It would, among public misfortunes,

be an evil more natural and more tolerable that the House of Commons should be infected with every epidemical frenzy of the people, as this would indicate some consanguinity, some sympathy of nature, with their constituents, than that they should in all cases be wholly untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people out of doors. By this want of sympathy they would cease to be a House of Commons. For it is not the derivation of the power of that House from the people which makes it in a distinct sense their representative. The king is the representative of the people; so are the Lords; so are the Judges. They all are trustees for the people, as well as the Commons; because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder; and, although government certainly is an institution of divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people.

A popular origin cannot therefore be the characteristic distinction of a popular representative. This belongs equally to all parts of government, and in all forms. The virtue, spirit, and essence of a House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation. It was not instituted to be a controul *upon* the people, as of late it has been taught, by a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency. It was designed as a controul *for* the people. Other institutions have been formed for the purpose of checking popular excesses; and they are, I apprehend, fully adequate to their object. If not, they ought to be made so. The House of Commons, as it was never intended for the support of peace and subordination, is miserably appointed for that service; having no stronger weapon than its mace, and no better officer than its serjeant-at-arms, which it can command of its own proper authority. A vigilant and jealous eye over executory and judicial magistracy, an anxious care of public money, an openness, approaching towards facility, to public complaint; these seem to be the true characteristics of a House of Commons. But an addressing House of Commons and a petitioning nation — a House of Commons full of confidence while the nation is plunged in despair — in the utmost harmony with ministers whom the people regard with the utmost abhorrence — who vote thanks, when the public opinion calls upon them for impeachments — who are eager to grant, when the general voice demands account — who, in all disputes between the people and administration, presume against the people — who punish their disorders, but refuse even to inquire into the provocations to them; this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things in this constitution. Such an assembly may be a great, wise, awful senate; but it is not, to any popular purpose, a House of Commons. This change from an immediate state of procurator and delegation to a course of acting as from original power is the way in which all the popular magistracies in the world have been perverted from their purposes. It is indeed their greatest and sometimes their

incurable corruption. For there is a material distinction between that corruption by which particular points are carried against reason (this is a thing which cannot be prevented by human wisdom, and is of less consequence), and the corruption of the principle itself. For then the evil is not accidental but settled. The distemper becomes the natural habit.

At a later date, again, although he could when he chose confine himself to a haughty severity of diction, in which few figures and little visible flame of passion were suffered to relieve the hard native force and impressiveness of the matter, — as, for instance, in the Address to the King on the War with America, which he proposed that the opposition should present in 1777, — his style in general returns to a richer and warmer character, both in his speeches and his writings. The following is from his famous Speech delivered at Bristol previous to the election in September, 1780, at which he was rejected by the constituency he had represented during the preceding six years, for the part he had taken in the recent mitigation of the penal laws against the Roman Catholics: —

A statute was fabricated in the year 1699, by which the saying mass (a church-service in the Latin tongue, not exactly the same as our liturgy, but very near it, and containing no offence whatsoever against the laws, or against good morals) was forged into a crime, punishable with perpetual imprisonment. The teaching school, an useful and virtuous occupation, even the teaching in a private family, was in every Catholic subjected to the same unproportioned punishment. Your industry, and the bread of your children, was taxed for a pecuniary reward to stimulate avarice to do what nature refused, to inform and prosecute on this law. Every Roman Catholic was, under the same law, to forfeit his estate to his nearest Protestant relation, until, through a profession of what he did not believe, he redeemed by his hypocrisy what the law had transferred to the kinsman as the recompense of his profligacy. When thus turned out of doors from his paternal estate, he was disabled from acquiring any other by any industry, donation, or charity; but was rendered a foreigner in his native land, only because he retained the religion, along with the property, handed down to him from those who had been the old inhabitants of that land before him.

Does any one who hears me approve this scheme of things, or think there is common justice, common sense, or common honesty in any part of it? If any does, let him say it, and I am ready to discuss the point with temper and candour. But, instead of approving, I perceive a virtuous indignation beginning to rise in your minds on the mere cold stating of the statute.

But what will you feel when you know from history how this statute passed, and what were the motives, and what the mode of making it? A party in this nation, enemies to the system of the Revolution, were in opposition to the government of King William. They knew that our glorious deliverer was an enemy to all persecution. They knew that he came to free us from slavery and popery, out of a country where a third of the people are contented Catholics under a Protestant government. He came, with a part of his army composed of those very Catholics, to over-set the power of a popish prince. Such is the effect of a tolerating spirit; and so much is liberty served in every way, and by all persons, by a manly adherence to its own principles. Whilst freedom is true to itself, every thing becomes subject to it; and its very adversaries are an instrument in its hands.

The party I speak of (like some amongst us who would disparage the best friends of their country) resolved to make the king either violate his principles of toleration, or incur the odium of protecting Papists. They therefore brought in this bill, and made it purposely wicked and absurd that it might be rejected. The then court-party, discovering their game, turned the tables on them, and returned their bill to them stuffed with still greater absurdities, that its loss might lie upon its original authors. They, finding their own ball thrown back to them, kicked it back again to their adversaries. And thus this act, loaded with the double injustice of two parties, neither of whom intended to pass what they hoped the other would be persuaded to reject, went through the legislature, contrary to the real wish of all parts of it, and of all the parties that composed it. In this manner these insolent and profligate factions, as if they were playing with balls and counters, made a sport of the fortunes and the liberties of their fellow-creatures. Other acts of persecution have been acts of malice. This was a perversion of justice from wantonness and petulance. Look into the History of Bishop Burnet. He is a witness without exception.

The effects of the act have been as mischievous as its origin was ludicrous and shameful. From that time every person of that communion, lay and ecclesiastic, has been obliged to fly from the face of day. The clergy, concealed in garrets of private houses, or obliged to take a shelter (hardly safe to themselves, but infinitely dangerous to their country) under the privileges of foreign ministers, officiated as their servants, and under their protection. The whole body of the Catholics, condemned to beggary and to ignorance in their native land, have been obliged to learn the principle of letters, at the hazard of all their other principles, from the charity of your enemies. They have been taxed to their ruin at the pleasure of necessitous and profligate relations, and according to the measure of their necessity and profligacy. Examples of this are many and affecting. Some of them are known by a friend who stands near me in

this hall. It is but six or seven years since a clergyman of the name of Malony, a man of morals, neither guilty nor accused of any thing noxious to the state, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment for exercising the functions of his religion; and, after lying in jail two or three years, was relieved by the mercy of government from perpetual imprisonment, on condition of perpetual banishment. A brother of the Earl of Shrewsbury, a Talbot, a name respectable in this country whilst its glory is any part of its concern, was hauled to the bar of the Old Bailey, among common felons, and only escaped the same doom either by some error in the process, or that the wretch who brought him there could not correctly describe his person; I now forget which. In short, the persecution would never have relented for a moment, if the Judges, superseding (though with an ambiguous example) the strict rule of their artificial duty by the higher obligation of their conscience, did not constantly throw every difficulty in the way of such informers. But so ineffectual is the power of legal evasion against legal iniquity, that it was but the other day that a lady of condition, beyond the middle of life, was on the point of being stript of her whole fortune by a near relation, to whom she had been a friend and benefactor; and she must have been totally ruined, without a power of redress or mitigation from the courts of law, had not the legislature itself rushed in, and by a special act of parliament rescued her from the injustice of its own statutes. One of the acts authorizing such things was that which we in part repealed; knowing what our duty was, and doing that duty as men of honour and virtue, as good Protestants, and as good citizens. Let him stand forth that disapproves what we have done.

As to the opinion of the people, which some think in such cases is to be implicitly obeyed; nearly two years' tranquillity, which followed the act, and its instant imitation in Ireland, proved abundantly that the late horrible spirit was, in a great measure, the effect of insidious art, and perverse industry, and gross misrepresentation. But suppose that the dislike had been much more deliberate, and much more general, than I am persuaded it was. When we know that the opinions of even the greatest multitudes are the standard of rectitude, I shall think myself obliged to make those opinions the masters of my conscience. But, if it may be doubted whether Omnipotence itself is competent to alter the essential constitution of right and wrong, sure I am that such *things* as they and I are possessed of no such power. No man carries further than I do the policy of making government pleasing to the people. But the widest range of this politic complaisance is confined within the limits of justice. I would not only consult the interest of the people, but I would cheerfully gratify their humours. We are all a sort of children that must be soothed and managed. I think I am not austere or formal in my nature. I would bear, I would even myself play my part in, any innocent buffooneries, to diver'

them. But I never will act the tyrant for their amusement. If they will mix malice in their sports, I shall never consent to throw them any living, sentient creature whatsoever, no, not so much as a kitling, to torment.

“ But, if I profess all this impolitic stubbornness, I may chance never to be elected into parliament.” It is certainly not pleasing to be put out of the public service. But I wish to be a member of parliament to have my share of doing good and resisting evil. It would therefore be absurd to renounce my objects, in order to obtain my seat. I deceive myself, indeed, most grossly, if I had not much rather pass the remainder of my life hidden in the recesses of the deepest obscurity, feeding my mind even with the visions and imaginations of such things, than to be placed on the most splendid throne of the universe, tantalized with a denial of the practice of all which can make the greatest situation any other than the greatest curse. Gentlemen, I have had my day. I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to you for having set me in a place wherein I could lend the slightest help to great and laudable designs. If I have had my share in any measure giving quiet to private property, and private conscience; if by my vote I have aided in securing to families the best possession, peace; if I have joined in reconciling kings to their subjects, and subjects to their prince; if I have assisted to loosen the foreign holdings of the citizen, and taught him to look for his protection to the laws of his country, and for his comfort to the good-will of his countrymen; if I have thus taken my part with the best of men in the best of their actions; I can shut the book. I might wish to read a page or two more, but this is enough for my measure. I have not lived in vain.

And now, gentlemen, on this serious day, when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you, let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges that are brought against me. I do not here stand before you accused of venality, or of neglect of duty. It is not said, that, in the long period of my service, I have in a single instance sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alleged, that, to gratify any anger or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any one man of any description. No! the charges against me are all of one kind; — that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant, and further than the opinions of many would go along with me. In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress — I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted.

As another specimen of Burke’s spoken eloquence we will give from his Speech on the case of the Nabob of Arcot, delivered in the House of Commons on the 28th of February, 1785, the passage

containing the description of Hyder Ali's devastation of the Carnatic : —

When at length Hyder Ali found that he had to do with men who either would sign no convention, or whom no treaty and no signature could bind, and who were the determined enemies of human intercourse itself, he decreed to make the country possessed by these incorrigible and predestinated criminals a memorable example to mankind. He resolved, in the gloomy recesses of a mind capacious of such things, to leave the whole Carnatic an everlasting monument of vengeance, and to put perpetual desolation as a barrier between him and those against whom the faith which holds the moral elements of the world together was no protection. He became at length so confident of his force, so collected in his might, that he made no secret whatsoever of his dreadful resolution. Having terminated his disputes with every enemy, and every rival, who buried their mutual animosities in their common detestation against the creditors of the Nabob of Arcot,¹ he drew from every quarter whatever a savage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in the arts of destruction ; and, compounding all the materials of fury, havoc, and desolation, into one black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains. Whilst the authors of all the evils were idly and stupidly gazing on this menacing meteor, which blackened all their horizon, it suddenly burst, and poured down the whole of its contents upon the plains of the Carnatic. Then ensued a scene of woe, the like of which no eye had seen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can adequately tell. All the horrors of war before known or heard of were merey to that new havoc. A storm of universal fire blasted every field, consumed every house, destroyed every temple. The miserable inhabitants, flying from their flaming villages, in part were slaughtered ; others, without regard to sex, to age, to the respect of rank, or sacredness of function, fathers torn from children, husbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry, and amidst the goading spears of drivers, and the trampling of pursuing horses, were swept into captivity in an unknown and hostile land. Those who were able to evade this tempest fled to the walled cities. But, escaping from fire, sword, and exile, they fell into the jaws of famine.

The alms of the settlement, in this dreadful exigency, were certainly liberal ; and all was done by charity that private charity could do ; but it was a people in beggary, a nation which stretched out its hands for food. For months together these creatures of sufferance, whose very excess and luxury in their most plenteous days had fallen short of the allowance of our austerest fasts, silent, patient, resigned, without sedition or disturbance,

¹ The designs upon Hyder, which provoked this retaliation on his part, are represented in the speech as the scheme of the Nabob's English creditors.

almost without complaint, perished by an hundred a day in the streets of Madras ; every day seventy at least laid their bodies in the streets, or on the glacis of Tanjore, and expired of famine in the granary of India. I was going to awake your justice towards this unhappy part of our fellow-citizens by bringing before you some of the circumstances of this plague of hunger. Of all the calamities which beset and waylay the life of man, this comes the nearest to our heart, and is that wherein the proudest of us all feels himself to be nothing more than he is : but I find myself unable to manage it with decorum ; these details are of a species of horror so nauseous and disgusting ; they are so degrading to the sufferers and to the hearers ; they are so humiliating to human nature itself ; that, on better thoughts, I find it more advisable to throw a pall over this hideous object, and to leave it to your general conceptions.

For eighteen months without intermission, this destruction raged from the gates of Madras to the gates of Tanjore ; and so completely did these masters in their art, Hyder Ali and his ferocious son, absolve themselves of their impious vow, that, when the British armies traversed, as they did, the Carnatic for hundreds of miles in all directions, through the whole line of their march they did not see one man, not one woman, not one child, not one four-footed beast of any description whatever. One dead, uniform silence reigned over the whole region.

With this may be compared the much longer and still more powerful description of the cruelties alleged to have been perpetrated by the Rajah Debi Sing upon the ryots of Rungpore and Dinagepore, contained in the opening Speech delivered at the bar of the House of Lords on the fifth day of the trial of Warren Hastings, in February, 1788. It ought to be read both in the report printed from Burke's own papers in the authentic edition of his works, and also in Mr. Bond's edition of the Speeches (Vol. I. pp. 143, *et seq.*). And there may be seen how he triumphs over the difficulties of a subject more perilous than that of the sufferings from hunger of the inhabitants of the Carnatic. There is nowhere to be found a more wonderful example of how the fire of strong imagination burns out all stains.

It is a mistake to suppose that either imagination or passion is apt to become weaker as the other powers of the mind strengthen and acquire larger scope. The history of all the greatest poetical minds of all times and countries confutes this notion. Burke's imagination grew with his intellect, by which it was nourished, with his ever-extending realm of thought, with his constantly increasing experience of life and knowledge of every kind ; and his

latest writings are his most splendid as well as his most profound. Undoubtedly the work in which his eloquence is at once the most highly finished, and the most impregnated with philosophy and depth of thought, is his *Reflections on the French Revolution*. But this work is so generally known, at least in its most striking passages, that we may satisfy ourselves with a single short extract:—

You will observe, that, from *Magna Charta* to the *Declaration of Rights*, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties as an *entailed inheritance*, derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom, without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our constitution preserves an unity in so great a diversity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown; an inheritable peerage; and a House of Commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties from a long line of ancestors.

This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know, that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of transmission, without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquisition free: but it secures what it acquires. Whatever advantages are obtained by a state proceeding on these maxims are locked fast as in a sort of family settlement: grasped as in a kind of mortmain for ever. By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of Providence, are handed down, to us and from us, in the same course and order. Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole at one time is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete. By adhering in this manner, and on these principles, to our forefathers, we are

guided, not by the superstition of antiquarians, but by the spirit of philosophic analogy. In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood; binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars.

Through the same plan of a conformity to nature in our artificial institutions, and by calling in the aid of her unerring and powerful instincts to fortify the fallible and feeble contrivances of our reason, we have derived several other, and those no small, benefits from considering our liberties in the light of an inheritance. Always acting as if in the presence of canonized forefathers, the spirit of freedom, leading in itself to misrule and excess, is tempered with an awful gravity. This idea of a liberal descent inspires us with a sense of habitual native dignity, which prevents that upstart insolence almost inevitably adhering to and disgracing those who are the first acquirers of any distinction. By this means our liberty becomes a noble freedom. It carries an imposing and majestic aspect. It has a pedigree and illustrating ancestors. It has its bearings and its ensigns armorial. It has its gallery of portraits; its monumental inscriptions; its records, evidences, and titles. We procure reverence to our civil institutions on the principle upon which nature teaches us to revere individual men; on account of their age, and on account of those from whom they are descended. All your sophisters cannot produce any thing better adapted to preserve a rational and manly freedom than the course that we have pursued, who have chosen our nature rather than our speculations, our breasts rather than our inventions, for the great conservatories and magazines of our rights and privileges.

The Reflections appeared in 1790. We shall not give any extract from the Letter to a Noble Lord on the attacks made upon him in the House of Lords by the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale, which, as it is one of the most eloquent and spirited, is also perhaps the most generally known of all Burke's writings. The following passage from another Letter, written in 1795 (the year before), to William Elliot, Esq., on a speech made in the House of Lords by the Duke of Norfolk, will probably be less familiar to many of our readers:—

I wish to warn the people against the greatest of all evils — a blind and furious spirit of innovation, under the name of reform. I was indeed well aware that power rarely reforms itself. So it is undoubtedly when all is quiet about it. But I was in hopes that provident fear might prevent

fruitless penitence. I trusted that danger might produce at least circumspection ; I flattered myself, in a moment like this, that nothing would be added to make authority top-heavy ; that the very moment of an earthquake would not be the time chosen for adding a story to our houses. I hoped to see the surest of all reforms, perhaps the only sure reform, the ceasing to do ill. In the meantime, I wished to the people the wisdom of knowing how to tolerate a condition which none of their efforts can render much more than tolerable. It was a condition, however, in which every thing was to be found that could enable them to live to nature, and, if so they pleased, to live to virtue and to honour.

I do not repent that I thought better of those to whom I wished well than they will suffer me long to think that they deserved. Far from repenting, I would to God that new faculties had been called up in me, in favour not of this or that man, or this or that system, but of the general vital principle, that whilst in its vigour produced the state of things transmitted to us from our fathers ; but which, through the joint operations of the abuses of authority and liberty, may perish in our hands. I am not of opinion that the race of men, and the commonwealths they create, like the bodies of individuals, grow effete, and languid, and bloodless, and ossify, by the necessities of their own conformation and the fatal operation of longevity and time. These analogies between bodies natural and politic, though they may sometimes illustrate arguments, furnish no argument of themselves. They are but too often used, under the colour of a specious philosophy, to find apologies for the despair of laziness and pusillanimity, and to excuse the want of all manly efforts when the exigencies of our country call for them most loudly.

How often has public calamity been arrested on the very brink of ruin by the seasonable energy of a single man ! Have we no such man amongst us ? I am as sure as I am of my being that one vigorous mind, without office, without situation, without public functions of any kind (at a time when the want of such a thing is felt, as I am sure it is), I say, one such man, confiding in the aid of God, and full of just reliance in his own fortitude, vigour, enterprise, and perseverance, would first draw to him some few like himself, and then that multitudes, hardly thought to be in existence, would appear, and troop about him.

If I saw this auspicious beginning, baffled and frustrated as I am, yet, on the very verge of a timely grave, abandoned abroad and desolate at home, stripped of my boast, my hope, my consolation, my helper, my counsellor, and my guide (you know in part what I have lost, and would to God I could clear myself of all neglect and fault in that loss), yet thus, even thus, I would rake up the fire under all the ashes that oppress it. I am no longer patient of the public eye ; nor am I of force to win my way, and to jostle and elbow in a crowd. But, even in solitude, something

may be done for society. The meditations of the closet have affected senates with a subtle frenzy, and inflamed armies with the brands of the furies. The cure might come from the same source with the distemper. I would add my part to those who would animate the people (whose hearts are yet right) to new exertions in the old cause.

Novelty is not the only source of zeal. Why should not a Maccabeus and his brethren arise to assert the honour of the ancient laws, and to defend the temple of their forefathers, with as ardent a spirit as can inspire any innovator to destroy the monuments of the piety and the glory of ancient ages? It is not a hazarded assertion, it is a great truth, that, when once things are gone out of their ordinary course, it is by acts out of the ordinary course they can alone be re-established. Republican spirit can only be combated by a spirit of the same nature: of the same nature, but informed with another principle, and pointed to another end. I would persuade a resistance both to the corruption and to the reformation that prevails. It will not be the weaker, but much the stronger, for combating both together. A victory over real corruptions would enable us to baffle the spurious and pretended reformations. I would not wish to excite, or even to tolerate, that kind of evil which invokes the powers of hell to rectify the disorders of the earth. No! I would add my voice, with better, and, I trust, more potent charms, to draw down justice, and wisdom, and fortitude from heaven, for the correction of human vice, and the recalling of human error from the devious ways into which it has been betrayed. I would wish to call the impulses of individuals at once to the aid and to the control of authority. By this, which I call the true republican spirit, paradoxical as it may appear, monarchies alone can be rescued from the imbecility of courts and the madness of the crowd. This republican spirit would not suffer men in high place to bring ruin on their country and on themselves. It would reform, not by destroying, but by saving the great, the rich, and the powerful. Such a republican spirit we, perhaps fondly, conceive to have animated the distinguished heroes and patriots of old, who knew no mode of policy but religion and virtue. These they would have paramount to all constitutions; they would not suffer monarchs, or senates, or popular assemblies, under pretences of dignity, or authority, or freedom, to shake off those moral riders which reason has appointed to govern every sort of rude power. These, in appearance loading them by their weight, do by that pressure augment their essential force. The momentum is increased by the extraneous weight. It is true in moral, as it is in mechanical science. It is true, not only in the draught but in the race. These riders of the great, in effect, hold the reins which guide them in their course, and wear the spur that stimulates them to the goals of honour and of safety. The great must submit to the dominion of prudence and of virtue, or none will long submit to the dominion of the great.

From the second of the Letters on a Regicide Peace, or to transcribe the full title, Letters addressed to a Member of the present Parliament on the Proposals for Peace with the Regicide Directory of France,¹ published in 1796, we give as our last extract the following remarkable observations on the conduct of the war:—

It is a dreadful truth, but it is a truth that cannot be concealed; in ability, in dexterity, in the distinctness of their views, the Jacobins are our superiors. They saw the thing right from the very beginning. Whatever were the first motives to the war among politicians, they saw that in its spirit, and for its objects, it was a *civil war*; and as such they pursued it. It is a war between the partisans of the ancient, civil, moral, and political order of Europe, against a sect of fanatical and ambitious atheists, which means to change them all. It is not France extending a foreign empire over other nations; it is a sect aiming at universal empire, and beginning with the conquest of France. The leaders of that sect secured the *centre of Europe*; and, that assured, they knew that, whatever might be the event of battles and sieges, their *cause* was victorious. Whether its territory had a little more or a little less peeled from its surface, or whether an island or two was detached from its commerce, to them was of little moment. The conquest of France was a glorious acquisition. That once well laid as a basis of empire, opportunities never could be wanting to regain or to replace what had been lost, and dreadfully to avenge themselves on the faction of their adversaries.

They saw it was a *civil war*. It was their business to persuade their adversaries that it ought to be a *foreign war*. The Jacobins everywhere set up a cry against the new crusade; and they intrigued with effect in the cabinet, in the field, and in every private society in Europe. Their task was not difficult. The condition of princes, and sometimes of first ministers too, is to be pitied. The creatures of the desk, and the creatures of favour, had no relish for the principles of the manifestoes.² They promised no governments, no regiments, no revenues from whence emoluments might arise by perquisite or by grant. In truth, the tribe of vulgar politicians are the lowest of our species. There is no trade so vile and mechanical as government in their hands. Virtue is not their habit. They are out of themselves in any course of conduct recommended only by conscience and glory. A large, liberal, and prospective view of the

¹ There are four Letters in all; of which the two first appeared in 1796 (a surreptitious edition being also brought out at the same time by Owen, a bookseller of Piccadilly), the third was passing through the press when Burke died, in July, 1797, and the fourth, which is unfinished, and had been written, so far as it goes before the three others, after his death.

² Of the Emperor and the King of Prussia, published in August, 1792.

interests of states passes with them for romance ; and the principles that recommend it for the wanderings of a disordered imagination. The calculators compute them out of their senses. The jesters and buffoons shame them out of everything grand and elevated. Littleness in object and in means to them appears soundness and sobriety. They think there is nothing worth pursuit but that which they can handle — which they can measure with a two-foot rule — which they can tell upon ten fingers.

Without the principles of the Jacobins, perhaps without any principles at all, they played the game of that faction. . . . They aimed, or pretended to aim, at *defending* themselves against a danger from which there can be no security in any *defensive* plan. . . . This error obliged them, even in their offensive operations, to adopt a plan of war, against the success of which there was something little short of mathematical demonstration. They refused to take any step which might strike at the heart of affairs. They seemed unwilling to wound the enemy in any vital part. They acted through the whole as if they really wished the conservation of the Jacobin power, as what might be more favourable than the lawful government to the attainment of the petty objects they looked for. They always kept on the circumference ; and, the wider and remoter the circle was, the more eagerly they chose it as their sphere of action in this centrifugal war. The plan they pursued in its nature demanded great length of time. In its execution, they who went the nearest way to work were obliged to cover an incredible extent of country. It left to the enemy every means of destroying this extended line of weakness. Ill success in any part was sure to defeat the effect of the whole. This is true of Austria. It is still more true of England. On this false plan even good fortune, by further weakening the victor, put him but the further off from his object.

As long as there was any appearance of success, the spirit of aggrandizement, and consequently the spirit of mutual jealousy, seized upon all the coalesced powers. Some sought an accession of territory at the expense of France, some at the expense of each other, some at the expense of third parties ; and, when the vicissitude of disaster took its turn, they found common distress a treacherous bond of faith and friendship.

The greatest skill, conducting the greatest military apparatus, has been employed ; but it has been worse than uselessly employed, through the false policy of the war. The operations of the field suffered by the errors of the cabinet. If the same spirit continues when peace is made, the peace will fix and perpetuate all the errors of the war. . . .

Had we carried on the war on the side of France which looks towards the Channel or the Atlantic, we should have attacked our enemy on his weak or unarmed side. We should not have to reckon on the loss of a man who did not fall in battle. We should have an ally in the heart of

the country, who, to one hundred thousand, would at one time have added eighty thousand men at the least, and all animated by principle, by enthusiasm, and by vengeance; motives which secured them to the cause in a very different manner from some of those allies whom we subsidized with millions. This ally (or rather this principal in the war), by the confession of the regicide himself, was more formidable to him than all his other foes united. Warring there, we should have led our arms to the capital of wrong. Defeated, we could not fail (proper precautions taken) of a sure retreat. Stationary, and only supporting the royalists, an impenetrable barrier, an impregnable rampart, would have been formed between the enemy and his naval power. We are probably the only nation who have declined to act against an enemy, when it might have been done, in his own country; and who, having an armed, a powerful, and a long victorious ally in that country, declined all effectual co-operation and suffered him to perish for want of support. On the plan of a war in France, every advantage that our allies might obtain would be doubtful in its effect. Disasters on the one side might have a fair chance of being compensated by victories on the other. Had we brought the main of our force to bear upon that quarter, all the operations of the British and imperial crowns would have been combined. The war would have had system, correspondence, and a certain connection. But, as the war has been pursued, the operations of the two crowns have not the smallest degree of mutual bearing or relation.¹



METAPHYSICAL AND ETHICAL WRITERS.

THE most remarkable metaphysical and speculative works which had appeared in England since Locke's Essay were, Dr. Samuel Clarke's Sermons on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, 1705, in which he expounded his famous *à priori* argument for the existence of a God; Berkeley's Theory of Vision, 1709, his Principles of Human Knowledge, 1710, in which he announced his argument against the existence of matter; his Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous, 1713; his Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher, 1732; his Analyst, 1734; the Earl of Shaftesbury's Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times, first pub-

¹ These prophetic views are very similar to those that were urged twelve years later in a memorable article in the Edinburgh Review, by a great living orator. (See No. XXV., Don Cevallos on the French Usurpation of Spain.)

lished in the form in which we now have them in 1713, after the author's death; Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Public Benefits*, 1714; Dr. Francis Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 1725; Andrew Baxter's *Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*, 1730; Bishop Butler's *Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel*, 1726; and his *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, 1736. David Hume, who was born in 1711, and died in 1776, and who has gained the highest place in two very distinct fields of intellectual and literary enterprise, commenced his literary life by the publication of his *Treatise on Human Nature*, in 1739. The work, which, as he has himself stated, was projected before he left college, and written and published not long after, fell, to use his own words, "dead-born from the press"; nor did the speculations it contained attract much more attention when republished ten years after in another form under the title of *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding*; but they eventually proved perhaps more exciting and productive, at least for a time, both in this and in other countries, than any other metaphysical views that had been promulgated in modern times. Hume's *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* appeared in 1752, his *Natural History of Religion* in 1755; and with the latter publication he may be regarded as having concluded the exposition of his sceptical philosophy. Among the most distinguished writers on mind and morals that appeared after Hume within the first quarter of a century of the reign of George III. may be mentioned Hartley, whose *Observations on Man*, in which he unfolded his hypothesis of the association of ideas, were published in 1749; Lord Kames (Henry Home), whose *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* were published in 1752; Adam Smith, whose *Theory of Moral Sentiments* was published in 1759; Reid, whose *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* was published in 1764; Abraham Tucker (calling himself Edward Search, Esq.), the first part of whose *Light of Nature Pursued* was published in 1768, the second in 1778, after the author's death; and Priestley, whose new edition of Hartley's work, with an *Introductory Dissertation*, was published in 1775; his *Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry*, the same year; and his *Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity*, in 1777. We may add to the list Campbell's very able *Dissertation on Miracles*, in answer to Hume, which appeared

in 1763; and Beattie's Essay on Truth, noticed in a former page, which appeared in 1770, and was also, as everybody knows, an attack upon the philosophy of the great sceptic.



HISTORICAL WRITERS.—HUME. ROBERTSON. GIBBON.

IN the latter part of his literary career Hume struck into altogether another line, and the subtle and daring metaphysician suddenly came before the world in the new character of an historian. He appears, indeed, to have nearly abandoned metaphysics very soon after the publication of his Philosophical Essays. In a letter to his friend Sir Gilbert Elliott, which, though without date, seems from its contents, according to Mr. Stewart, to have been written about 1750 or 1751, he says, "I am sorry that our correspondence should lead us into these abstract speculations. I have thought, and read, and composed very little on such questions of late. Morals, politics, and literature have employed all my time."¹ The first volume of his History of Great Britain, containing the Reigns of James I. and Charles I., was published, in quarto, at Edinburgh, in 1754; the second, containing the Commonwealth and the Reigns of Charles II. and James II., at London, in 1757.² According to his own account the former was received with "one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation"; and after the first ebullitions of the fury of his assailants were over, he adds, "what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion: Mr. Miller told me that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it." He was so bitterly disappointed, that, he tells us, had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, he had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, changed his name, and never more returned to his native country. However, after a little time, in the impracticability of

¹ Dissertation on the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical, and Political Philosophy, prefixed to Encyclopædia Britannica, p. 206, note 3. But we do not understand how Mr. Stewart infers from this letter that Hume had abandoned all his metaphysical researches *long before* the publication of his Essays. His Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding, which are those of which Mr. Stewart is speaking were first published in 1749.

² The common accounts say 1756; but the copy before us, "printed for A. Millar, opposite Catharine Street, in the Strand," is dated 1757.

executing this scheme of expatriation, he resolved to pick up courage and persevere, the more especially as his second volume was considerably advanced. That, he informs us, "happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received: it not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother." The work, indeed, seems to have now rapidly attained extraordinary popularity. Two more volumes, comprehending the reigns of the princes of the House of Tudor, appeared in 1759; and the remaining two, completing the History, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the accession of Henry VII., in 1762. And several new editions of all the volumes were called for in rapid succession.¹ Hume makes as much an epoch in our historical as he does in our philosophical literature. His originality in the one department is as great as in the other; and the influence he has exerted upon those who have followed him in the same path has been equally extensive and powerful in both cases. His History, notwithstanding some defects which the progress of time and of knowledge is every year making more considerable, or at least enabling us better to perceive, and some others which probably would have been much the same at whatever time the work had been written, has still merits of so high a kind as a literary performance that it must ever retain its place among our few classical works in this department, of which it is as yet perhaps the greatest. In narrative clearness, grace, and spirit, at least, it is not excelled, scarcely equalled, by any other completed historical work in the language; and it has besides the high charm, indispensable to every literary performance that is to endure, of being impressed all over with the peculiar character of the author's own mind, interesting us even

¹ In a newspaper of 1764 (*The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, for Wednesday, May 9), we find, besides the advertisement of a new edition of the History of the House of Tudor, in 2 vols. small paper, 4to, price 1*l.* 5*s.*, the following announcement, which is curious both as an evidence of the popularity of Hume's work, and as showing that a mode of publication extensively adopted in our own day is no novelty:—"This day is published, printed on a new type and good paper, the seventh volume, in octavo, price 5*s.* in boards, of the Complete History of England, from Julius Cæsar to the Revolution. With Additions and Corrections. And to the last volume will be added a full and complete Index. By DAVID HUME, Esq. *.* The Proprietor, at the desire of many who wish to be possessed of this valuable and esteemed History, is induced to this Monthly Publication, which will not exceed Eight volumes; a volume of which shall be punctually published every Month, for the benefit of those who do not choose to purchase them all at once. Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand: and S. Bladon, in Paternoster Row; and to be had of all the Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland."

in its most prejudiced and objectionable passages (perhaps still more, indeed, in some of these than elsewhere) by his tolerant candor and gentleness of nature, his charity for all the milder vices, his unaffected indifference to many of the common objects of human passion, and his contempt for their pursuers, never waxing bitter or morose, and often impregnating his style and manner with a vein of the quietest but yet truest and richest humor. One effect which we may probably ascribe in great part to the example of Hume was the attention that immediately began to be turned to historic composition in a higher spirit than had heretofore been felt among us, and that ere long added to the possessions of the language in that department the celebrated performances of Robertson and Gibbon. Robertson's *History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI.* was published at London in 1759; his *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V.*, in 1769; and his *History of America*, in 1776. Robertson's style of narration, lucid, equable, and soberly embellished, took the popular ear and taste from the first. A part of the cause of this favorable reception is slyly enough indicated by Hume, in a letter which he wrote to Robertson himself on the publication of the *History of Scotland*: — "The great success of your book, besides its real merit, is forwarded by its prudence, and by the deference paid to established opinions. It gains also by its being your first performance, and by its surprising the public, who are not upon their guard against it. By reason of these two circumstances justice is more readily done to its merit, which, however, is really so great, that I believe there is scarce another instance of a first performance being so near perfection."¹ The applause, indeed, was loud and universal, from Horace Walpole to Lord Lyttelton, from Lord Mansfield to David Garrick.² Nor did it fail to be renewed in equal measure on the appearance both of his *History of Charles V.* and of his *History of America*. But, although in his own day he probably bore away the palm from Hume in the estimation of the majority, the finest judgments even then discerned, with Gibbon, that there was something higher in "the careless inimitable graces" of the latter than in his rival's more elaborate regularity, flowing and perspicuous as it usually is; and, as always happens, time has brought the general

¹ Account of the Life and Writings of Robertson, by Dugald Stewart.

² "Lord Lyttelton," says Hume, in another letter, "seems to think that since the time of St. Paul there scarce has been a better writer than Dr. Robertson."

opinion into accordance with this feeling of the wiser few. The first volume of Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* appeared in 1776, a few months before the death of Hume, and about a year before the publication of Robertson's *America*; the second and third followed in 1781; the three additional volumes, which completed the work, not till 1788. Of the first volume, the author tells us, "the first impression was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand; and a scarcely diminished interest followed the great undertaking to its close, notwithstanding the fear which he expresses in the preface to his concluding volumes that "six ample quartos must have tried, and may have exhausted, the indulgence of the public." A performance at once of such extent, and of so sustained a brilliancy throughout, perhaps does not exist in ancient or modern historical literature; but it is a hard metallic brilliancy, which even the extraordinary interest of the subject and the unflagging animation of the writer, with the great skill he shows in the disposition of his materials, do not prevent from becoming sometimes fatiguing and oppressive. Still the splendor, artificial as it is, is very imposing; it does not warm, as well as illuminate, like the light of the sun, but it has at least the effect of a theatrical blaze of lamps and cressets; while it is supported everywhere by a profusion of real erudition such as would make the dullest style and manner interesting. It is remarkable, however, that in regard to mere language, no one of these three celebrated historical writers, the most eminent we have yet to boast of, at least among those that have stood the test of time, can be recommended as a model. No one of the three, in fact, was of English birth and education. Gibbon's style is very impure, abounding in Gallicisms; Hume's, especially in the first edition of his *History*, is, with all its natural elegance, almost as much infested with Scotticisms; and, if Robertson's be less incorrect in that respect, it is so unidiomatic as to furnish a still less adequate exemplification of genuine English eloquence. Robertson died at the age of seventy-one, in 1793; Gibbon, in 1794, at the age of fifty-seven.

Many other historical works, some of them very ably executed, and forming valuable additions to our literature, also appeared about this date, the most remarkable of which are, Lord Lyttelton's *History of the Life of King Henry II.* (1764-7), a prolix and ill arranged but elaborate and sensible performance, founded

throughout on original authorities, and, from the detailed and painstaking investigations it contains of many fundamental points, still forming perhaps the best introduction we possess to the study of the English constitution; Sir David Dalrymple Lord Hailes's admirable Annals of Scotland from the accession of Malcolm Canmore to the accession of the House of Stuart (1776-9); Sir John Dalrymple's Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland from the Dissolution of the last Parliament of Charles II. until the sea-battle off La Hogue (1771-3), to which a third volume was afterwards added carrying down the narrative to the capture of the French and Spanish fleets at Vigo, a publication the importance of which consists in the original papers it contains, procured from the French Foreign Office and from King William's private cabinet at Kensington; James Macpherson's History of Great Britain from the Restoration to the Accession of the House of Hanover, with Original Papers (1775); Gilbert Stuart's Historical Dissertation concerning the Antiquity of the British Constitution (1767); his View of Society in Europe in its Progress from Rudeness to Refinement; or, Inquiries concerning the History of Laws, Government, and Manners (1777); his History of the Establishment of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland (1780); and his History of Scotland from the Establishment of the Reformation till the death of Queen Mary (1782): all displaying both research and acuteness, but the two last-mentioned deformed by the author's violent personal animosity against Robertson, for the purpose of confuting certain of whose statements or views they were mainly written; Whitaker's History of Manchester (1771-5), which is in truth a general investigation of the Celtic and Roman antiquities of Britain, conducted, however, with more learning and ingenuity than sound judgment; Warner's History of Ireland (1763-7); Leland's History of Ireland from the Invasion of Henry II. (1773), a well-written general sketch, by the translator of Demosthenes and Æschines, and the author of The Life of Philip of Macedon, published in 1758; Henry's History of Great Britain, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the Death of Henry VIII. (1771-74-77-81-85, a sixth volume having been published in 1793, after the author's death, under the superintendence of Malcolm Laing, Esq.), a work valuable for the numerous facts it contains illustrative of manners and the state of society, which are not to be found in any of our previous general historians, but chiefly meritorious as having

been our first English history compiled upon that plan; Granger's curious Biographical History of England (1769-75); Dr. Adam Ferguson's Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767), and his History of the Progress and the Termination of the Roman Republic (1783), both very able works, the product of independent thought as well as of accurate scholarship; Watson's History of Philip II. of Spain (1776), designed as a sequel to Robertson's Charles V., the continuation of which to the death of Philip III., begun by Watson, was completed and published in 1783, after his death, by Dr. William Thomson; Orme's accurate and perspicuous History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from the year 1745 (1763-78); Holwell's Interesting Historical Events relative to the Provinces of Bengal, and the Empire of Hindostan (1765-67-71); Anderson's Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce (1764); Tytler Lord Woodhouselee's Plan and Outlines of a Course of Lectures on Universal History (1783). To these titles may be added that of Home Lord Kames's Sketches of the History of Man (1773), which, however, although it presents a highly curious collection of arranged facts, or what the author believed to be such, is in the main rather disquisitional and theoretic than historical in the proper sense.



POLITICAL ECONOMY. THEOLOGY. CRITICISM AND BELLES
LETTRES.

BESIDES his metaphysical and historical works, upon which his fame principally rests, the penetrating and original genius of Hume also distinguished itself in another field, that of economical speculation, which had for more than a century before his time to some extent engaged the attention of inquirers in this country. There are many ingenious views upon this subject scattered up and down in his Political Discourses, and his Moral and Political Essays. Other contributions, not without value, to the science of political economy, for which we are indebted to the middle of the last century, are the Rev. R. Wallace's Essay on the Numbers of Mankind, published at Edinburgh in 1753; and Sir James Steuart's Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy, which appeared

in 1767. But these and all other preceding works on the subject have been thrown into the shade by Adam Smith's celebrated Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, which, after having been long expected, was at last given to the world in the beginning of the year 1776. It is interesting to learn that this crowning performance of his friend was read by Hume, who died before the close of the year in which it was published; a letter of his to Smith is preserved, in which, after congratulating him warmly on having acquitted himself so as to relieve the anxiety and fulfil the hopes of his friends, he ends by saying, "If you were here at my fireside, I should dispute some of your principles. . . . But these, and a hundred other points, are fit only to be discussed in conversation. I hope it will be soon, for I am in a very bad state of health, and cannot afford a long delay." Smith survived till July, 1790.

A few other names, more or less distinguished in the literature of this time, we must content ourselves with merely mentioning:— in theology, Warburton, Lowth, Horsley, Jortin, Madan, Gerard, Blair, Geddes, Lardner, Priestley; in critical and grammatical disquisition, Harris, Monboddo, Kames, Blair, Jones; in antiquarian research, Walpole, Hawkins, Burney, Chandler, Barrington, Steevens, Pegge, Farmer, Vallancey, Grose, Gough; in the department of the belles lettres and miscellaneous speculation, Chesterfield, Hawkesworth, Brown, Jenyns, Bryant, Hurd, Melmoth, Potter, Francklin, &c.

PROGRESS OF SCIENCE.

THE last notices given under that head brought down our sketch of the progress of the mathematical and physical sciences to the death of Flamsteed in 1719. The successor of Flamsteed, as astronomer royal, was Edmund Halley, who was then in his sixty-fourth year, and who held the appointment till his death in 1742, at the age of eighty-six. "Among the Englishmen of his day," says the writer of his life in the Penny Cyclopædia, "Halley stands second only to Newton, and probably for many years after the publication of the Principia he was the only one who both could and would rightly appreciate the character and coming util-

ity of that memorable work. His own attention was too much divided to permit of his being the mathematician which he might have been; but nevertheless his papers on pure mathematics show a genius of the same order of power, though of much less fertility, with that of John Bernoulli."¹ Besides numerous papers in the Philosophical Transactions, Halley is the author of a Catalogue of the Southern Stars (*Catalogus Stellarum Australium, sive Supplementum Catalogi Tycho-nici*), published in 1679, being the result of his observations made at St. Helena, where he had resided the two preceding years; and of editions of the treatise of Apollonius *De Rationis Sectione* (from the Arabic), and of the same ancient geometrician's *Conic Sections* (partly from the Arabic), the former of which was published at Oxford in 1706, the latter in 1710. Halley did not himself understand Arabic, but he was able both to restore what was lost in these works and in many cases to suggest the true meaning and emendation of the text where it was corrupted, merely by his geometrical ingenuity and profound knowledge of their subjects. Besides other astronomical labors, Halley is famous for having been the first person to predict the return of a comet, that known by his name, which he first saw at Paris in December 1680, and which actually reappeared, as he had calculated that it would, in 1758 and 1835. He also suggested the observation of the transit of Venus, with the view of determining the sun's parallax, which was accomplished at St. Helena, by Dr. Maskelyne, in 1761. Out of the province of astronomy he contributed to the progress of science by his construction of the first tables of mortality (from observations made at Breslau), by his improvements in the diving-bell, and by his speculations on the variation of the compass, the theory of the trade-winds, and other subjects.

The third astronomer royal was James Bradley—"the first, perhaps, of all astronomers," as he is called by the writer of his life in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, "in the union of theoretical sagacity with practical excellence." Bradley, who was born in 1693, had already in 1728 made his great discovery of the aberration of light, or the apparent alteration in the place of a star arising in part from the motion of light, in part from the change of position in the spectator occasioned by the motion of the earth; "the greatest discovery," says the writer just quoted, "of a man who has, more than any

¹ *Penny Cyclopædia*, xii. 21.

other, contributed to render *a single observation* of a star correct enough for the purposes of astronomy," and "the first positively direct and unanswerable proof of the earth's motion."¹ Bradley, whom Newton had declared the best astronomer in Europe, held the office of astronomer royal from 1742 till his death in 1762. Besides an immense mass of observations of unprecedented accuracy (which have been published by the University of Oxford in two volumes, 1798-1805), he made in 1747 his second great discovery of the nutation of the earth's axis, that is, of the fact that the curve in which the pole of the equator moves round the pole of the ecliptic is not that of a plain but of a waving or tremulous circle, somewhat like the rim of a milled coin. One of the subjects that occupied the attention of this distinguished astronomer was the introduction of the new style, which was effected by act of parliament in 1751. "Bradley," says his biographer in the Penny Cyclopædia, "appears to have had some share in drawing up the necessary tables, as well as in aiding Lord Macclesfield, his early friend, and the seconder of the measure in the House of Lords, and Mr. Pelham, then minister, with his advice on the subject. But this procured him some unpopularity, for the common people of all ranks imagined that the alteration was equivalent to robbing them of eleven days of their natural lives, and called Bradley's subsequent illness and decline a judgment of heaven." "This," adds the learned writer, "was, as far as we know, the last expiring manifestation of a belief in the wickedness of altering the time of religious anniversaries, which had disturbed the world more or less, and at different periods, for fourteen hundred years."² But, if the people believed that the change of style had actually shortened their lives, they had more serious cause for alarm than the zealots of orthodoxy in former times, who made themselves unhappy about the notion of merely celebrating Easter on the wrong day.

In the earlier part of the eighteenth century, we ought not to omit to mention, was invented the ingenious and valuable instrument called Hadley's Quadrant (since improved into a sextant, and still more recently into an entire circle), either by John Hadley, who was a fellow of the Royal Society, and who gave an account of it in the Philosophical Transactions for 1731, or by Thomas Godfrey, a glazier in Philadelphia, who is generally believed to

¹ Penny Cyclopædia, v. 320.

² Ibid. 321

have been in possession of it a year before the date of Hadley's communication. But it appears that a similar instrument had been described to Dr. Halley by Newton, some time before his death in 1727. And this age is also marked in the history of optics and astronomical observation by the important correction of the Newtonian views as to the dispersion of refracted light, of which the honor belongs to John Dollond, and by the invention of the Achromatic Telescope, with which that sagacious and philosophical experimentalist followed up his discovery. Dollond's account of his Experiments concerning the Different Refrangibility of Light appeared in the Philosophical Transactions in 1758; and his achromatic object-glass was contrived the same year.

Of a few other distinguished British mathematicians belonging to the middle portion of the last century the most eminent was Colin Maclaurin, the successor of James Gregory in the mathematical chair at Edinburgh, who was born in 1698, and died in 1746. Maclaurin's principal works are his *Geometria Organica* (a treatise on curves), published in 1720; his admirable *Treatise on Fluxions*, 1742; and his *Treatise on Algebra*, 1748. Another very able performance printed after his death is his *Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries*, which also appeared at London in 1748. All Maclaurin's works are distinguished by profoundness and solidity united with elegance, and often by originality in the method of exposition, or novelty in the application of principles. His countryman and contemporary, Dr. Robert Simson, professor of mathematics at Glasgow (b. 1687, d. 1768), was also a most learned and able geometrician: he is the author of a restoration of the *Loci of Apollonius*, and of an English translation of *Euclid*, which continued down to our own day in common use as an elementary book both in Scotland and England. Along with these may be mentioned James Stirling, the author of a Latin treatise published in 1717, on what are called lines of the third order, and a treatise on fluxions, entitled *Methodus Differentialis*, 1730. William Emerson, a mathematician and mechanist of great talent, whose death did not take place till 1782, when he had reached his eighty-first year, is the author of a series of works on fluxions, trigonometry, mechanics, navigation, algebra, optics, astronomy, geography, dialing, &c. His manner of writing is singularly uncouth; but his works often exhibit much scientific elegance, as well as considerable invention. Another author of

a remarkable series of mathematical works, of this date, is the self-taught genius, Thomas Simpson, who was born at Market Bosworth, in the humblest rank of life, in 1710, worked at his trade of a weaver till he was seven-and-twenty, and then suddenly came forth as one of the most acute and well-furnished mathematical writers of the day. A Treatise on Fluxions, another on the Nature and Laws of Chance, a quarto volume of Essays on subjects in speculative and mixed mathematics, a work on the doctrine of Annuities and Reversion, a second volume of Mathematical Dissertations, a treatise on Algebra, another on Elementary Geometry, another on Trigonometry, plane and spherical, a new work on the doctrine and application of Fluxions, a volume of Exercises for young proficients in Mathematics, and a volume of Miscellaneous Tracts, were all produced by Simpson in the twenty years between 1737 and 1757. And he also furnished several papers to the Philosophical Transactions, and edited for some years the mathematical annual called the Ladies' Diary. He died in 1761. In the same year with Simpson was born in Banffshire, in Scotland, James Ferguson, who was the son of a day-laborer, and who taught himself the elements of mechanics and astronomy while employed as a farmer's boy in tending sheep. Ferguson published his first performance, his Dissertation on the Phenomena of the Harvest Moon, in 1747; his Astronomy in 1756; his Lectures on Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Pneumatics, and Optics, in 1760; and two or three other works between that date and his death in 1776. "Ferguson," it has been observed, "has contributed more than perhaps any other man in this country to the extension of physical science among all classes of society, but especially among that largest class whose circumstances preclude them from a regular course of scientific instruction. Perspicuity in the selection and arrangement of his facts, and in the display of the truths deduced from them, was his characteristic both as a lecturer and a writer."¹

Another department of natural philosophy in which some splendid results were obtained by English experimenters of this era was that of electricity. Francis Hawksbee, who was admitted a fellow of the Royal Society in 1705, published several papers in the Transactions between that year and 1711, giving an account of a series of experiments, partly performed with a glass globe, in the course of which he noticed a number of facts connected with electrical

¹ Penny Cyclopædia, x. 234.

attraction and repulsion, and in particular detected for the first time the remarkable phenomenon of the production of light by friction. A few years later the subject was taken up by Stephen Gray, a pensioner of the Charter House, who, with the aid of a very poor apparatus, made out a catalogue, which he published in 1720, of bodies which show electricity on being rubbed, and in 1732 discovered the conducting property inherent in bodies that are not electrical. The two opposite kinds, or exhibitions, of electricity (which he called the vitreous and the resinous) were discovered by Dufay, keeper of the King's Garden at Paris, before 1739; and he also showed that bodies similarly electrified repel, and those dissimilarly electrified attract, each other. The mode of accumulating the electric power by what is called the Leyden phial, or jar, was discovered by Cuneus and Lallemand in 1745. This experiment immediately attracted universal attention: Nollet in France, and Watson in England, in particular, applied themselves to find out the explanation of it; and the latter is asserted to have first conceived the hypothesis of the redundancy of the electricity on the one side of the jar and its deficiency on the other. The same view occurred to the celebrated Benjamin Franklin, in America, who expounded it in a series of letters written to his friend Collinson, in London, in the course of the year 1747, in which he described the overcharged side of the jar as in a state of positive, and the undercharged of negative, electricity, and showed how all the known phenomena of electric action were to be accounted for on this hypothesis of only one kind of electric matter, or power, in opposite states. Franklin seems to have known little or nothing of what had been done by his predecessors either in France or England; of the theories, at least, either of Dufay or Watson, he appears never to have heard. Although not the first in the field, his penetrating and inventive genius immediately raised him to the first place among the cultivators of the new science. He soon improved the Leyden jar into the much more powerful apparatus of the electrical battery. Some of his earliest experiments had taught him the superior efficiency of sharp points both in attracting and giving out the electric matter; from the year 1749 he had inferred, from a great number of facts which he had observed and collected, the probable identity of electricity and lightning; and at last, in June, 1752, he established that truth by the decisive experiment of actually drawing down the electric matter from the clouds.

This was followed by his invention of lightning-conductors, of which, however, none were erected in England till the year 1762.

The thermometer was invented at Florence soon after the middle of the seventeenth century, and by the assistance of that instrument, as manufactured by Fahrenheit and Réaumur, a considerable number of facts relating to the laws of heat had been gradually collected before the middle of the eighteenth. "The most judicious writer," says Professor Leslie, "that had yet appeared on the subject of heat, was Dr. Martine, of St. Andrew's, who studied medicine on the Continent, and, like the accomplished physicians of that period, cultivated learning and general science. His acute Essays, published in the years 1739 and 1740, not only corrected the different thermometric scales, but enriched philosophy by several well-devised and original experiments. Unfortunately the career of this promising genius was very short. Having in the pursuit of his profession accompanied Admiral Vernon in the fatal expedition against Carthage, he perished by a malignant fever."¹ Mr. Leslie adds, that if Martine's investigations had been steadily prosecuted, they must have led to interesting results. About the year 1750, also, Dr. Cullen had his attention accidentally drawn to some facts connected with the curious subject of the production of cold by evaporation; but he did not pursue the inquiry.

In general chemistry the experiments begun by Boyle and Hooke had been followed up by their contemporary Dr. John Mayow, a physician of Oxford, whose tracts, written in Latin, on nitre and other connected subjects, were published in 1674. They announced many new and important facts illustrative of the phenomena of respiration and combustion. About the beginning of the next century the first general theory of combustion was given to the world by the German chemist Stahl, — that which, under the name of the Stahlian or Phlogistic theory (from his imaginary *phlogiston*, or principle of inflammability), continued to be generally received down to the era of Black, Cavendish, and Priestley. Some considerable additions were made to our knowledge of æriiform bodies by Dr. Stephen Hales about a quarter of a century after this. But the most important chemical discoveries of this age are those of the celebrated Dr. Joseph Black, the pupil of Cullen. One was that of the new air discovered by him in the commencement of his career, and announced in his Experiments

¹ Dissertation Fourth, in *Encyc. Brit.* p. 642.

on Magnesia, Quicklime, and other Alkaline Substances, published in 1755. Fixed air, or, as it is now called, carbonic acid, had indeed been long before recognized as something distinct from common air by Van Helmont; but his notice of it appears to have been quite forgotten when it was again detected by Black, who also first examined it with any degree of care, and ascertained its most remarkable properties. Another was the great discovery of latent heat, which he made a few years later. The most eminent names in the mathematical and physical sciences belonging to the earlier part of the reign of George III. are those of Cavendish (the discoverer of the composition of water), Priestley, Herschel (the discoverer of the planet Uranus), Bliss, who was the fourth, and Maskelyne, who was the fifth astronomer royal, Horsley, Vince, Maseres, Charles Hutton, James Hutton (the author of the Huttonian Theory of the Earth), Cullen, Brown (the propounder of the Brunonian System of Medicine), John and William Hunter, the anatomists, &c. Under this head may also be noticed the several government voyages of discovery conducted by Commodore Byron, 1764-1766 (in the course of which he discovered the Duke of York's Island and the Isles of Danger); by Captain Wallis, 1766-1768 (in which he discovered the Island of Otaheite); by Captain Carteret, 1766-1769; by Captain Cook, accompanied by Mr. Green, the astronomer, and Dr. Solander and Mr. (afterwards Sir Joseph) Banks, the naturalists, 1668-1771 (in which the transit of Venus over the sun was observed at Otaheite 4th June, 1769, and New South Wales was discovered, and New Zealand rediscovered); by Captain Cook, 1772-1775 (in which he discovered New Caledonia); and by Captain Cook, 1776-1780 (in which the great navigator discovered the Sandwich Islands, and lost his life there, at Owhyhee, on the 14th of February, 1779).

THE LATTER PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE death of Samuel Johnson, in the end of the year 1784, makes a pause, or point of distinction, in our literature, hardly less notable than the acknowledgment of the independence of America, the year before, makes in our political history. It was not only the end of a reign, but the end of kingship altogether, in our literary system. For King Samuel has had no successor; nobody since his day, and that of his contemporary Voltaire, who died in 1778, at the age of eighty-five, has sat on a throne of literature either in England or in France.

Of the literary figures, however, that had previously appeared upon the scene, many continued to be conspicuous for years after this date, some throughout the rest of the century or longer. Burke, the most eminent of them all, survived till 1797; and, having already raised himself to distinction by his publications and speeches in connection with the American war, won his highest fame in the finishing part of his career by his wonderful oratorical displays on the impeachment of Hastings, and his writings, outblazing everything he had before produced, on the French revolution. Adam Smith did not die till 1790; his countryman, Dr. Robertson, not till 1793; Robertson's illustrious brother-historian, Gibbon, not till 1794. Of the poets and cultivators of light literature, or the belles-lettres, who have been already mentioned, Thomas Warton lived till 1790, Ossian Macpherson till 1796, Mason and his friend Horace Walpole till 1797, Joseph Warton till 1800. Other writers, again, who have been noticed in preceding pages, outlived Johnson by many years. Thus Beattie only died in 1803; Anstey, the author of the *New Bath Guide*, in 1805; John Home, the author of *Douglas*, in 1808; Bishop Percy and Richard Cumberland in 1811; Adam Ferguson, the historian of the Roman Republic, in 1816; Richard Brinsley Sheridan the same year; Sir Philip Francis, presumed to be Junius, in 1818; Miss Sophia Lee in 1824; Henry Mackenzie in 1831; Miss Burney (afterwards Madame d'Arblay) not till 1840. These writers, and others whose names might be added, had all produced the

works by which they were first made known, most of them those to which they chiefly owe their reputation, before the close of the Johnsonian era.

COWPER.

It is a remarkable fact that, if we were to continue our notices of the poets of the last century in strict chronological order, the first name we should have to mention would be that of a writer, who more properly belongs to what may almost be called our own day. Crabbe, whose *Tales of the Hall*, the most striking production of his powerful and original genius, appeared in 1819, and who died so recently as 1832, published his first poem, *The Library*, in 1781: some extracts from it are given in the *Annual Register* for that year. But Crabbe's literary career is divided into two parts by a chasm or interval, during which he published nothing, of nearly twenty years; and his proper era is the present century.

One remark, however, touching this writer may be made here: his first manner was evidently caught from Churchill more than from any other of his predecessors. And this was also the case with his contemporary Cowper, the poetical writer whose name casts the greatest illustration upon the last twenty years of the eighteenth century. William Cowper, born in 1731, twenty-three years before Crabbe, — we pass over his anonymous contributions to his friend the Rev. Mr. Newton's collection of the *Olney Hymns*, published in 1776, — gave to the world the first volume of his poems, containing those entitled *Table-Talk*, *The Progress of Error*, *Truth*, *Expostulation*, *Hope*, *Charity*, *Conversation*, and *Retirement*, in 1782; his famous *History of John Gilpin* appeared the following year, without his name, in a publication called *The Repository*; his second volume, containing *The Task*, *Tirocinium*, and some shorter pieces, was published in 1785; his translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in 1791; and his death took place on the 25th of April, 1800. It is recorded that Cowper's first volume attracted little attention: it certainly appears to have excited no perception in the mind or eye of the public of that day that a new and great light had arisen in the poetical firmament. The

Annual Register for 1781, as we have said, gives extracts from Crabbe's Library; a long passage from his next poem, The Village, is given in the volume for 1783; the volume for 1785 in like manner treats its readers to a quotation from The Newspaper, which he had published in that year; but, except that the anonymous History of John Gilpin is extracted in the volume for 1783 from the Repository, we have nothing there of Cowper's till we come to the volume for 1786, which contains two of the minor pieces published in his second volume. Crabbe was probably indebted for the distinction he received in part to his friend and patron Burke, under whose direction the Register was compiled; but the silence observed in regard to Cowper may be taken as not on that account the less conclusive as to the little or next to no impression his first volume made. Yet surely there were both a force and a freshness of manner in the new aspirant that might have been expected to draw some observation. Nor had there of late been such plenty of good poetry produced in England as to make anything of the kind a drug in the market. But here, in fact, lay the main cause of the public inattention. The age was not poetical. The manufacture of verse was carried on, indeed, upon a considerable scale, by the Hayleys and the Whiteheads and the Pratts and others (spinners of sound and weavers of words not for a moment to be compared in inventive and imaginative faculty, or in faculty of any kind, any more than for the utility of their work, with their contemporaries the Arkwrights and Cartwrights); but the production of poetry had gone so much out, that, even in the class most accustomed to judge of these things, few people knew it when they saw it. It has been said that the severe and theological tone of this poetry of Cowper's operated against its immediate popularity; and that was probably the case too; but it could only have been so, at any rate to the same extent, in a time at the least as indifferent to poetry as to religion and morality. For, certainly, since the days of Pope, nothing in the same style had been produced among us to be compared with these poems of Cowper's for animation, vigor, and point, which are among the most admired qualities of that great writer, any more than for the cordiality, earnestness, and fervor which are more peculiarly their own. Smoother versification we had had in great abundance; more pomp and splendor of rhetorical declamation, perhaps, as in Johnson's paraphrases from Juvenal; more warmth and glow of

imagination, as in Goldsmith's two poems, if they are to be considered as coming into the competition. But, on the whole, verse of such bone and muscle had proceeded from no recent writer, — not excepting Churchill, whose poetry had little else than its coarse strength to recommend it, and whose hasty and careless workmanship Cowper, while he had to a certain degree been his imitator, had learned, with his artistical feeling, infinitely to surpass. Churchill's vehement invective, with its exaggerations and personalities, made him the most popular poet of his day: Cowper, neglected at first, has taken his place as one of the classics of the language. Each has had his reward — the reward he best deserved, and probably most desired.

As the death of Samuel Johnson closes one era of our literature, so the appearance of Cowper as a poet opens another. Notwithstanding his obligations both to Churchill and Pope, a main characteristic of Cowper's poetry is its originality. Compared with almost any one of his predecessors, he was what we may call a natural poet. He broke through conventional forms and usages in his mode of writing more daringly than any English poet before him had done, at least since the genius of Pope had bound in its spell the phraseology and rhythm of our poetry. His opinions were not more his own than his manner of expressing them. His principles of diction and versification were announced, in part, in the poem with which he introduced himself to the public, his *Table-Talk*, in which, having intimated his contempt for the "creamy smoothness" of modern fashionable verse, where sentiment was so often

sacrificed to sound,

And truth cut short to make a period round,

he exclaims,

Give me the line that ploughs its stately course
Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force;
That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.

But, although he despised the "tricks" of art, Cowper, like every great poet, was also a great artist; and, with all its in that day almost unexampled simplicity and naturalness, his style is the very reverse of a slovenly or irregular one. If his verse be not so highly polished as that of Pope, — who, he complains, has

Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler has his tune by heart, —

it is in its own way nearly as “well disciplined, complete, compact,” as he has described Pope’s to be. With all his avowed admiration of Churchill, he was far from being what he has called that writer —

Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force.

On the contrary, he has in more than one passage descanted on “the pangs of a poetic birth” — on

the shifts and turns,
The expedients and inventions multiform,
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms,
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win ; —

and the other labors to be undergone by whoever would attain to excellence in the work of composition. Not, however, that, with all this elaboration, he was a slow writer. Slowness is the consequence of indifference, of a writer not being excited by his subject — not having his heart in his work, but going through it as a mere task ; let him be thoroughly in earnest, fully possessed of his subject and possessed by it, and, though the pains he takes to find apt and effective expression for his thoughts may tax his whole energies like wrestling with a strong man, he will not write slowly. He is in a state of active combustion — consuming away, it may be, but never pausing. Cowper is said to have composed the six thousand verses, or thereby, contained in his first volume, in about three months.

Not creative imagination, nor deep melody, nor even, in general, much of fancy or grace or tenderness, is to be met with in the poetry of Cowper ; but yet it is not without both high and various excellence. Its main charm, and that which is never wanting, is its earnestness. This is a quality which gives it a power over many minds not at all alive to the poetical ; but it is also the source of some of its strongest attractions for those that are. Hence its truth both of landscape-painting, and of the description of character and states of mind ; hence its skilful expression of such emotions and passions as it allows itself to deal with ; hence the force and fervor of its denunciatory eloquence, giving to some passages as fine an inspiration of the moral sublime as is perhaps anywhere to

be found in didactic poetry. Hence, we may say, even the directness, simplicity, and manliness of Cowper's diction — all that is best in the form, as well as in the spirit, of his verse. It was this quality, or temper of mind, in short, that principally made him an original poet, and, if not the founder of a new school, the pioneer of a new era, of English poetry. Instead of repeating the unmeaning conventionalities and faded affectations of his predecessors, it led him to turn to the actual nature within him and around him, and there to learn both the truths he should utter and the words in which he should utter them.

After Cowper had found, or been found out by, his proper audience, the qualities in his poetry that at first had most repelled ordinary readers rather aided its success. In particular, as we have said, its theological tone and spirit made it acceptable in quarters to which poetry of any kind had rarely penetrated, and where it may perhaps be affirmed that it keeps its ground chiefly perforce of this its most prosaic peculiarity; although, at the same time, it is probable that the vigorous verse to which his system of theology and morals has been married by Cowper has not been without effect in diffusing not only a more indulgent toleration but a truer feeling and love for poetry throughout what is called the religious world. Nor is it to be denied that the source of Cowper's own most potent inspiration is his theological creed. The most popular of his poems, and also certainly the most elaborate, is his *Task*: it abounds in that delineation of domestic and every-day life which interests everybody, in descriptions of incidents and natural appearances with which all are familiar, in the expression of sentiments and convictions to which most hearts readily respond: it is a poem, therefore, in which the greatest number of readers find the greatest number of things to attract and attach them. Besides, both in the form and in the matter, it has less of what is felt to be strange and sometimes repulsive by the generality; the verse flows, for the most part, smoothly enough, if not with much variety of music; the diction is, as usual with Cowper, clear, manly, and expressive, but at the same time, from being looser and more diffuse, seldomer harsh or difficult than it is in some of his other compositions; above all, the doctrinal strain is pitched upon a lower key, and, without any essential point being given up, both morality and religion certainly assume a countenance and voice considerably less rueful and vindictive. But, although *The Task* has much occasional elevation

and eloquence, and some sunny passages, it perhaps nowhere rises to the passionate force and vehemence to which Cowper had been carried by a more burning zeal in some of his earlier poems. Take, for instance, the following fine burst in that entitled *Table-Talk* : —

Not only vice disposes and prepares
 The mind, that slumbers sweetly in her snares,
 To stoop to tyranny's usurped command,
 And bend her polished neck beneath his hand
 (A dire effect, by one of Nature's laws,
 Unchangeably connected with its cause) ;
 But Providence himself will intervene
 To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.
 All are his instruments ; each form of war,
 What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
 Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
 The storms that overset the joys of life,
 Are but his rods to scourge a guilty land,
 And waste it at the bidding of his hand.
 He gives the word, and mutiny soon roars
 In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores ;
 The standards of all nations are unfurled ;
 She has one foe, and that one foe the world :
 And, if he doom that people with a frown,
 And mark them with a seal of wrath pressed down,
 Obduracy takes place ; callous and tough
 The reprobated race grows judgment-proof ;
 Earth shakes beneath them, and heaven wars above
 But nothing scares them from the course they love.
 To the lascivious pipe, and wanton song,
 That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
 With mad rapidity and unconcern,
 Down to the gulf from which is no return.
 They trust in navies, and their navies fail —
 God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail !
 They trust in armies, and their courage dies ;
 In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies ;
 But all they trust in withers, as it must,
 When He commands, in whom they place no trust.
 Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast
 A long-despised, but now victorious, host ;
 Tyranny sends the chain, that must abridge
 The noble sweep of all their privilege ;

Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock ;
Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.

And, even when it expresses itself in quite other forms, and with least of passionate excitement, the fervor which inspires these earlier poems occasionally produces something more brilliant or more graceful than is anywhere to be found in *The Task*. How skilfully and forcibly executed, for example, is the following moral delineation in that called *Truth* : —

The path to bliss abounds with many a snare ;
Learning is one, and wit, however rare.
The Frenchman first in literary fame —
(Mention him, if you please. Voltaire? — The same)
With spirit, genius, eloquence, supplied,
Lived long, wrote much, laughed heartily, and died.
The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon mots to gall the Christian and the Jew ;
An infidel in health ; but what when sick ?
Oh — then a text would touch him at the quick.
View him at Paris in his last career ;
Surrounding throngs the demigod revere ;
Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
And fumed with frankincense on every side,
He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
And, smothered in 't at last, is praised to death.

Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store ;
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit,
Receives no praise ; but, though her lot be such,
(Toilsome and indigent) she renders much ;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true —
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew ;
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
Her title to a treasure in the skies.

O happy peasant ! O unhappy bard !
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward ;
He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half a mile from home ;

He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
 She safe in the simplicity of hers.

Still more happily executed, and in a higher style of art, is the following version, so elaborately finished, and yet so severely simple, of the meeting of the two disciples with their divine Master on the road to Emmaus, in the piece entitled *Conversation* : —

It happened on a solemn eventide,
 Soon after He that was our surety died,
 Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
 The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
 Sought their own village, busied as they went
 In musings worthy of the great event :
 They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,
 Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife,
 Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
 A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
 The recollection, like a vein of ore,
 The farther traced, enriched them still the more ;
 They thought him, and they justly thought him, one
 Sent to do more than he appeared to have done ;
 To exalt a people, and to place them high
 Above all else ; and wondered he should die.
 Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
 A stranger joined them, courteous as a friend,
 And asked them, with a kind, engaging air,
 What their affliction was, and begged a share.
 Informed, he gathered up the broken thread,
 And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
 Explained, illustrated, and searched so well
 The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
 That, reaching home, The night, they said, is near
 We must not now be parted, — sojourn here.
 The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
 And, made so welcome at their simple feast,
 He blessed the bread, but vanished at the word,
 And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord !
 Did not our hearts feel all he deigned to say ?
 Did not they burn within us by the way ?

For one thing, Cowper's poetry, not organ-toned, or informed with any very rich or original music, any more than soaringly imaginative or gorgeously decorated, is of a style that requires

the sustaining aid of rhyme: in blank verse it is apt to overflow in pools and shallows. And this is one among other reasons why, after all, some of his short poems, which are nearly all in rhyme, are perhaps what he has done best. His *John Gilpin*, universally known and universally enjoyed by his countrymen, young and old, educated and uneducated, and perhaps the only English poem of which this can be said, of course at once suggests itself as standing alone in the collection of what he has left us for whimsical conception and vigor of comic humor; but there is a quieter exercise of the same talent, or at least of a kindred sense of the ludicrous and sly power of giving it expression, in others of his shorter pieces. For tenderness and pathos, again, nothing else that he has written, and not much that is elsewhere to be found of the same kind in English poetry, can be compared with his *Lines on receiving his Mother's Picture*:—

O that those lips had language! Life has passed
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
 Those lips are thine — thy own sweet smile I see,
 The same that oft in childhood solaced me :
 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
 "Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
 The meek intelligence of those clear eyes
 (Blest be the art that can immortalize,
 The art that baffles Time's gigantic claim
 To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
 O welcome guest, though unexpected here !
 Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
 I will obey, not willingly alone,
 But gladly, as the precept were her own :
 And, while that face renews my filial grief,
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
 Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
 A momentary dream that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?
 Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun ?
 Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss ;
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can melt in bliss —

Ah that maternal smile! it answers — Yes.
 I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
 And, turning from my nursery window, drew
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
 But was it such? — It was. — Where thou art gone,
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown:
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
 Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wished I long believed,
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived;
 By expectation every day beguiled,
 Dupe of to-morrow even from a child,
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
 I learned at last submission to my lot,
 But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
 Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
 Drew me to school along the public way,
 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet-capped,
 'Tis now become a history little known
 That once we called the pastoral house our own.
 Short-lived possession! but the record fair,
 That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
 Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
 Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
 That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid;
 Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
 The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed
 All this, and, more endearing still than all,
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
 Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks,
 That humour interposed too often makes;
 All this still legible in memory's page,
 And still to be so to my latest age,

Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
 Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
 When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
 The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
 I pricked them into paper with a pin,
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,
 Would'st softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile)
 Could those few pleasant days again appear,
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?
 I would not trust my heart ; — the dear delight
 Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might. —
 But no : — what here we call our life is such,
 So little to be loved, and thou so much,
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
 (The storms all weather'd and the ocean crossed)
 Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
 There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
 While airs impregnated with incense play
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;
 So thou, with sails low swift ! hast reached the shore
 " Where tempests never beat, nor billows roar." ¹
 And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
 Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
 Always from port withheld, always distressed —
 Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-tossed,
 Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost
 And day by day some current's thwarting force
 Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
 Yet O the thought that thou art safe, and he !
 That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
 My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
 From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth
 But higher far my proud pretensions rise —
 The son of parents passed into the skies.

¹ Garth.

And now farewell. — Time unrevoked has run
 His wonted course ; yet what I wished is done.
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
 I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again ;
 To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
 Without the sin of violating thine ;
 And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft —
 Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

This is no doubt, as a whole, Cowper's finest poem, at once springing from the deepest and purest fount of passion, and happy in shaping itself into richer and sweeter music than he has reached in any other. It shows what his real originality, and the natural spirit of art that was in him, might have done under a better training and more favorable circumstances of personal situation, or perhaps in another age. Generally, indeed, it may be said of Cowper, that the more he was left to himself, or trusted to his own taste and feelings, in writing, the better he wrote. In so far as regards the form of composition, the principal charm of what he has done best is a natural elegance, which is most perfect in what he has apparently written with the least labor, or at any rate with the least thought of rules or models. His Letters to his friends, not written for publication at all, but thrown off in the carelessness of his hours of leisure and relaxation, have given him as high a place among the prose classics of his country as he holds among our poets. His least successful performances are his translations of the Iliad and Odyssey, throughout which he was straining to imitate a style not only unlike his own, but, unfortunately, quite as unlike that of his original, — for these versions of the most natural of all poetry, the Homeric, are, strangely enough, attempted in the manner of the most artificial of all poets, Milton.

DARWIN.

NEITHER, however, did this age of our literature want its artificial poetry. In fact, the expiration or abolition of that manner

among us was brought about not more by the example of a fresh and natural style given by Cowper, than by the exhibition of the opposite style, pushed to its extreme, given by his contemporary Darwin. Our great poets of this era cannot be accused of hurrying into print at an immature age. Dr. Erasmus Darwin, born in 1721, after having risen to distinguished reputation as a physician, published the Second Part of his Botanic Garden, under the title of *The Loves of the Plants*, in 1789; and the First Part, entitled *The Economy of Vegetation*, two years after. He died in 1802. The Botanic Garden, hard, brilliant, sonorous, may be called a poem cast in metal — a sort of Pandemonium palace of rhyme, not unlike that raised long ago in another region, —

where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars, overlaid
With golden architrave; nor did there want
Cornice, or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven:
The roof was fretted gold.

The poem, however, did not rise exactly “like an exhalation.” “The verse,” writes its author’s sprightly biographer, Miss Anna Seward, “corrected, polished, and modulated with the most sedulous attention; the notes involving such great diversity of matter relating to natural history; and the composition going forward in the short recesses of professional attendance, *but chiefly in his chaise, as he travelled from one place to another*; the Botanic Garden could not be the work of one, two, or three years; it was *ten* from its primal lines to its first publication.” If this account may be depended on, the Doctor’s supplies of inspiration must have been vouchsafed to him at the penurious rate of little more than a line a day. At least, therefore, it cannot be said of him, as it was said of his more fluent predecessor in both gifts of Apollo, Sir Richard Blackmore, that he wrote “to the rumbling of his chariot wheels.” The verse, nevertheless, does in another way smack of the travelling-chaise, and of “the short recesses of professional attendance.” Nothing is done in passion and power; but all by filing, and scraping, and rubbing, and other painstaking. Every line is as elaborately polished and sharpened as a lancet; and the most effective paragraphs have the air of a lot of those bright little instruments arranged in rows, with their blades out, for sale. You feel as if so thick an array of points and edges demanded careful

handling, and that your fingers are scarcely safe in coming near them. Darwin's theory of poetry evidently was, that it was all a mechanical affair — only a higher kind of pin-making. His own poetry, however, with all its defects, is far from being merely mechanical. The *Botanic Garden* is not a poem which any man of ordinary intelligence could have produced by sheer care and industry, or such faculty of writing as could be acquired by serving an apprenticeship to the trade of poetry. Vicious as it is in manner, it is even there of an imposing and original character; and a true poetic fire lives under all its affectations, and often blazes up through them. There is not much, indeed, of pure soul or high imagination in Darwin; he seldom rises above the visible and material; but he has at least a poet's eye for the perception of that, and a poet's fancy for its embellishment and exaltation. No writer has surpassed him in the luminous representation of visible objects in verse; his descriptions have the distinctness of drawings by the pencil, with the advantage of conveying, by their harmonious words, many things that no pencil can paint. His images, though they are for the most part tricks of language rather than transformations or new embodiments of impassioned thought, have often at least an Ovidian glitter and prettiness, or are striking from their mere ingenuity and novelty — as, for example, when he addresses the stars as “flowers of the sky,” or apostrophizes the glowworm as “Star of the earth, and diamond of the night.” These two instances, indeed, thus brought into juxtaposition, may serve to exemplify the principle upon which he constructs such decorations: it is, we see, an economical principle; for, in truth, the one of these figures is little more than the other reversed, or inverted. Still both are happy and effective enough conceits — and one of them is applied and carried out so as to make it more than a mere momentary light flashing from the verse. The passage is not without a tone of grandeur and meditative pathos: —

Roll on, ye stars! exult in youthful prime,
 Mark with bright curves the printless steps of time;
 Near and more near your beamy cars approach,
 And lessening orbs on lessening orbs enroach; —
 Flowers of the Sky! ye too to age must yield,
 Frail as your silken sisters of the field!
 Star after star from heaven's high arch shall rush,
 Suns sink on suns, and systems systems crush,

Headlong, extinct, to one dark centre fall,
 And death and night and chaos mingle all!
 — Till o'er the wreck, emerging from the storm,
 Immortal Nature lifts her changeful form,
 Mounts from her funeral pyre on wings of flame,
 And soars and shines, another and the same.

There is also a fine moral inspiration, as well as the usual rhetorical brilliancy, in the following lines: —

Hail, adamantine Steel! magnetic Lord!
 King of the prow, the ploughshare, and the sword!
 True to the pole, by thee the pilot guides
 His steady helm amid the struggling tides,
 Braves with broad sail the immeasurable sea,
 Cleaves the dark air, and asks no star but thee!

Here, to be sure, we have another variation of the same thought according to which the stars have elsewhere been presented shining on earth as glowworms and blooming in the sky as flowers; and that may be considered to show some poverty of invention in the poet, or an undue partiality for the stars; but this last metaphor, — making a star of the mysterious loadstone, in the dark night and on the immeasurable sea, a guiding and, as it were, living, though lustreless star — is more uncommon and surprising, and evinces more imagination, than the other figures. Bursts such as these, however, are of rare occurrence in the poem. Its sounding declamation is for the most part addressed rather to the ear than to either the imagination or the fancy. But the mortal disease inherent in Darwin's poetry is, that it is essentially unspiritual. It has no divine soul: it has not even a heart of humanity beating in it. Its very life is galvanic and artificial. Matter only is what it concerns itself about: not to spiritualize the material, which is the proper business and end of poetry, but to materialize the spiritual, is its constant tendency and effort. It believes only in the world of sense; and even of that it selects for its subject the lowest departments. Not man and his emotions, but animals, vegetables, minerals, mechanical inventions, and processes, are what it delights to deal with. But these things are mostly, by doom of nature, incapable of being turned into high poetry. They belong to the domain of the understanding, or the bodily senses and powers, not either to that of the imagination or that of the heart. Dr. Darwin himself probably came to suspect that there were some sub-

jects of which poetry could make nothing, some regions of mental speculation in which she could only make herself ridiculous, when he saw how grotesquely, and at the same time how exactly in many respects, the style and manner of his *Loves of the Plants* were reflected in the *Loves of the Triangles*.

Darwin's poetry is now very little read; and a few extracts, therefore, selected with the object of exhibiting both what is best and what is most peculiar and characteristic in his manner, may not be uninteresting. The first we shall give is the description of the approach of the Goddess of Botany (Darwin manufactures most of his own deities), with part of her address to the Fire Nymphs, in the first canto of the *Economy of Vegetation*: —

She comes! — the goddess! through the whispering air,
 Bright as the moon, descends her blushing car;
 Each circling wheel a wreath of flowers entwines,
 And gemmed with flowers the silken harness shines;
 The golden bits with flowery studs are decked,
 And knots of flowers the crimson reins connect. —
 And now on earth the silver axle rings,
 And the shell sinks upon its slender springs;
 Light from her airy seat the goddess bounds,
 And steps celestial press the panted grounds.

Fair Spring advancing calls her feathered choir,
 And tunes to softer notes her laughing lyre;
 Bids her gay hours on purple pinions move,
 And crowns her zephyrs with the shafts of love.
 Pleased Gnomes, ascending from their earthy beds,
 Play round her graceful footsteps as she treads;
 Gay Sylphs attendant beat the fragrant air
 On winnowing wings, and waft her golden hair;
 Blue nymphs emerging leave their sparkling streams,
 And Fiery Forms alight from orient beams;
 Musk'd in the rose's lap fresh dews they shed,
 Or breathe celestial lustres round her head.

First the fine forms her dulcet voice requires,
 Which bathe or bask in elemental fires;
 From each bright gem of Day's refulgent car,
 From the pale sphere of every twinkling star,
 From each nice pore of ocean, earth, and air,
 With eye of flame the sparkling hosts repair,
 Mix their gay hues, in changeful circles play,
 Like notes that tenant the meridian ray. —

So the clear lens collects with magic power
 The countless glories of the midnight hour ;
 Stars after stars with quivering lustre fall,
 And twinkling glide along the whitened wall. —
 Pleased, as they pass, she counts the glittering bands,
 And stills their murmur with her waving hands,
 Each listening tribe with fond expectance burns,
 And now to these, and now to those, she turns.

“ Nymphs of primeval fire ! your vestal train
 Hung with gold tresses o'er the vast inane,
 Pierced with your silver shafts the throne of night,
 And charmed young Nature's opening eyes with light.
 When love divine, with brooding wings unfurled,
 Called from the rude abyss the living world.
 ‘ Let there be light ! ’ proclaimed the Almighty Lord ;
 Astonished Chaos heard the potent word ;
 Through all his realms the kindling ether runs,
 And the mass starts into a million suns ;
 Earths round each sun with quick explosions burst,
 And second planets issue from the first ;
 Bend, as they journey with projectile force,
 In bright ellipses their reluctant course ;
 Orbs wheel in orbs, round centres centres roll,
 And form, self-balanced, one revolving whole.
 — Onward they move amid their bright abode,
 Space without bound, the bosom of their God !

“ Ethereal powers ! you chase the shooting stars,
 Or yoke the vollied lightnings to your cars ;
 Cling round the aerial bow with prisms bright,
 And pleased untwist the seven-fold threads of light ;
 Eve's silken couch with gorgeous tints adorn,
 And fire the arrowy throne of rising morn :
 — Or, plumed with flame, in gay battalions spring,
 To brighter regions borne on broader wing ;
 Where lighter gases, circumfused on high,
 Form the vast concave of exterior sky ;
 With airy lens the scattered rays assault,
 And bend the twilight round the dusky vault ;
 Ride, with broad eye and scintillating hair,
 The rapid fireball through the midnight air ;
 Dart from the north on pale electric streams,
 Fringing night's sable robe with transient beams.
 — Or rein the planets in their swift careers,

Gilding with borrowed light their twinkling spheres ;
 Alarm with comet-blaze the sapphire plain,
 The wan stars glimmering through its silver train ;
 Gem the bright zodiac and the glowing pole,
 Or give the sun's phlogistic orb to roll."

There is much more in the same strain ; indeed, the oration of the goddess runs on to very near the end of the canto, or for above 450 lines more. In its first aspect this singular style of Darwin's is not a little imposing, with its sonorous march and glare of decoration ; but its real poverty soon makes itself felt. His far-sougl, epithets and other novel applications of words are speedily found to be less satisfactory than startling ; not unfrequently the effect is something not very far from ludicrous, and at the best the variety proves to be little more than formal, such as might be produced by mere elaboration or trickery. The above passage is rather a favorable specimen : of the peculiar sort of splendor in which Darwin deals, made up in great part of glittering words and other ingenuities of diction, it has as much as perhaps any other passage in the poem ; and the subject is not so unfavorable as some others that he takes up to that kind of display, nor has it led him into any of his more adventurous eccentricities. The conclusion of this address to the Nymphs of Fire is also very high-wrought : —

"With crest of gold should sultry Sirius glare,
 And with his kindling tresses scorch the air ;
 With points of flame the shafts of summer arm,
 And burn the beauties he designs to warm ; —
 — So erst, when Jove his oath extorted mourned,
 And clad in glory to the fair returned ;
 While Loves at forked bolts their torches light,
 And resting lightnings gild the car of night ;
 His blazing form the dazzled maid admired,
 Met with fond lips, and in his arms expired ; —
 — Nymphs ! on light pinions lead your bannered hosts
 High o'er the cliffs of Orkney's gulfy coasts
 Leave on your left the red volcanic light
 Which Hecla lifts amid the dusky night ;
 Mark on the right the Dofrine's snow-capt brow,
 Where whirling Maelstrom roars and foams below ;
 Watch with unmoving eye where Cepheus bends
 His triple crown, his sceptred hand extends ;
 Where studs Cassiope with stars unknown
 Her golden chair, and gems her sapphire zone ;

Where with vast convolution Draco holds
 The ecliptic axis in his scaly folds,
 O'er half the skies his neck enormous rears,
 And with immense meanders parts the Bears ;
 Onward, the kindred Bears with footsteps rude
 Dance round the pole, pursuing and pursued.

“ There, in her azure coil and starry stole,
 Grey Twilight sits, and rules the slumbering pole ;
 Bends the pale moonbeams round the sparkling coast,
 And strews with livid hands eternal frost.
 There, Nymphs ! alight, array your dazzling powers,
 With sudden march alarm the torpid hours ;
 On icebuilt isles expand a thousand sails,
 Hinge the strong helms, and catch the frozen gales.
 The winged rocks to feverish climates guide,
 Where fainting zephyrs pant upon the tide ;
 Pass, where to Ceuta Calpe's thunder roars,
 And answering echoes shake the kindred shores ;
 Pass, where with palmy plumes Canary smiles,
 And in her silver girdle binds her isles :
 Onward, where Niger's dusky Naiad laves
 A thousand kingdoms with prolific waves,
 Or leads o'er golden sands her threefold train
 In steamy channels to the fervid main ;
 While swarthy nations crowd the sultry coast,
 Drink the fresh breeze, and hail the floating frost ;
 Nymphs ! veiled in mist, the melting treasures steer,
 And cool with arctic snows the tropic year.
 So, from the burning line by monsoons driven,
 Clouds sail in squadrons o'er the darkened heaven ;
 Wild wastes of sand the gelid gales pervade,
 And ocean cools beneath the moving shade.

“ Should Solstice, stalking through the sickening bowers,
 Suck the warm dewdrops, lap the falling showers ;
 Kneel with parched lip, and, bending from its brink,
 From dripping palm the scanty river drink ;
 Nymphs ! o'er the soil ten thousand points erect,
 And high in air the electric flame collect.
 Soon shall dark mists with self-attraction shroud
 The blazing day, and sail in wilds of cloud ;
 Each silvery flower the streams aerial quaff,
 Bow her sweet head, and infant harvest laugh.

“ Thus, when Elijah marked from Carmel's brow
 In bright expanse the briny flood below ;

Rolled his red eyes amid the scorching air,
 Smote his firm breast, and breathed his ardent prayer ;
 High in the midst a massy altar stood,
 And slaughtered offerings pressed the piles of wood ;
 While Israel's chiefs the sacred hill surround,
 And famished armies crowd the dusty ground ;
 While proud Idolatry was leagued with dearth,
 And withered Famine swept the desert earth : —
 ‘ Oh ! mighty Lord ! thy wo-worn servant hear,
 Who calls thy name in agony of prayer ;
 Thy fanes dishonoured, and thy prophets slain,
 Lo ! I alone survive of all thy train ! —
 Oh ! send from heaven thy sacred fire, and pour
 O'er the parched land the salutary shower ; —
 So shall thy priest thy erring flock recall —
 And speak in thunder, thou art Lord of all.
 He cried, and, kneeling on the mountain sands,
 Stretched high in air his supplicating hands.
 Descending flames the dusky shrine illumine,
 Fire the wet wood, the sacred bull consume ;
 Winged from the sea, the gathering mists arise,
 And floating waters darken all the skies ;
 The king with shifted reins his chariot bends,
 And wide o'er earth the airy flood descends ;
 With mingling cries dispersing hosts applaud,
 And shouting nations own the living God.”

A passage from the intermediate part of this address has been made interesting by the progress of discovery since it was written. In a note Darwin expresses his opinion that steam may probably “ in time be applied to the rowing of barges, and the moving of carriages along the road ” ; and he adds, “ As the specific levity of air is too great for the support of great burdens by balloons, there seems no probable method of flying conveniently but by the power of steam, or some other explosive material, which another half century may probably discover.” The most recent great achievement of steam-power as commemorated in the lines that follow was its application in the apparatus for coining copper erected by Watt for Mr. Boulton at Soho : —

“ Nymphs ! you erewhile on simmering cauldrons played,
 And called delighted Savery to your aid ;

Bade round the youth explosive steam aspire,
 In gathering clouds, and winged the wave with fire ;
 Bade with cold streams the quick expansion stop,
 And sunk the immense of vapours to a drop.
 Pressed by the ponderous air the piston falls
 Resistless, sliding through its iron walls ;
 Quick moves the balanced beam, of giant birth,
 Wields his large limbs, and nodding shakes the earth.

“ The giant power from earth’s remotest caves
 Lifts with strong arm her dark reluctant waves ;
 Each caverned rock and hidden den explores,
 Drags her dark coals, and digs her shining ores.
 Next, in close cells of ribbed oak confined,
 Gale after gale, he crowds the struggling wind ;
 The imprisoned storms through brazen nostrils roar,
 Fan the white flame, and fuse the sparkling ore.
 Here high in air the rising stream he pours
 To clay-built cisterns, or to lead-lined towers ;
 Fresh through a thousand pipes the wave distils,
 And thirsty cities drink the exuberant rills.
 There the vast millstone, with inebriate whirl,
 On trembling floors his forceful fingers twirl,
 Whose flinty teeth the golden harvests grind, —
 Feast without blood ! — and nourish human kind.

“ Now his hard hand on Mona’s rifled crest,
 Bosomed in rock, her azure ores arrest ;
 With iron lips his rapid rollers seize
 The lengthening bars, in thin expansion squeeze ;
 Descending screws with ponderous flywheels wound
 The tawny plates, the new medallions round ;
 Hard dies of steel the cupreous circles cramp,
 And with quick fall his massy hammers stamp.
 The harp, the lily, and the lion join,
 And George and Britain guard the sterling coin.

“ Soon shall thy arm, unconquered Steam ! afar
 Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car ;
 Or, on wide-waving wings expanded, bear
 The flying chariot through the fields of air.
 Fair crews triumphant, leaning from above,
 Shall wave their fluttering kerchiefs as they **move**
 Or warrior-bands alarm the gaping crowd,
 And armies sink beneath the shadowy cloud.

“ So mighty Hercules o’er many a clime

Waved his vast mace in Virtue's cause sublime ;
 Unmeasured strength with early art combined,
 Awed, served, protected, and amazed mankind.
 First, two dread snakes, at Juno's vengeful nod,
 Climbed round the cradle of the sleeping god ;
 Waked by the shrilling hiss, and rustling sound,
 And shrieks of fair attendants trembling round,
 Their gasping throats with clenching hands he holds ;
 And death entwists their convoluted folds.
 Next in red torrents from her seven-fold heads
 Fell Hydra's blood on Lerna's lake he sheds ;
 Grasps Achelous with resistless force,
 And drags the roaring river to his course ;
 Binds with loud bellowing and with hideous yell
 The monster bull, and three-fold god of hell.
 Then, where Nemea's howling forests wave,
 He drives the lion to his dusky cave ;
 Seized by the throat the growling fiend disarms,
 And tears his gaping jaws with sinewy arms ;
 Lifts proud Antæus from his mother-plains,
 And with strong grasp the struggling giant strains ;
 Back falls his fainting head, and clammy hair,
 Writhe his weak limbs, and flits his life in air.
 By steps reverted o'er the blood-dropped fen
 He tracks huge Cacus to his murderous den ;
 Where, breathing flames through brazen lips, he fled,
 And shakes the rock-roofed cavern o'er his head.
 Last, with wide arms the solid earth he tears,
 Piles rock on rock, on mountain mountain rears ;
 Heaves up huge Abyla on Afric's sand,
 Crowns with high Calpe Europe's salient strand,
 Crests with opposing towers the splendid scene,
 And pours from urns immense the sea between.
 Loud o'er her whirling flood Charybdis roars,
 Affrighted Scylla bellows round her shores,
 Vesuvio groans through all his echoing caves,
 And Etna thunders o'er the insurgent waves."

From the address to the Gnomes, or earth-nymphs, which occupies the second canto, we will extract our author's explanation, or theory, of "the fine forms on Portland's mystic vase," -- the beautiful and world-renowned vase now in the British Museum : —

" Here, by fallen columns and disjointed arcades,
 On mouldering stones, beneath deciduous shades,
 Sits human-kind, in hieroglyphic state,
 Serious, and pondering on their changeful fate ;
 While, with inverted torch and swimming eyes,
 Sinks the fair shade of mortal life, and dies.
 There, the pale ghost through death's wide portal bends
 His timid feet, the dusky steep descends :
 With smiles assuasive love divine invites,
 Guides on broad wing, with torch-uptifted lights ;
 Immortal life, her hand extending, courts
 The lingering form, his tottering step supports ;
 Leads on to Pluto's realms the dreary way,
 And gives him trembling to Elysian day.
 Beneath, in sacred robes the priestess dressed,
 The coif close-hooded, and the fluttering vest,
 With pointed finger guides the initiate youth,
 Unweaves the many-coloured veil of truth,
 Drives the profane from mystery's bolted door,
 And silence guards the Eleusinian lore."

As a specimen of Darwin's skill in the description of material phenomena in verse, we will give the passage on weaving and spinning, including Arkwright's then novel invention of mechanical cotton-spinning, from the second canto of the *Loves of the Plants* : —

Inventress of the woof, fair Lina¹ flings
 The flying shuttle through the dancing strings ;
 Inlays the broidered weft with flowery dyes ;
 Quick beat the reeds, the pedals fall and rise ;
 Slow from the beam the lengths of warp unwind,
 And dance and nod the massy weights behind.
 Taught by her labours, from the fertile soil
 Immortal Isis clothed the banks of Nile ;
 And fair Arachne with her rival loom
 Found undeserved a melancholy doom.
 Five² sister nymphs with dewy fingers twine
 The beamy flax, and stretch the fibre-line ;
 Quick eddying threads from rapid spindles reel,
 Or whirl with beating foot the dizzy wheel.

¹ From the Latin name for flax, *linum*.

² The plant *Linum*, in the Linnæan system, has five males and five females in each flower.

Charmed round the busy fair five shepherds press,
 Praise the nice texture of their snowy dress,
 Admire the artists, and the art approve,
 And tell with honeyed words the tale of love.

So now, where Derwent rolls his dusky floods
 Through vaulted mountains, and a night of woods,
 The nymph Gossypia¹ treads the velvet sod,
 And warms with rosy smiles the watery god ;
 His ponderous oars to slender spindles turns,
 And pours o'er massy wheels his foamy urns ;
 With playful charms her hoary lover wins,
 And wields his trident, while the monarch spins.
 First, with nice eye emerging Naiads cull
 From leathery pods the vegetable wool ;
 With wiry teeth revolving cards release
 The tangled knots, and smooth the ravelled fleece ;
 Next moves the iron hand with fingers fine,
 Combs the wide card, and forms the eternal line ;
 Slow, with soft lips, the whirling can acquires
 The tender skeins, and wraps in rising spires ;
 With quickened pace successive rollers move,
 And these retain, and those extend the rove ;
 Then fly the spokes, the rapid axles glow,
 And slowly circumvolves the labouring wheel below.

In all this, however, it must be confessed, there is more of ingenuity than of poetry. The excess of emphasis, and overcrowding of all the artifices and licenses of the poetical style, into which Darwin runs, would, if there were nothing else, betray the process of hard hammering, and, as it were, manual force and dexterity, by which he fabricated his verse ; but his theory of poetry, as we have intimated above, was also radically vicious. Take the single figure of impersonation, in which he deals so largely. We shall all admit that there are bounds to the employment of this figure. Its effect is to represent a mere thing or idea as a living and individual being. But this can only be done with any poetical result in cases in which there is a natural disposition in the general mind, when in a state of excitement, to view the matter in that light. Sometimes such a tendency is checked by certain constituents or accessories of the object of too inherently mean or trivial a character, or too distinctly obtruding its real nature upon the senses or

¹ From *Gossypium*, the cotton plant.

the imagination, to allow of its being thus metamorphosed and exalted; but it is enough that there should merely be nothing in it or about it to respond to the exertion of the poet's skill. Throughout all nature, moral and material, there must be the proper sort of worth in the substance wrought upon, as well as in the instrument, or no worthy effect will be produced. The steel that strikes fire from the flint will strike none from the brick. No husbandry can raise a harvest on a sandy sea-beach. The best teaching will not illuminate a blockhead, nor the kindest help be of any enduring service to the man who can do nothing for himself. So in the treatment of a subject poetically; it cannot be done unless there be poetry in the subject, as well as in the writer. No poetical power or skill, for example, could give any grandeur or solemnity to the *prosopœia* either of a wheelbarrow, or of the art of making wheelbarrows. It would merely turn out something utterly flat and dead, if it did not prove ridiculous. It would resemble an attempt to compound gunpowder out of sulphur and common earth. The great constituent elements of the poetical in the nature of things are few in number. Whatever can be made to flash a new combination, or other exciting image, upon the fancy admits of poetical treatment and embellishment in an inferior degree; but all high poetry has its source in passion,—in veneration, in love, in terror, in hatred, in revenge, or some other of those strong emotions that, as it were, transport the mind out of and above itself, and give it to see as with a new intelligence and with other organs. But such emotions are not to be excited by such phenomena, whether of art or nature, as those with which Darwin's poetry principally deals. Many of the processes of mechanics, of chemistry, of vegetation, which he describes are in the highest degree curious and interesting, philosophically or scientifically considered; but that is quite a different thing from being poetically interesting or exciting. We may almost say that the one quality is directly opposed to and destructive of the other. Poetry and science are two rival and hostile powers. The latter is continually employed in encroaching upon and subjugating to itself the dominion of the former, which, however, is happily infinite in extent, so that, no matter how much of it may be thus wrested away, it never can suffer any real diminution. Whenever anything has been perfectly reduced to matter of science, its poetical character is extinguished: it ceases to appeal to any passion or

affection. What was veneration or terror, religion or superstition, becomes now satisfied and unimpassioned intelligence. Imagination is dethroned there, its creative power abolished and destroyed, its transforming illumination made impossible. Even mere wonder, the lowest of all the imaginative states of mind, ceases when the scientific comprehension is complete; for, of course, when understood, no one thing is really more wonderful than another, any more than it is essentially more majestic; — the blue sky is but “a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors,” — its golden fires, the ever-circling squadrons of the host of heaven, the suns and planets of a million systems, but another form or development of some such humble and commonplace incident as the rising of the dust from the high-road on a windy day, or of the smoke any day from a kitchen-chimney. The tendency of science is to reduce and level; the tendency of poetry is to magnify and exalt. Each, therefore, has its proper and peculiar ground; they cannot act in concert, and upon the same ground: in other words, it is impossible to treat any subject at once scientifically and poetically. That is what Darwin has attempted, or professes, to do; but in truth the spirit of his poetry is scientific, and only the form poetical. His verses are profusely decorated with similitudes and other poetical figures and forms of speech; but both the manner in which he views his subject, and his subject itself, are anti-poetical. His poetry appeals to none of what may be called our original and universal sympathies. It addresses itself, not to our hearts as moulded and inspired by nature and by those common influences of various kinds which are to us almost a second nature, but to our heads, as artificially, accidentally, and unequally furnished, or stuffed, by books, or colleges, or laboratories. For the most part, therefore, it fails of making any deep impression; but not unfrequently the effect is even jarring, and a note is struck altogether different from what the poet intended, just as would happen with a musician who, with whatever power of fingering, or other brilliancy in execution, should persist in disregarding any natural peculiarity of his instrument. As little or no aid is sought from the ordinary associations which may be presumed to be in the reader’s mind, so whenever it is convenient such associations and preconceptions are outraged without hesitation. Thus a story of two lovers (in the address to the Water Nymphs, in the third canto of the *Economy*

of Vegetation), intended to be very pathetic, is commenced in the following droll fashion : —

“ Where were ye, nymphs ! in those disastrous hours
Which wrapt in flames Augusta’s¹ sinking towers ?
Why did ye linger in your wells and groves
When sad Woodmason mourned her infant loves ?
*When thy fair daughters, with unheeded screams,
Ill-fated Molesworth ! called the loitering streams ?*”

We must give the rest of this narrative for the sake of some choice Darwinian epithets, and other flowers of speech : —

“ The trembling nymph, *on bloodless fingers hung,*
Eyes from the tottering wall the distant throng,
With ceaseless shrieks her sleeping friends alarms,
Drops *with singed hair* into her lover’s arms.
The illumined mother seeks with footsteps fleet
Where hangs the safe balcony o’er the street ;
Wrapped in her sheet, her youngest hope suspends,
And, panting, lowers it to her tiptoe friends ;
Again she hurries on affection’s wings,
And now a third, and now a fourth she brings ;
Safe all her babes, *she smooths her horrent brow,*
And bursts through bickering flames, *unscorched below.*
So, by her son arraigned, with feet unshod
O’er burning bars indignant Emma trod.

“ E’en on the day when youth with beauty wed,
The flames surprised them in their nuptial bed ;
Seen at the opening sash with bosom bare,
With wringing hands and dark dishevelled hair,
The blushing bride with wild disordered charms
Round her fond lover winds her ivory arms ;
Beat, as they clasp, their throbbing hearts with fear,
And many a kiss is mixed with many a tear.
Ah me ! in vain the labouring engines pour
Round their pale limbs the ineffectual shower !
Then crashed the floor, while shrinking clouds retire,
And love and virtue sunk amid the fire !
With piercing screams afflicted strangers mourn,
And their white ashes mingle in their urn.”

¹ London’s.

Besides that every line in this labored description is manifestly prompted and regulated chiefly by the necessities of the metre, were it not that the most prosaic or most affected account of such a situation cannot hide its real horrors, the picture of the blushing, and the kissing, and the winding of the ivory arms, and the ineffectual deluging of the pale limbs, would be almost ludicrous. But the sense of the ludicrous was wanting in Darwin: as there is little genuine pathos in anything he has written, so there is not a trace of humor. It is in his first published poem, however, *The Loves of the Plants* (now forming the second part of the *Botanic Garden*), that this insensibility to the ridiculous is most remarkably shown; the whole conception of that performance, the idea of making a serious poem out of the Linnæan system of botany, is an absurdity which would be incredible if the thing had not been actually attempted. In what manner, and with what success, let the commencement of the singular rhapsody show:—

First the tall *Canna*¹ lifts his curled brow
 Erect to heaven, and plights his nuptial vow;
 The virtuous pair, in milder regions born,
 Dread the rude blast of autumn's icy morn;
 Round the chill fair he folds his crimson vest,
 And clasps the timorous beauty to his breast.

Thy love, *Callitriche*,² two virgins share,
 Smit with thy starry eye and radiant hair;
 On the green margin sits the youth, and laves
 His floating train of tresses in the waves;
 Sees his fair features paint the streams that pass,
 And bends for ever o'er the watery glass.

Two brother swains, of *Collin's* gentle name,³
 The same their features, and their forms the same,
 With rival love for fair *Collinia* sigh,
 Knit the dark brow, and roll the unsteady eye.
 With sweet concern the pitying beauty mourns,
 And soothes with smiles the jealous pair by turns.

Sweet blooms *Genista*⁴ in the myrtle shade,
 And ten fond brothers woo the haughty maid.

¹ The cane, or Indian reed; each flower of which contains one male and one female.

² Fine-hair, star-grass; one male and two females.
Collinsonia; two males and one female.

⁴ Dyer's broom; ten males and one female

Two knights before thy fragrant altar bend,
 Adored Melissa,¹ and two squires attend.
 Meadia's² soft chains five suppliant beaux confess,
 And hand in hand the laughing belle address ;
 Alike to all she bows with wanton air,
 Rolls her dark eye, and waves her golden hair.

Woody with long care, Curcuma,³ cold and shy,
 Meets her fond husband with averted eye :
 Four beardless youths the obdurate beauty meet
 With soft attentions of Platonic love.

With vain desires the pensive Alcea⁴ burns,
 And, like sad Eloisa, loves and mourns.
 The freckled Iris⁵ owns a fiercer flame,
 And three unjealous husbands wed the dame.
 Cupressus⁶ dark disdains his dusky bride ;
 One dome contains them, but two beds divide.
 The proud Osyris⁷ flies his angry fair ;
 Two houses hold the fashionable pair.
 With strange deformity Plantago⁸ treads,
 A monster birth ! and lifts his hundred heads.
 Yet with soft love a gentle belle he charms,
 And clasps the beauty in his hundred arms.
 So hapless Desdemona, fair and young,
 Won by Othello's captivating tongue,
 Sighed o'er each strange and piteous tale distressed,
 And sunk enamoured on his sooty breast.

Is all this really a whit less ridiculous than the parody of it in
 The Loves of the Triangles ? —

For me, ye Cissoids, round my temples bend
 Your wandering curves ; ye Conchoids, extend ;
 Let playful Pendules quick vibration feel,
 While silent Cyclois rests upon her wheel ;
 Let Hydrostatics, simpering as they go,
 Lead the light Naiads on fantastic toe ;

¹ Balm ; four males and one female.

² American cowslip ; five males and one female.

³ Turmeric ; one male and one female, together with four filaments without anthers.

⁴ Double hollyhocks.

⁵ Flower-de-luce ; three males and one female.

⁶ Cypress.

⁷ The males and females of the Osyris are on different plants.

⁸ Rose-plantain.

ANNA SEWARD.

Let shrill Acoustics tune the tiny lyre ;
With Euclid sage fair Algebra conspire ;
The obedient Pulley strong Mechanics ply ;
And wanton Optics roll the melting eye.

Alas that partial Science should approve
The sly Rectangle's too licentious love !
For three bright nymphs the wily wizard burns ;
Three bright-eyed nymphs requite his flame by turns.

And first the fair Parabola behold
Her timid arms with virgin blush unfold !
Though on one focus fixed, her eyes betray
A heart that glows with love's resistless sway ;
Though, climbing oft, she strive with bolder grace
Round his tall neck to clasp her fond embrace,
Still, ere she reach it, from his polished side
Her trembling hands in devious Tangents glide.

Not thus Hyperbole ; — with subtlest art
The blue-eyed wanton plays her changeful part.

Yet why, Ellipsis, at thy fate repine ?
More lasting bliss, securer joys are thine.
Though to each fair his treacherous wish may stray,
Though each in turn may seize a transient sway,
'Tis thine with mild coercion to restrain,
Twine round his struggling heart, and bind with endless chain.

So down thy hill, romantic Ashbourn, glides
The Derby Dilly, carrying three insides.
One in each corner sits, and lolls at ease,
With folded arms, propped back, and outstretched knees ;
While the pressed Bodkin, punched and squeezed to death,
Sweats in the midmost place, and scolds, and pants for breath.



ANNA SEWARD. LADY MILLER. THE DELLA CRUSCANS.

It must be regarded as a real misfortune for Dr. Darwin's fame,
though a ludicrous one, that he should have had such a biographer

and commentator upon his works as Miss Anna Seward. Anna has herself a claim upon our notice as one of the poetical lights of this time. Besides various contributions to magazines, she emitted separately, and with her name, in the last twenty years of the century, a succession of elegies, monodies, odes, sonnets, poetical epistles, adieus, &c., about Captain Cook, Major André, Lady Miller of Batheaston, and other persons and things, which were generally read in their day, and were, after her death, in 1809, at the age of sixty-two, collected and republished in three octavo volumes under the care of Walter Scott, who had formed her acquaintance in the early part of his career, and upon whom she had imposed the honor of being her literary executor. A selection from her Letters, which she had bequeathed to Constable, the Edinburgh bookseller, appeared about the same time in six volumes. But decidedly her most remarkable performance, and the one by which her name is likely to be the longest preserved, is the octavo volume she gave to the world in 1804, under the title of *Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin*, chiefly during his residence at Lichfield, with *Anecdotes of his Friends, and Criticisms on his Writings*. Here we have Anna herself, as well as her friend the poetic Doctor, at full length. Anna's not a little is, that the Botanic Garden ought to have been her poem, not Darwin's, if matters had been fairly managed. The Doctor, it seems, about the year 1777, purchased a little, wild, umbrageous valley, a mile from Lichfield, irriguous from various springs, and swampy from their plenitude." This he soon dressed up into a very neat imitation of Paradise, and then, having till now "restrained his friend Miss Seward's steps to this her always favorite scene," he allowed her to visit it, when, the lady informs us, "she took her tablets and pencil, and, seated on a flower-bank, in the midst of that luxuriant retreat, wrote the following lines, while the sun was gilding the glen, and while birds of every plume poured their song from the boughs." Now, be it observed, the Doctor was not even with her on the flower-bank: it was intended that they should have gone to see paradise together, "but a medical summons into the country deprived her of that pleasure." The lines, therefore, were wholly the produce of her own particular muse and her own black-lead pencil. They are substantially the commencing lines of the *First Book of the Botanic Garden*. When the authoress presented them to Darwin, he said that they ought to form the exordium of a great

work, and proposed that Anna should write such a work "on the unexplored poetic ground of the Linnæan system," to which he would provide prose notes. Anna answered, modestly, "that, besides her want of botanic knowledge, the plan was not strictly proper for a female pen,"—but that she thought it was just the thing for "the efflorescence of his own fancy." It would appear that, soon after this, Darwin began the composition of his great poem; but previously, the lady tells us, a few weeks after they were composed, he "sent the verses Miss S. wrote in his Botanic Garden (that is, the Lichfield Paradise, so called) to the Gentleman's Magazine, and in her name."—"From thence," she proceeds, "they were copied in the Annual Register [where we have not been able to find them]; but, without consulting her, he had substituted for the last six lines eight of his own. He afterwards, and again without the knowledge of their author, made them the exordium to the First Part of his poem, published, for certain reasons, some years after the Second Part had appeared. No acknowledgment was made that those verses were the work of another pen. Such acknowledgment ought to have been made, especially since they passed the press in the name of their real author. They are somewhat altered in the exordium to Dr. Darwin's poem, and eighteen lines of his own are interwoven with them." The lines having been only forty-six originally, and twenty-six of those in the Doctor's exordium being thus admitted to be of his own composition, it might seem that the theft was reduced to a somewhat small matter; but Miss Seward, not unreasonably, holds that in thus rifling her poem, probably of its best verses, Darwin did her the same injury as if he had appropriated the whole; and therefore in returning, in a subsequent page, to this "extraordinary, and, in a poet of so much genius, unprecedented instance of plagiarism," and quoting against him one of his own critical canons, that "a few common flowers of speech may be gathered as we pass over our neighbour's ground, but we must not plunder his cultivated fruit," she bitterly charges him with having "forgotten that just restraint when he took, unacknowledged, *forty-six entire lines*, the published verses of his friend, for the exordium of the first part of his work." After all, it has been doubted by the world if that scene of the flower-bank and the tablets was anything more than a pleasant dream of Anna's, or if she had anything to do with the authorship of the forty-six verses

at all, beyond allowing them to be published with her name in the magazines. She has been proved to be incorrect in her recollections of other matters about which she was as obstinate as she was about this: her memory had the worst defect, of being apt to remember too much.

Miss Seward's own poetry, with much more sentimentality and much less sense and substance, belongs to the same school with Darwin's. Hers is the feeble commonplace of the same labored, tortuous, and essentially unnatural and untrue style out of which he, with his more powerful and original genius, has evolved for himself a distinctive form or dialect. This style has subsisted among us, in one variation or another, and with more or less of temporary acceptance, in every era of our poetry. It is mimicked by Pope, in his *Song by a Person of Quality*, written in the year 1733; it is the Euphuism of the Elizabethan age, gently ridiculed by Shakspeare, in his *Love's Labours Lost*, though then made brilliant and imposing by the wit and true poetic genius of Lilly; it is the same thing that is travestied by Chaucer in his *Rime of Sir Thopas*. Perhaps, however, it had in no former time made so much din, or risen to such apparent ascendancy, as at the date of which we are now speaking, the last years of the eighteenth century. Nor had it ever before assumed a shape or character at once so extravagant and so hollow of all real worth or power. The first impulse seems to have been caught from Italy, the foreign country whose literature has in every age exercised, for good or for evil, the greatest influence upon our own. The writers of what is called the Della Crusean school had their predecessors and progenitors in the small manufacturers of rhyme, male and female, collected about her by Lady Miller, who, when she set up her Parnassus and Wedgwood-ware vase at Batheaston, and established the weekly competitions in elegies and epigrams, songs and sonnets, which went on through the instrumentality of the said mystic vase till her death in 1781, had just returned from a tour in Italy with her husband, of which she published an account, in three volumes of *Letters*, in 1776. Their performances were given to the world under the title of *Poetical Amusements at a Villa near Bath*, in a succession of volumes which appeared between 1770 and 1780. Miss Seward was one of the contributors to this Batheaston poetry. It does not seem, however, to have attracted much notice beyond the circle in which the writers and their patroness moved; at most it

was regarded as belonging rather to the provincial than to either the national or the metropolitan literature of the time. In the Della Cruscan school the thing came to a head. "In 1785," as the matter is recorded in the Introduction to the Baviad and Mæviad, "a few English of both sexes, whom chance had jumbled together at Florence, took a fancy to while away their time in scribbling high-flown panegyrics on themselves; and complimentary canzonettas on two or three Italians, who understood too little of the language in which they were written to be disgusted with them." Among them were Mrs. Piozzi, the widow of Johnson's friend Thrale, now the wife of her daughter's music-master; Mr. Bertie Greathead, a man of property and good family; Mr. Robert Merry, who specially took to himself the designation of Della Crusca; Mr. William Parsons, another English gentleman of fortune; &c. These people first printed a volume of their rhymes under the title of *The Florence Miscellany*. Afterwards they and a number of other persons, their admirers and imitators, began to publish their lucubrations in England, chiefly in two new daily newspapers, called *The World* and *The Oracle*; from which they were soon collected, and recommended with vast laudation to the public attention, in a volume entitled *The Album*, by Bell the printer. "While the epidemic malady was spreading from fool to fool;" continues Gifford, "Della Crusca came over, and immediately announced himself by a sonnet to Love. Anna Matilda wrote an incomparable piece of nonsense in praise of it; and the two 'great luminaries of the age,' as Mr. Bell calls them, fell desperately in love with each other. From that period not a day passed without an amatory epistle, fraught with lightning and thunder, *et quicquid habent telorum armamentaria cæli*. The fever turned to a frenzy: Laura Maria, Carlos, Orlando, Adelaide, and a thousand other nameless names caught the infection; and, from one end of the kingdom to the other, all was nonsense and Della Crusca." After this had gone on for some time, Gifford took up his pen, and in 1794 produced his *Baviad*, which in 1796 was followed by its continuation, the *Mæviad*. It is only in these two poems that the memory of most of the unhappy Della Cruscan songsters has been preserved, — an immortality which may be compared with that conferred by the *Newgate Calendar*. We may transfer to our historic page the principal names, in addition to those already mentioned, that figure in these celebrated satires, adding a few par-

particulars as to some of them gleaned from other sources. A few of the writers, we may remark, that got bespattered in the course of Gifford's somewhat energetic horse-play, have survived and recovered from his corrosive mud and any connection they may have had with the Della Cruscan folly: — such as the dramatists O'Keefe, Morton, Reynolds, and Holcroft; the younger Colman, who had already, in 1795, produced his *Sylvester Daggerwood*, besides other dramatic pieces; Mrs. Cowley, the clever authoress of *The Belle's Stratagem*; and no less a person than the prince of biographers, James Boswell, of whose Johnsonianism, however, people in general as yet discerned only the ludicrous excess; — not to speak of such rather more than respectable rhymers as Edward Jerningham, the author of numerous plays and poems; Miles Peter Andrews, noted for his prologues and epilogues, which were occasionally lively as well as rattling; and perhaps we ought also to add, in a proper spirit of gallantry, the somewhat too famous Mrs. Robinson, who, with all her levity, intellectual as well as moral, was not without some literary talent and poetical feeling. Mrs. Piozzi, too, of course, though not the wisest of women, must be held to have been by no means *all* ignorance and pretension.¹ But the general herd of the Della Cruscans may be safely set down as having been mere blatant blockheads. Of some of the fictitious signatures quoted by Gifford we find no interpretation: such as Arno, Cesario, Julia, &c. Others of the names he mentions are real names. Topham, for instance, is Mr. Edward Topham, the proprietor of *The World*; “*monosoph Este*,” as he calls him, is the Rev. Charles Este, principal editor of that paper; Weston is Joseph Weston, a small magazine critic of the day. Two of the minor offenders, to whom he deals a lash or two in passing, are James Cobbe, a now forgotten farce-writer; and Frederick Pilon, who was, we believe, a player by profession. The most conspicuous names, besides Merry and Greathead, are Mit Yenda, or Mot Yenda, stated to be the anagram of a Mr. Timothy or Thomas Adney, of whom we know nothing; Edwin, which stands for a Mr. Thomas Vaughan, the same person, we suppose, who wrote a farce called *The Hotel*, and one or two other things of the same sort, about twenty years

¹ Much new light has been lately thrown on the life and character of this famous lady by Mr. Hayward's two lively and amusing volumes, entitled, *Autobiography, Letters, and Literary Remains of Mrs. Piozzi (Thrale)*, Lon. 1861. See, also, for a view of some parts of the subject different from that of Mr. Hayward, the article on his book in the *Edinburgh Review* for April, 1861.

before this time ; and especially Tony or Anthony Pasquin, the *nom de guerre* of a John Williams, the author of loads both of verse and prose. If we may judge by a collection of the Poems, as they are called, of this Williams, or Pasquin, published, in two volumes, in 1789, — a second edition, with a long list of subscribers, sparkling with titled names, — Gifford's representation of the emptiness, feebleness, and sounding stupidity of the Della Cruscans is no exaggeration at all. Nothing, certainly, was ever printed on decent paper more worthless and utterly despicable in every way than this poetry of the great Anthony Pasquin, who, in quite a lofty and patronizing style, dedicates one of his volumes to Mr. Pitt, and the other in part to Sir Joshua Reynolds, in part to Warren Hastings (so economically does he distribute the precious honor) ; — who has all these three distinguished persons among his subscribers, in company with most of the rank and eminence of the time ; — and whom his friends and admirers, West Dudley Digges, W. Whitby of Cambridge, Thomas Bellamy, Frederick Pilon, William Upton, and J. Butler, — all, he tells us, “ of high estimation in the world of literature,” — in a series of introductory odes and other rhyming laudations, extol as another Martial and Juvenal combined, — the reformer of the age, — the scourge of folly, — animating the just criticism of Persius with a brighter fire than Churchill's, — “ at once the Pride and Terror of the Land,” — a Dryden come to life again, — the greatest wit since Butler, — a giant, magnanimous and proud, fit only to contend with giants. “ Our children's children,” exclaims Dudley Digges, —

“ Our children's children o'er thy honoured dust
Shall raise the sculptured tomb and laureled bust ;
Inscribe the stone with monumental woe,
While the big tears in gushing torrents flow !”

“ Resistless bard !” Pilon breaks out, —

“ by every science owned,
Thou shalt be universally renowned !
Well may you tread all competition down :
Originality is all your own.”

But far beyond this is the fine frenzy of William Upton. “ Pasquin !” roars out this idiot striving to get in a passion, —

“ Pasquin ! Can nought thy daring pen impede,
Or stem the venom of thy critic gall ?

Shall thy effusions make whole legions bleed,
And thou sit smiling as their numbers fall?

“By heaven! I'll probe thee to the heart's warm core,
If Thespis hurl again his satire round,
E'en thy existence, by the gods, I've sworn
To bring, by strength Samsonian, to the ground!

“For know, that giants should with giants vie,” &c.

And afterwards, —

“Imperious tyrant, *doth* my threats affright
Thy yet ungoverned and undaunted soul?
Or rather fill thee with renewed delight,
Such as when Paris lovely Helen stole?”

So much for contemporary praise — at least when estimated by the number and vehemence rather than by the true worth and authority of the voices! This man Upton, too, had published at least one volume of rhymes of his own, and no doubt was considered by many others as well as by himself to be one of the poetical luminaries of the age. The frantic insipidities we have quoted, however, may serve to give a right notion of the whole of this singular phenomenon — of what the Della Cruscan poetry was, and also of the nature and extent of the celebrity and admiration which it for a time enjoyed. Of course, it could not deceive the higher order of cultivated minds; but even in what is called the literary world there are always numbers of persons easily imposed upon as to such matters, and at the same time favorably placed for imposing upon others; poetical antiquaries, editors, and commentators, for example, who, naturally enough, take themselves, and are taken by the multitude, to be the best judges of the article which it seems to be in a manner their trade to deal in, but who, in truth, for the most part do not know good poetry from bad, or from no poetry at all. Witness the manner in which about this very time some of the most laborious of the Shakspearian commentators, and other *literati* of high name, were taken in by the miserable forgeries of Ireland. No wonder, then, that Tony Pasquin too had his literary as well as fashionable admirers. No doubt his chief acceptance, and that of the other Della Cruscan warblers, male and female, was with what is (or rather was, for the phrase in that sense is now gone out) called the town — in other words, the mere popu-

face of the reading world, whose voice is not, and cannot be, more potential for any enduring effect than that of any other mob; yet the discreditable infatuation — the parallel of that of Queen Titania for Bottom the weaver, with his ass's head —

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again :
Mine ear is much enamoured of thy note —

might have lasted considerably longer, and even spread farther than it did, had it not been checked by Gifford's vigorous exposure and castigation. He himself intimates, in the Preface to the *Mæviad*, that he had been charged with breaking butterflies upon a wheel; but "many a man," he adds, "who now affects to pity me for wasting my strength upon unresisting imbecility, would, not long since, have heard their poems with applause, and their praises with delight." On the other hand, their great patron, Bell, the printer, accused him of "bespattering nearly all the poetical eminence of the day." "But, on the whole," he says, "the clamour against me was not loud; and was lost by insensible degrees in the applause of such as I was truly ambitious to please. Thus supported, the good effects of the satire (*glorioso loquor*) were not long in manifesting themselves. Della Crusca appeared no more in the Oracle, and, if any of his followers ventured to treat the town with a soft sonnet, it was not, as before, introduced by a pompous preface. Pope and Milton resumed their superiority; and Este and his coadjutors silently acquiesced in the growing opinion of their incompetency, and showed some sense of shame."



THE SHAKSPEARE PAPERS.

OF the forgeries of William Henry Ireland it is only necessary to record that, after the pretended old parchments had been exhibited for some months in Norfolk Street, where they were beheld and perused with vast reverence and admiration by sundry eminent scholars and critics, their contents were printed in December, 1795, in a magnificent two-guinea folio, published by subscription among the believers, with the title of *Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments*, under the hand and seal of William Shakspeare,

ncluding the Tragedy of King Lear, and a small fragment of Hamlet, from the original MSS.; that the professed editor was Samuel Ireland, the father of the fabricator; that the tragedy of *Kyunge Vorrytygerne*, an additional piece of manufacture from the same workshop, was brought out at Drury Lane in March following; that Malone's conclusive Inquiry into the Authenticity of the papers appeared just in time to herald that performance; that young Ireland himself the same year acknowledged the imposition (at the same time acquitting his father of all share in it) in his *Authentic Account of the Shakspeare Manuscripts* (afterwards extended in his *Confessions* relative to the Shakspeare Forgery, published in 1805); and that, notwithstanding all this, George Chalmers came out in 1797, with *An Apology for the Believers*, which he followed up with another thick octavo, entitled *A Supplemental Apology*, two years after. Malone's exposure, founded entirely on evidence external to the merits of the poetry thus impudently attributed to Shakspeare, was, as we have said, demonstrative enough; but it ought not to have been required: the wretched rubbish should have been its own sufficient refutation. Vortigern, indeed, was damned, after Malone had sounded his cat-call; but that persons occupying such positions in the literary world as Pye, the poet-laureate, Boswell, John Pinkerton, George Chalmers, Dr. Parr, &c., should have mistaken, as they did, the poetry of Ireland for that of Shakspeare, could only have happened in a time in which there was very little true feeling generally diffused, even among persons to whom the public naturally looked up for guidance in such matters, either of Shakspeare or of poetry. The Della Cruscan poetry had its proper and natural sequel in the Shakspeare papers.



THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE.

CONTEMPORANEOUSLY with Gifford's *Baviad* and *Mæviad* appeared another remarkable satirical poem, *The Pursuits of Literature*, now known to have been written by the late Thomas James Mathias, the author of many other pieces both in verse and prose (among the rest, of a number of poetical compositions in Italian, published in the latter part of his life), although, we believe, it never was

publicly acknowledged by him. The First Part, or Dialogue, of the Pursuits of Literature came out in May, 1794; the Second and Third together, in May, 1796; the Fourth and last in July, 1797. The Four Dialogues were collected and republished together in January, 1798: this is called the fifth edition; before the end of the same year two more editions had been called for; and that before us, dated 1805, is numbered the thirteenth. The poem, which consists in all of only between 1500 and 1600 lines, spread over a volume of 450 pages, takes a general survey both of the literature and politics of its day; but the interest of the work lies chiefly in the prose prefaces and notes, the quantity of which amounts to about ten times that of the verse. And, in truth, the prose is in every way the cleverest and most meritorious part of the performance. Mathias's gift of song was not of a high order; his poetry is of the same school with Gifford's, but the verse of the Pursuits of Literature has neither the terseness and pungency nor the occasional dignity and elegance which make that of the Baviad and Mæviad so successful an echo of Pope — the common master of both writers. The notes, however, though splenetic, and avowing throughout a spirit of the most uncompromising partisanship, are written with a sharp pen, as well as in a scholarly style, and, in addition to much Greek and Latin learning, contain a good deal of curious disquisition and anecdote. Most of the literary and political notorieties, great and small, of that day, are noticed by the author, — himself not excepted;¹ and it is interesting and amusing to look back from this distance, and to remark how time has dealt with the several names introduced, and what final judgments she has passed on his likings and dislikings.



OTHER SATIRICAL POETRY.—MASON. THE ROLLIAD. PROBATIONARY ODES. PETER PINDAR.

THIS may be said to have been especially the age of literary and political satire in England. Most of it, however, was in a

¹ See a note on line 151 of Dialogue First, where mention is made of "Mr. Mathias's candid and comprehensive Essay" on Rowley's poems (written in defence of their authenticity).

lighter style than the Pursuits of Literature or the Baviad and Mæviad. These poems were the energetic invectives of Juvenal and Persius after the more airy ridicule of Horace. Perhaps the liveliest and happiest of all the quick succession of similar *jeux d'esprit* that appeared from the first unsettlement of the power and supremacy of Lord North to the termination of the war of parties by the firm establishment of the premiership of Pitt, was Richard Tickell's Anticipation, published a few days before the meeting of parliament in November, 1778. It was an anticipation of the king's speech and the coming debates on it in the two Houses; and so much to the life was each noble lord and honorable member hit off, that, it is said, they one after another, to the infinite amusement of their hearers, fell in their actual orations into the forms of expression and modes of argument and illustration that had been assigned to them, only drifting the faster and the farther in that direction the more they strove to take another course. Poor Tickell, the grandson of Addison's friend, Thomas Tickell, after making the town merry by other sportive effusions both in prose and verse, put an end to his life by throwing himself from his bedroom-window at Hampton Court Palace in November, 1793. The Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers, with its Heroic Postscript, and the Odes to Dr. Shebbeare, to Sir Fletcher Norton, &c., which appeared in 1782 under the name of Malcolm MacGregor, of Knightsbridge, Esq., and are now known to have been the productions of the poet Mason, have been already noticed. A fortunate subject did as much perhaps for the first and most celebrated of these pieces as any remarkable merit there was in its execution; the verses would have needed to be golden indeed to give any extraordinary value to so short a performance. The Heroic Epistle is only an affair of 146 lines, with a few slight prose notes. But, although Sir William's Oriental principles of gardening afforded matter for solemn ridicule which it was impossible for him to fail in turning to some account, Mason had more spite than wit, and his wordy, labored verse is for the most part rather insolent than caustic. The next political satire that made much noise at the time, and is still remembered, was the famous Rolliad, which appeared in a series of papers in the latter part of 1784 and beginning of 1785, immediately after the great struggle between Pitt and the Coalition. The Rolliad — so named after the late Lord Rolle, then Colonel John Rolle, one of the members for Devon-

shire, and a staunch adherent to the party of Pitt and the Court—was a volley of prose and verse from the side of the defeated Coalition. One of the persons principally concerned in it is understood to have been the eminent civilian, Dr. French Lawrence, Burke's friend; another is believed to have been the late George Ellis, the author of the *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, &c. Its tone and manner are jocular; but it is easy to see that the writers were at heart not a little angry, and that they were bent on doing mischief. The satire is daringly personal and not unfrequently coarse, going to a much greater length in both ways than our present manners would allow. The vindictive spirit out of which it comes, too, is shown both by the pertinacity with which the more eminent victims are again and again attacked, and by the eagerness with which the smaller game also are hunted down and torn to pieces. Nobody escapes, from the new premier down to the most nameless among his retainers. Yet all this is done, as we have said, with much gayety and laughter; and the epigrams are often as brilliant as they are stinging and exasperating. The *Rolliad* was followed, first by a small volume of *Political Eclogues*, and then by the *Probationary Odes for the Laureateship*, published after the election of Thomas Warton to that office on the vacancy occasioned by the death of William Whitehead. The Odes, which are supposed to be recited by their respective authors before the Lord Chamberlain, assisted by his friend Mr. Delpini, of the Haymarket Theatre, whom his lordship had sent for to serve as a guide to his inexperience in such matters, are assigned to Sir Cecil Wray, a not very literary M. P., the established butt of the Whig wits of those days—"the words by Sir Cecil Wray, Bart., the spelling by Mr. Grojan, attorney-at-law," is the title); to Lord Mulgrave, a member of the new administration, and the author of a *Voyage to the North Pole*, as well as of various fugitive pieces in not the soberest verse; to Sir Joseph Mawbey, another ministerial M. P., who appears to have dealt, not in poetry, but in pigs; to Sir Richard Hill, the methodistical baronet, brother of Rowland, the well-known preacher, and said to be given to the same kind of pious jocularly in his speeches with which Rowland used to enliven his sermons; to James Macpherson, the translator or author of *Ossian*, who was also at this time a member of the House of Commons (sitting as one of the representatives of the Nabob of Arcot); to Mason, the poet; to the Attorney-General, R. T. Arden (afterwards Lord

Alvanley); to Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, already famous for having, as it was said, run over all the countries of the world, and learned nothing but their names; to Sir Gregory Page Turner, another loyal baronet and M. P.; to Michael Angelo Taylor, M. P.; to Major John Scott, Warren Hastings's chief agent and champion in the House of Commons; to Harry Dundas (in Scotch); to Dr. Joseph Warton, "in humble imitation of Brother Thomas"; to Viscount Mountmorres (in Hibernian English); to the Lord Chancellor Thurlow; to the Rev. Dr. Prettyman (Pitt's tutor, afterwards Bishop of Winchester), the prose notes to whose irregular strains, "except those wherein Latin is concerned," are stated to be by John Robinson, Esq., the notorious "Jack Robinson," in popular repute the well-rewarded and unscrupulous doer of all work for all administrations; to the Marquis of Graham (the late Duke of Montrose); to Lord Mountmorres (a second attempt, in English); to Sir George Howard, K. B. (afterwards Field Marshal); to Dr. Markham, Archbishop of York; and to Warton himself, the successful candidate. The Probationary Odes proceeded from the same manufactory as the Rolliad; and they are at least equally spirited and successful. Indeed, the humor, we would say, is richer as well as brighter and freer in its flow, an effect owing partly perhaps to the form of the composition, which is not so solemn and rigid, but somewhat, also, probably, to the writers being in a kindlier mood, and less disposed to give pain to the objects of their satire. Except in a small collection of Political Miscellanies in the same style, which appeared shortly afterwards, the muse of the Rolliad and the Probationary Odes was, as far as is known, heard no more; but another mocking spirit, not to be so soon silenced, was already in the air, and beginning to "syllable men's names" in a very peculiar accent, at once singularly comic and biting. Dr. John Wolcot, formerly a preacher to a congregation of negroes in Jamaica, now settled in London as a physician, made his first appearance as Peter Pindar in his Lyric Odes [fifteen in number] to the Royal Academicians, for 1782. The style and manner of these compositions, coarse and careless enough, but full of drollery and pungency, and quite original, seems to have taken the public fancy at once. Some attention also their author would have had a right to, had it been merely for the soundness of some of his remarks, and his evident knowledge of his subject; for Wolcot, who when practising medicine at Truro had discovered

and encouraged the genius of John Opie, then a working carpenter in that neighborhood, had a true as well as cultivated feeling for art. But, although the truth or good sense of his criticism may have done something at first to bring him into notice, it was to attractions of another sort that he owed his popularity. He confined himself to his friends the Academicians, to whom he addressed another set of odes in 1783, and a third set in 1785, till the latter year, when he came out with the first canto of his *Lousiad*, the earliest of his lampoons expressly or entirely dedicated to the higher game which henceforward engaged his chief attention. The king, naturally falling in his way as the founder and patron of the Academy, had from the first come in for a side-blow now and then; but from this date their majesties became the main butts of his ridicule, and it was only when no fresh scandal or lie suited for his purpose was afloat about the doings at St. James's or Kew that he wasted his time on anything else. Such a thorn in the side of the royal family did he make himself, that a negotiation, it is said, was at one time entered into to purchase his silence. There can be no doubt, indeed, that his daring and incessant derision proved materially injurious to the popularity of the king and queen. Their unscrupulous assailant took all sorts of advantages, fair and unfair, and his ludicrous delineations are certainly no materials for history; but as a caricaturist in rhyme he must be placed very high. His manner, as we have observed, is quite original and his own, however much it may have been imitated since by others. His mere wit is not very pointed; but nobody tells a story better, or brings out the farce of a scene with more breadth and effect. Much of what he has left is hastily executed and worth very little; some of his attempts were not suited to the nature of his powers; much of what made people laugh heartily in his own day has lost its interest with the topics to which it relates; but it may safely be predicted that some of his comic tales, and other things which he has done best, and which have least of a mere temporary reference, will live in the language and retain their popularity. Wolcot survived till 1819; but, although he continued to write and publish till within a few years of his death (producing, among other things, a tragedy, *The Fall of Portugal*, which appeared without his name in 1808), all his most memorable effusions belong to the first eighteen or twenty years of his authorship. His proper successor, who may be regarded in the main as his imitator or disciple, was the

late George Colman the Younger (as he persisted in calling himself so long as he lived); but it has not been generally noticed that from Wolcot Byron also has evidently caught part of the inspiration of his *Don Juan* — not of its golden poetry, of course, but of the fluent drollery and quaintness of its less elevated passages. Even there, indeed, it is Wolcot refined and heightened: but still the spirit and manner are essentially the same. Compare, for instance, the harangue of Julia to her husband and his intruding myrmidons, in the first canto of *Don Juan*, with the *Petition of the Cooks* in the second canto of the *Louisiad*.



OTHER POETICAL WRITERS OF THE LATTER PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

OF a number of other poetical writers, or verse-makers, of the latter part of the last century, very little need be said. The celebrated Sir William Jones — the Admirable Crichton of his day — published the first of his poems, consisting mostly of translations from the Asiatic languages, in 1772, in his twenty-sixth year; and he afterwards produced, from time to time, other similar translations, and also some original compositions in verse. He died, in the midst of a career of intellectual conquest which promised to embrace the whole compass of human learning, in 1794. The poetry of Sir William Jones is very sonorous and imposing; and in his happiest efforts there is not wanting nobleness of thought, or glow of passion, as well as pomp of words. He cannot, however, be called a poet of an original genius; any peculiarity of inspiration that may seem to distinguish some of his compositions is for the most part only the Orientalism of the subject, and of the figures and images. He is a brilliant translator and imitator rather than a poet in any higher sense. We cannot say even so much for some other verse-writers of this age, once of great note. Henry James Pye, who died Poet-Laureate and a police magistrate in 1813 (having succeeded to the former office in 1790 on the death of Thomas Warton), had in his time discharged upon the unresisting public torrents of Progress of Refinement, Shoot

ing, a Poem, Amusement, a Poetical Essay, Alfred, Faringdon Hill, The Aristocrat, The Democrat, and other ditch-water of the same sort, which the thirsty earth has long since drunk up. Not less unweariedly productive was Hayley, the friend and biographer of Cowper, with his Triumphs of Temper, Triumphs of Music, poetical epistles, elegies, odes, rhyming essays, plays, &c., which had accumulated to a mass of six octavo volumes so early as 1785, and to which much more forgotten verse was afterwards added — besides his Lives of Cowper and Milton, a prose three-volume Essay on Old Maids, a novel of similar extent &c., &c. William Hayley lived till 1820. With his prose poetry may be classed the several wooden poetical perpetrations of the late learned Richard Payne Knight: The Landscape, published in 1794; The Progress of Civil Society in 1796; The Romance of Alfred, many years after. Mr. Knight died in 1824. Here may be also properly enumerated Cumberland's worthless epics of Calvary, Richard the First, The Exodiad (the two latter written in conjunction with Sir James Bland Burges, and the last not published till 1807-8). Cumberland's Comedies have been already noticed. Another popular poet, and voluminous writer both in verse and prose, of this age was Samuel Jackson Pratt, — originally a strolling player, next an itinerant lecturer, finally a Bath bookseller, — who, after beginning his literary career as a writer of novels under the designation of Courtney Melmoth, Esq., produced certain long poems, in a style of singularly mawkish sentimentality and empty affectation — Sympathy, Humanity, and sundry others, with which humanity has long ceased to sympathize. Pratt, however, was quite the rage for a time, though his existence had been generally forgotten for a good many years before its earthly close in 1814. Here, too, may be mentioned the Rev. Percival Stockdale, whose first poetical effusion, Churchill Defended, dates so far back as 1765, and who continued scribbling and publishing down nearly to his death, in 1811; but all whose literary labors have passed into utter oblivion, except only his Memoirs of his own Life, published in two octavo volumes in 1809, which is a work that the world will not willingly let die, and to have written which is, of itself, not to have lived in vain. Poor Stockdale's pleasant delusion was merely, that, being one of the smallest men of his time, or of any time, he imagined himself to be one of the greatest; and his autobiography is his exposition and defence of this faith, written with an in

tense serenity of conviction which the most confirmed believers in anything else whatever might envy.

Mrs. Charlotte Smith, better known as a novelist, made her first appearance as an author, at the age of twenty-five, by the publication, at Chichester, in 1784, of a series of Elegiac Sonnets, in which there was at least considerable poetic promise. Miss Brooke, daughter of Henry Brooke, the author of *The Fool of Quality*, published in 1790 her *Reliques of Irish Poetry translated into English Verse*, which is chiefly deserving of notice as having called some attention to a neglected and interesting department of ancient national literature. Hannah More had produced her first work, *The Search after Happiness, a Pastoral Drama*, in 1773, her two ballads, or Poetical Tales, as she called them, of *Sir Eldred of the Bower* and *the Bleeding Rock*, the following year, and several more poems, as well as sundry tragedies and other dramatic pieces, in the course of the next ten years; and she maintained her reputation as a correct, sensible, and highly moral writer of verse by her *Florio* and *The Bas Bleu*, published in 1786, and her poem entitled *Slavery*, which appeared, in a quarto volume, two years later. Joanna Baillie, who survived till 1851, assumed at once her much more eminent place as a poetess, by the first volume of her *Plays illustrative of the Passions*, which was given to the world in 1798. The late William Sotheby, besides a volume of poems published in 1794, added to our literature in 1798 his elegant version of Wieland's *Oberon*, the work by which his name is perhaps most likely to be preserved, although he continued to write verse down almost to his death in 1833. But perhaps the two most important poetical publications which have not been noticed, at least in their effects if not in themselves, were the *Fourteen Sonnets* by the Rev. Lisle Bowles, who died only in 1850, printed at Bath in 1780; and the *Tales of Wonder*, by Matthew Gregory Lewis (already of literary notoriety as the author of the novel of *The Monk*, published in 1795), which came out, in two volumes, in 1801. Mr. Bowles, whose later works amply sustained his reputation as a true poet, has the glory of having by his first verses given an impulse and an inspiration to the genius of Coleridge, who in his *Biographia Literaria* has related how the spirit of poetry that was in him was awakened into activity by these sonnets. Lewis, again, and his *Tales of Wonder*, gave in like manner example and excitement to Scott, who had indeed already published his first rhymes,

partly translated, partly original, in 1796, and also his prose version of Goethe's *Goetz of Berlichingen*, in 1799, but had not yet given any promise of what he was destined to become. Coleridge published his forgotten drama of *The Fall of Robespierre* in 1794, and a volume of *Poems* in 1796; Wordsworth, his *Epistle in verse* entitled *An Evening Walk*, and also his *Descriptive Sketches* during a *Tour in the Alps*, in 1793, and the first edition of his *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798; Southey, his *Joan of Arc* in 1796 and a volume of *Poems* in 1797; but these writers all nevertheless belong properly to the present century, in which their principal works were produced, as well as Scott and Crabbe, and Thomas Moore, whose first publication, his *Odes of Anacreon*, appeared in 1800; Thomas Campbell, whose *Pleasures of Hope* first appeared in 1799; Walter Savage Landor, still living, whose first published poetry dates so far back as 1795; and Samuel Rogers, whose first poetry came out in 1786, and his *Pleasures of Memory* in 1792.

 BURNS.

IN October or November of the same year, 1786, in which Rogers, who all but saw 1856, first made his name known to English readers by *An Ode to Superstition*, with other *Poems*, printed at London, in the fashionable quarto size of the day, the press of the obscure country town of Kilmarnock, in Scotland, gave to the world, in an octavo volume, the first edition of the *Poems*, chiefly in the *Scottish Dialect*, of Robert Burns. A second edition was printed at Edinburgh early in the following year. Burns, born on the 25th of January, 1759, had composed most of the pieces contained in this publication in the two years preceding its appearance: his life — an April day of sunshine and storm — closed on the 21st of July, 1796; and in his last nine or ten years he may have about doubled the original quantity of his printed poetry. He was not quite thirty-seven and a half years old when he died — about a year and three months older than Byron. Burns is the greatest peasant-poet that has ever appeared; but his poetry is so remarkable in itself that the circumstances in which it was produced hardly add anything to our admiration. It is a poetry of very limited compass — not ascending towards any “highest heaven

of invention," nor even having much variety of modulation, but yet in its few notes as true and melodious a voice of passion as was ever heard. It is all light and fire. Considering how little the dialect in which he wrote had been trained to the purposes of literature, what Burns has done with it is miraculous. Nothing in Horace, in the way of curious felicity of phrase, excels what we find in the compositions of this Ayrshire ploughman. The words are almost always so apt and full of life, at once so natural and expressive, and so graceful and musical in their animated simplicity, that, were the matter ever so trivial, they would of themselves turn it into poetry. And the same native artistic feeling manifests itself in everything else. One characteristic that belongs to whatever Burns has written is that, of its kind or in its own way, it is a perfect production. It is perfect in the same sense in which every production of nature is perfect, the humblest weed as well as the proudest flower; and in which, indeed, every true thing whatever is perfect, viewed in reference to its species and purpose. His poetry is, throughout, real emotion melodiously uttered. As such, it is as genuine poetry as was ever written or sung. Not, however, although its chief and best inspiration is passion rather than imagination, that any poetry ever was farther from being a mere Æolian warble addressing itself principally to the nerves. Burns's head was as strong as his heart; his natural sagacity, logical faculty, and judgment were of the first order; no man, of poetical or prosaic temperament, ever had a more substantial intellectual character. And the character of his poetry is like that of the mind and the nature out of which it sprung — instinct with passion, but not less so with power of thought — full of light, as we have said, as well as of fire. More of matter and meaning, in short, in any sense in which the terms may be understood, will be found in no verses than there is in his. Hence the popularity of the poetry of Burns with all classes of his countrymen, — a popularity more universal, probably, than any other writer ever gained, at least so immediately; for his name, we apprehend, had become a household word among all classes in every part of Scotland even in his own lifetime. Certainly at the present day, that would be a rare Lowland Scotchman, or Scotchwoman either, who should be found never to have heard of the name and fame of Robert Burns, or even to be altogether ignorant of his works. It has happened, however, from this cause, that he is not perhaps, in

general, estimated by the best of his productions. Nobody, of course, capable of appreciating any of the characteristic qualities of Burns's poetry will ever think of quoting even the best of the few verses he has written in English, as evidence of his poetic genius. In these he is Samson shorn of his hair, and become as any other man. But even such poems as his *Cotter's Saturday Night*, and his tale of *Tam o' Shanter*, convey no adequate conception of what is brightest and highest in his poetry. The former is a true and touching description in a quiet and subdued manner, suitable to the subject, but not adapted to bring out much of his illuminating fancy and fusing power of passion: the other is a rapid, animated, and most effective piece of narrative, with some vigorous comedy, and also some scene-painting in a broad, dashing style, but exhibiting hardly more of the peculiar humor of Burns than of his pathos. Of a far rarer merit, much richer in true poetic light and color, and of a much more original and distinctive inspiration, are many of his poems which are much less frequently referred to, at least out of his own country. Take, for instance, that entitled *To a Mouse, on turning her up in her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785*:—

Wee,¹ sleekit,² cow'riu,³ timorous beastie,⁴
 O what a panic 's in thy breastie!⁴
 Thou need na⁵ start awa⁶ sa hastie,
 Wi' bickerin' brattle!⁷
 I wad be laith⁸ to rin⁹ an' chase thee,
 Wi' murderin' pattle.¹⁰

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
 Has broken nature's social union,
 An' justifies that ill opinion
 Which makes thee startle
 At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
 An' fellow mortal.

I doubt na, whiles,¹¹ but thou mayst thieve;
 What then? Poor beastie, thou maun¹² live!

¹ Little.

² Sly.

³ Cowering

⁴ Diminutives of "beast," and "breast."

⁵ Not.

⁶ Away.

⁷ With scudding fury.

⁸ Would (should) be loath.

⁹ Run.

¹⁰ With murderous ploughstaff.

¹¹ Sometimes.

¹² Must.

A daimen icker¹ in a thrave²
 'S a sma'³ request:
 I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,⁴
 An' never miss't.

Thy wee bit housie,⁵ too, in ruin!
 Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!⁶
 An' naething, now, to big a new ane,⁷
 O' foggage⁸ green!
 An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
 Baith snell⁹ and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
 An' weary winter comin' fast;
 An' cozie¹⁰ here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell;
 Till crash! the cruel coulter passed
 Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble¹¹
 Has cost thee monie¹² a weary nibble!
 Now thou 's¹³ turned out, for a' thy trouble,
 But house or hald,¹⁴
 To thole¹⁵ the winter's sleety dribble;
 An' cranreuch cald.¹⁶

But, Mousie,¹⁷ thou art no thy lane¹⁸
 In proving foresight may be vain:
 The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
 Gang aft a-gley,¹⁹
 An' leave us nought but grief and pain,
 For promised joy.

Still thou art blest compared wi' me!
 The present only toucheth thee:

¹ An occasional ear of corn.

³ Is a small.

⁶ Triple diminutive of *house* — untranslatable into English.

⁶ Its weak walls the winds are strewing.

⁷ Nothing now to build a new one.

¹⁰ Snug.

¹² Many.

¹⁵ Endure.

¹⁸ Not alone.

² A double shock.

⁴ Remainder.

⁸ Moss.

⁹ Biting

¹¹ Very small quantity of leaves and stubble.

¹³ Thou is (art).

¹⁶ Hoar-frost cold.

¹⁴ Without house or hold.

¹⁷ Diminutive of "mouse."

¹⁹ Go oft awry.

But och !¹ I backward cast my ee²
 On prospects drear ;
 An' forward, though I canna³ see,
 I guess an' fear.

A simple and common incident poetically conceived has never been rendered into expression more natural, delicately graceful, and true. Of course, however, our glossarial interpretations can convey but a very insufficient notion of the aptness of the poet's language to those to whom the Scottish dialect is not familiar. Such a phrase as "bickering brattle," for instance, is not to be translated. The epithet "bickering" implies that sharp, explosive, fluttering violence, or impetuosity, which belongs to any sudden and rapid progressive movement of short continuance, and it expresses the noise as well as the speed. It is no doubt the same word with the old English "bickering," but used in a more extensive sense : a "bicker" means commonly a short irregular fight, or skirmish : but Milton has "bickering flame," where, although the commentators interpret the epithet as equivalent to *quivering*, we apprehend it includes the idea of *crackling* also. Darwin has borrowed the phrase, as may be seen in one of our extracts given above. Nor is it possible to give the effect of the diminutives, in which the Scottish language is almost as rich as the Italian. While the English, for example, has only its *manikin*, the Scotch has its *mannie*, *mannikie*, *bit mannie*, *bit mannikie*, *wee bit mannie*, *wee bit mannikie*, *little wee bit mannie*, *little wee bit mannikie* ; and so with *wife*, *wifie*, *wifikie*, and many other terms. Almost every substantive noun has at least one diminutive form, made by the affix *ie*, as *mousie*, *housie*. We ought to notice also, that the established or customary spelling in these and other similar instances does not correctly represent the pronunciation : — the vowel sound is the soft one usually indicated by *oo* ; as if the words were written *moosie*, *hoosie*, *coorin*, &c. It is an advantage that the Scottish dialect possesses, somewhat akin to that possessed by the Greek in the time of Homer, that, from having been comparatively but little employed in literary composition, and only imperfectly reduced under the dominion of grammar, many of its words have several forms, which are not only convenient for the exigencies of verse, but are used with different effects or shades of meaning. In particular, the English form is always available when wanted ; and it is the writer's natural resource when he would rise from the

¹ Ah.² Eye.³ Cannot.

light or familiar style to one of greater elevation or earnestness. Thus, in the above verses, while expressing only half-playful tenderness and commiseration, Burns writes, "Now thou's turned out" (pronounce *oot*), in his native dialect; but it is in the regular English form, "Still thou art blest," that he gives utterance to the deeper pathos and solemnity of the concluding verse.

The proper companion to this short poem is that addressed To a Mountain Daisy, on turning one down with the Plough, in April, 1786; but in that the execution is not so pure throughout, and the latter part runs somewhat into commonplace. The beginning, however, is in the poet's happiest manner:—

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
 Thou 's¹ met me in an evil hour;
 For I maun crush amang the stour²
 Thy tender stem;
 To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
 Thou bonnie³ gem.

Alas! it's no⁴ thy neebor⁵ sweet,
 The bonnie lark, companion meet!
 Bending thee 'mang the dewy weat⁶
 Wi' speckled⁷ breast,
 When upward springing, blythe, to greet
 The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
 Upon thy early, humble, birth;
 Yet cheerfully thou glinted⁸ forth
 Amid the storm,
 Scarce reared above the parent earth
 Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield
 High sheltering woods and wa's maun⁹ shield;
 But thou beneath the random bield¹⁰
 O' clod or stane¹¹
 Adorns the histie¹² stibble-field,
 Unseen, alane.

¹ Thou hast.³ Lovely.⁷ Speckled.¹⁰ Shelter.² Dust (pronounce *floor, hoor, stoor, poor*).⁴ Not.⁵ Neighbor.⁸ Peeped, or rather glanced (glancedst).¹¹ Stone.¹² Dry and rugged.⁶ Wet.⁹ Walls must

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
 Thy snawy¹ bosom sun-ward spread,
 Thou lifts thy unassuming head
 In humble guise ;
 But now the share uptears thy bed,
 And low thou lies !

Such is the fate of artless maid,
 Sweet floweret of the rural shade !
 By love's simplicity betrayed,
 And guileless trust,
 Till she, like thee, all soiled is laid
 Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
 On life's rough ocean luckless-starred !
 Unskilful he to note the card
 Of prudent lore,
 Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And whelm him o'er !

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
 Who long with wants and woes has striven,
 By human pride or cunning driven
 To misery's brink,
 Till, wrenched of every stay but heaven,
 He, ruined, sink !

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
 That fate is thine — no distant date ;
 Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
 Full on thy bloom,
 Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
 Shall be thy doom !

In a different style, and of another mood, but still, in the strong rush of its comic and satiric eloquence and the hurry of its whimsical fancies, not without occasional touches both of the terrific and the tender, is the glorious Address to the Deil (the Devil) : —

O Thou ! whatever title suit thee,
 Auld² Hornie,³ Satan, Nick, or Clootie,⁴

Snowy. ² Old. ³ A popular name of the devil, in allusion to his horns
 Another, in allusion to his *cloots*, or hoofs.

Wha,¹ in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
 Closed under hatches,
 Spairges² about the brunstane³ cootie⁴
 To scaud⁵ poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie,⁶ for a wee,⁷
 And let poor damned bodies be;
 I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,⁸
 E'en to a deil,
 To skelp⁹ and scaud poor dogs like me,
 An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy power, an' great thy fame;
 Far-kenned¹⁰ and noted is thy name;
 An', though yon lowin' heugh's thy hame,¹¹
 Thou travels far;
 An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
 Nor blate¹² nor scour.¹³

Whiles,¹⁴ rangin' like a roarin' lion,
 For prey a'¹⁵ holes an' corners tryin';
 Whiles on the strong-winged tempest flyin',
 Tirling¹⁶ the kirks;
 Whiles in the human bosom pryin'
 Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend Grannie¹⁷ say
 In lanely glens¹⁸ ye like to stray;
 Or, where auld ruined castles grey
 Nod to the moon,
 Ye fright the nightly wanderer's way
 Wi' eldritch croon.¹⁹

When twilight did my Grannie summon
 To say her prayers, douce,²⁰ honest woman,

¹ Who.² Dashes.³ Brimstone.⁴ Wooden bowl.⁵ Scald.⁶ Hangman.⁷ For a little.⁸ Give.⁹ Slap severely.¹⁰ Far-knownd¹¹ Though yonder blazing coal-pit is thy home.¹² Bashful.¹³ Apt to be scared.¹⁴ Sometimes.¹⁵ All.¹⁶ Unroofing.¹⁷ Grandmother.¹⁸ Lonelydales.¹⁹ With unearthly moan (the *oo* in *noon* and *croon* pronounced like the French *u*).²⁰ Quiet, sedate.

Aft yont¹ the dyke² she 's heard ye bummin',³
 Wi' eerie⁴ drone ;
 Or, rustlin', through the hoortrees⁵ comin',
 Wi' heavy groan.

Ae⁶ dreary, windy, winter night,
 The stars shot down wi' sklentint'⁷ light,
 Wi' you, mysel,⁸ I gat⁹ a fright,
 Ayont¹⁰ the lough ;¹¹
 Ye like a rash-bush¹² stood in sight,
 Wi' waving sugh.¹³

The cudgel in my nieve¹⁴ did shake,
 Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
 When wi' an eldritch, stour,¹⁵ quaik, quaik,
 Amang the springs
 Awa' ye squattered,¹⁶ like a drake,
 On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim, an' withered hags,
 Tell how wi' you on ragweed¹⁷ nags
 They skim the muirs¹⁸ and dizzy crags,
 Wi' wicked speed ;
 And in kirk-yards¹⁹ renew their leagues
 Ower²⁰ howkit²¹ dead.

Thence kintra²² wives, wi' toil an' pain,
 May plunge an' plunge the kirk²³ in vain ;
 For oh ! the yellow treasure's ta'en
 By witching skill ;
 An' dawtit, twal-pint Hawkie's gane
 As yell's the bill.²⁴

.
 When thowes²⁵ dissolve the snawy hoord,²⁶
 An' float the jinglin' icy boord,²⁷

¹ Often beyond.² Stone wall of a field.³ Humming.⁴ Ghastly, unearthly.⁵ Whortleberry bushes.⁶ One.⁷ Slanting⁸ Myself.⁹ Got.¹⁰ Beyond.¹¹ Lake.¹² Bush of rushes.¹³ Long sighing sound.¹⁴ Fist.¹⁵ Stern and hollow.¹⁶ Away you fluttered in water.¹⁷ Ragwort.¹⁸ Moors.¹⁹ Churchyards.²⁰ Over.²¹ Dug up, disinterred.²² Country.²³ Churn.²⁴ And fondly cherished, twelve-pint Hawkie (the cow) is gone as barren of milk the bull.²⁵ Thaws.²⁶ Hoard, heap.²⁷ Board.

Then water-kelpies ¹ haunt the foord ²
 By your direction,
 An' nighted travellers are allured
 To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing spunkies ³
 Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is ;
 The bleezin', ⁴ curst, mischievous monkeys
 Delude his eyes,
 Till in some miry slough he sunk is
 Ne'er mair ⁵ to rise.

When Masons' mystic word an' grip ⁶
 In storms an' tempests raise you up,
 Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
 Or, strange to tell !
 The youngest Brother ye wad whip
 Aff straught ⁷ to hell !

Lang syne, ⁸ in Eden's bonnie yard, ⁹
 When youthfu' lovers first were paired,
 An' all the soul of love they shared
 The raptured hour,
 Sweet on the fragrant, flowery swaird, ¹⁰
 In shady bow'r ;

Then you, ye auld sneek-drawin' ¹¹ dog !
 Ye came to Paradise incog,
 An' played on man a cursed brogue ¹²
 (Black be your fa' !) ¹³
 An' gied the infant warld a shog, ¹⁴
 Maist ruined a' ¹⁵.

D' ye mind that day when in a bizz, ¹⁶
 Wi' reekit duds, ¹⁷ and reested gizz, ¹⁸
 Ye did present your smoutie ¹⁹ phiz,
 'Mang better folk,

¹ Mischievous water-spirits.² Ford.³ Will-o'-the-wisps.⁴ Blazing.⁵ Never more⁶ Grip, clasp of the hand⁷ Off straight.⁸ Long since.⁹ Garden.¹⁰ Sward.¹¹ Crafty, bolt-drawing.¹² Trick.¹³ Fate, what befalls you.¹⁴ Gave the infant world a push to the side.¹⁵ That almost ruined all.¹⁶ Buzz.¹⁷ Smoked rags of clothes.¹⁸ Singed periwig.¹⁹ Smutty.

An' sklentit¹ on the Man of Uz
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him² out o' bouse an' hall,
While scabs an' blotches did him gall
Wi' bitter claw,
An' loused³ his ill-tongued wicked scawl,⁴
Was warst ava' ?⁵

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin'⁶ fierce,
Sin⁷ that day Michael did ye pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a' Lallan tongue or Erse⁸
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye 're thinkin'
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin'⁹
To your black pit ;
But faith ! he 'll turn a corner jinkin'¹⁰
An' cheat you yet.

But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben !¹¹
O wad ye tak a thought an' men' !¹²
Ye aiblins¹³ might — I dinna ken¹⁴ —
Still ha'e a stake : —
I 'm wae¹⁵ to think upo'¹⁶ you den,
E'en for your sake !

The same brilliant comic power animates the pieces entitled Scotch Drink, Death and Dr. Hornbook, the Holy Fair, the Ordination, and others of his more irreverent or reckless effusions. There is infinite spirit also in the little operatic sketch, or cantata, as it is called, of the Jolly Beggars, together with the happiest skill in painting character and manners by a few vigorous touches.

¹ Made to fall obliquely.

² Broke him — made him bankrupt.

³ Let loose. ⁴ Scold.

⁵ Which was worse of all.

⁶ Fighting.

⁷ Since.

⁸ Would beat all Lowland tongue or Erse (Gaelic).

⁹ Tripping along.

¹⁰ Dodging.

¹¹ Old Nick.

¹² O would you take a thought and mend !

¹³ Possibly.

¹⁴ I do not know

¹⁵ Sorrowful.

¹⁶ Upon.

As a picture of manners, however, his Hallowe'en is Burns's greatest performance — with its easy vigor, its execution absolutely perfect, its fulness of various and busy life, the truth and reality throughout, the humor diffused over it like sunshine and ever and anon flashing forth in changeful or more dazzling light, the exquisite feeling and rendering both of the whole human spirit of the scene, and also of its accessories in what we can scarcely call or conceive of as inanimate nature while reading such lines as the following: —

Whiles ¹ ow'r ² a linn ³ the burnie ⁴ plays,
 As through the glen ⁵ it wimpled; ⁶
 Whiles round a rocky scar ⁷ it strays;
 Whiles in a wiel ⁸ it dimpled;
 Whiles glittered to the nightly rays,
 Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
 Whiles cookit ⁹ underneath the braes,
 Below the spreading hazel.

But this poem is too long for quotation, and is besides well known to every reader who knows anything of Burns. We will rather present our English readers with one or two shorter pieces that may serve to illustrate another quality of the man and of his poetry — the admirable sagacity and good sense, never separated from manliness and a high spirit, that made so large a part of his large heart and understanding. All the more considerate nature of Burns speaks in the following Epistle to a Young Friend, dated May, 1786: —

I lang hae ¹⁰ thought, my youthfu' friend,
 A something to have sent you,
 Though it should serve nae ¹¹ other end
 Than just a kind memento;
 But how the subject-theme may gang
 Let time and chance determine;
 Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
 Perhaps turn out a sermon.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
 And, Andrew dear, believe me,

¹ Sometimes.

² Over.

³ Waterfall.

⁴ Rivulet.

⁶ Dale.

⁶ Nimbly meandered.

⁷ Cliff.

³ Small whirlpool.

⁹ Silly disappeared by dipping down; skulked. [Dr. Currie interprets it "appeared and disappeared by fits."]

¹⁰ Long have.

¹¹ No.

Ye 'll find mankind an unco squad,¹
 And muckle² they may grieve ye :
 For care and trouble set your thought,
 Ev'n when your end's attained ;
 And a'³ your views may come to nought,
 Where every nerve is strained.

I'll no⁴ say men are villains a' ;
 The real, hardened wicked,
 Wha hae nae⁵ check but human law,
 Are to a few restricked ;⁶
 But oh ! mankind are unco⁷ weak,
 An' little to be trusted ;
 If *self* the wavering balance shake,
 It's rarely right adjusted !

Yet they wha fa'⁸ in fortune's strife,
 Their fate we should na⁹ censure ;
 For still the important *end* of life
 They equally may answer :
 A man may hae an honest heart,
 Though poortith¹⁰ hourly stare him ;
 A man may tak¹¹ a neebor's¹² part,
 Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Aye free aff han'¹³ your story tell,
 When wi' a bosom crony ;¹⁴
 But still keep something to yoursel¹⁵
 You scarcely tell to ony.¹⁶
 Conceal yoursel as weel's¹⁷ ye can
 Frae¹⁸ critical dissection ;
 But keek¹⁹ through every other man
 Wi' sharpened, slee²⁰ inspection.

The sacred lowe²¹ o' weel-placed love,
 Luxuriantly indulge it ;
 But never tempt the illicit rove,
 Though naething should divulge it :

¹ Strange crew.³ Who have no.⁹ Not.¹³ Off-hand.¹⁷ As well as.²¹ Flame² Much.⁶ Restricted.¹⁰ Poverty.¹⁴ Intimate associate.¹⁸ From.⁸ All.⁷ Very, strangely.¹¹ Take.¹⁵ Yourself.¹⁹ Look sily.⁴ Not.⁸ Who fall.¹² Neighbor's¹⁶ Any.²⁰ Sly.

I wave the quantum o' the sin,
 The hazard of concealing ;
 But oh ! it hardens a' within,
 And petrifies the feeling !

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
 Assiduous wait upon her ;
 And gather gear by every wile
 That 's justified by honour ;
 Not for to hide it in a hedge,
 Not for a train attendant ;
 But for the glorious privilege
 Of being independent.

The fear o' hell 's a hangman's whip
 To haud¹ the wretch in order ;
 But where ye feel your *honour* grip,
 Let that aye be your border ;
 Its slightest touches — instant pause ;
 Debar a' side pretences ;
 And resolutely keep its laws,
 Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to revere
 Must sure become the creature ;
 But still the preaching cant forbear,
 And even the rigid feature :
 Yet ne'er with wits profane to range
 Be complaisance extended ;
 An Atheist's laugh 's a poor exchange
 For Deity offended.

When ranting round in pleasure's ring
 Religion may be blinded ;
 Or, if she gie² a random sting,
 It may be little minded ;
 But when on life we 're tempest-driven —
 A conscience but a canker —
 A correspondence fixed wi' heaven
 Is sure a noble anchor.

Adieu, dear, amiable youth !
 Your heart can ne'er be wanting ;

¹ Hold.² Give.

May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
 Erect your brow undaunting !
 In ploughman phrase, " God send you speed,"
 Still daily to grow wiser ;
 And may you better reckon the rede¹
 Than ever did the adviser.

This poem, it will be observed, is for the greater part in English ; and it is not throughout written with all the purity of diction which Burns never violates in his native dialect. For instance, in the fourth stanza the word "censure" is used to suit the exigencies of the rhyme, where the sense demands some such term as deplore or regret ; for, although we might censure the man himself who fails to succeed in life (which, however, is not the idea here), we do not censure, that is blame or condemn, his fate ; we can only lament it ; if we censure anything, it is his conduct. In the same stanza, the expression "stare him" is, we apprehend, neither English nor Scotch : usage authorizes us to speak of poverty staring a man in the face, but not of it staring him, absolutely. Again, in the tenth stanza, we have "Religion may be blinded," apparently, for may be blinked, disregarded, or looked at as with shut eyes.² We notice these things, to prevent an impression being left with the English reader that they are characteristic of Burns. No such vices of style, we repeat, are to be found in his Scotch, where the diction is uniformly as natural and correct as it is appropriate and expressive.

Our next extract shall be a portion of his Epistle to Davie [David Sillar], a Brother Poet, in which we have something of the same strain of sentiment, with a manner, however, more fervid or impetuous : —

While winds frae aff³ Ben Lomond blaw⁴
 And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,⁵
 And hing^{6,7} us ow'r the ingle,⁷
 I set me down to pass the time,
 And spin a verse or twa⁸ o' rhyme
 In hamely⁹ westlin¹⁰ jingle.

¹ "Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own read." — *Shakspeare, Hamlet.*

² Unless, indeed, we may interpret the word as meaning deprived of the power of seeing.

³ From off.

⁴ Blow.

⁵ Snow.

⁶ Hang.

⁷ Fire.

⁸ Two.

⁹ Homely.

¹⁰ Western.

While frosty winds blaw in the drift
 Ben ¹ to the chimla ² lug,³
 I grudge a wee ⁴ the great folk's gift,
 That live sae bien ⁵ an' snug.
 I tent ⁶ less and want less
 Their roomy fire-side ;
 But hanker and canker
 To see their cursed pride.

It's hardly in a body's power
 To keep, at times, frae being sour,
 To see how things are shared ;
 How best o' chieils ⁷ are whiles in want,
 While coofs ⁸ on countless thousands rant,
 And ken na how to wear 't : ⁹
 But, Davie lad, ne'er fash ¹⁰ your head ;
 Though we hae little gear,
 We're fit to win our daily bread
 As lang's ¹¹ we're hale and fier ; ¹²
 Mair spier na ¹³ nor fear na ;
 Auld ¹⁴ age ne'er mind a feg ; ¹⁵
 The last o't, ¹⁶ the warst ¹⁷ o't,
 Is only for to beg.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
 When banes ¹⁸ are crazed and bluid ¹⁹ is thin,
 Is, doubtless, great distress !
 Yet then content could make us blest ;
 Ev'n then sometimes we'd snatch a taste
 Of truest happiness.
 The honest heart that's free frae a'
 Intended fraud or guile,
 However fortune kick the ba', ²⁰
 Has aye some cause to smile ;
 And mind still you'll find still
 A comfort this, nae sma', ²¹
 Nae mair then we'll care then,
 Nae farther can we fa'. ²²

¹ Into the sitting-room [within, or be-in]. ² Chimney.

⁴ Little. ⁶ So well provided, comfortable.

⁷ Fellows. ⁸ Fools. ⁹ Spend it.

¹¹ As long as ¹² In sound health. ¹³ More inquire not.

¹⁶ Fig. ¹⁷ Of it. ¹⁷ Worst.

¹⁹ Blood. ²⁰ Ball. ²¹ Small.

³ Ear, corner.

⁶ Regard, mind

¹⁰ Trouble.

¹⁴ Old.

¹⁸ Bones.

²² Fall.

What though, like commoners of air,
 We wander out, we know not where,
 But either house or hall?
 Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
 The sweeping vales and foaming floods,
 Are free alike to all.
 In days when daisies deck the ground,
 And blackbirds whistle clear,
 With honest joy our hearts will bound
 To see the coming year:
 On bras,¹ when we please, then,
 We 'll sit and sowth² a tune;
 Syne³ rhyme till 't⁴ we 'll time till 't,
 And sing 't when we hae done.

It 's no in titles nor in rank,
 It 's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
 To purchase peace and rest;
 It 's no in makin' muckle mair,⁵
 It 's no in books, it 's no in lear,⁶
 To make us truly blest:
 If happiness hae not her seat
 And centre in the breast,
 We may be wise, or rich, or great,
 But never can be blest;
 Nae treasures nor pleasures
 Could make us happy lang;
 The heart aye 's the part aye
 That makes us right or wrang.⁷

Think ye that sic⁸ as you and I,
 Wha drudge and drive through wet and dry
 Wi' never-ceasing toil;
 Think ye, are we less blest than they
 Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
 As hardly worth their while?
 Alas! how aft in haughty mood
 God's creatures they oppress!
 Or else, neglecting a' that 's guid,
 They riot in excess!

¹ Banks, slopes.⁴ To it.⁵ Wrong.² Whistle in a low tone.⁶ In making much more.⁸ Such.³ Then⁶ Learning

Baith¹ careless and fearless
 Of either heaven or hell!
 Esteeming and deeming
 It's a' an idle tale!

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce,
 Nor make our scanty pleasures less
 By pining at our state;
 And, even should misfortunes come,
 I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
 An's thankfu'² for them yet.
 They gie the wit of age to youth;
 They let us ken oursel;³
 They make us see the naked truth,
 The *real* guid and ill.
 Though losses and crosses
 Be lessons right severe,
 There's wit there, ye'll get there,
 Ye'll find nae other where.

Still more animated is his Answer to the Guid Wife [Mistress] of Wauchope House, written in March, 1787, of which this is the commencement:—

I mind it weel,⁴ in early date,
 When I was beardless, young, and blate,⁵
 An' first could thrash the barn,⁶
 Or haud a yokin' on the pleugh,⁷
 An', though forfoughten sair enough,⁸
 Yet unco⁹ proud to learn;
 When first amang the yellow corn
 A man I reckoned was,
 And wi' the lave¹⁰ ilk¹¹ merry morn
 Could rank my rig¹² and lass;
 Still shearing,¹³ and clearing
 The tither stookit raw,¹⁴
 Wi' claivers and haivers¹⁵
 Wearing the day awa';—

¹ Both.² And is [am] thankful.³ Know ourself.⁴ I remember it well.⁶ Modest, bashful.⁶ Thrash the corn on the barn-floor⁷ Hold a yoking at the plough.⁸ Fatigued sore enough.⁹ Very.¹⁰ With the rest.¹¹ Every.¹² Take rank in respect to my ridge.¹³ Reaping.¹⁴ T'other row of shocks.¹⁶ With idle stories and nonsense

Ev'n then, a wish (I mind its pow'r),
 A wish that to my latest hour
 Shall strongly heave my breast,
 That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
 Some usefu' plan or book could make,
 Or sing a sang¹ at least.
 The rough bur-thistle, spreading wide
 Among the bearded bear,² —
 I turned my weeding-heuk³ aside,
 An' spared the symbol dear.
 No nation, no station,
 My envy e'er could raise ;
 A Scot still, but⁴ blot still,
 I knew nae higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang,
 In formless jumble, right an' wrang,
 Wild floated in my brain ;
 Till on that hairst⁵ I said before,
 My partner in the merry core,⁶
 She roused the forming strain :
 I see her yet, the sonsie⁷ quean,
 That lighted up the jingle,
 Her witching smile, her pawky een,⁸
 That gart⁹ my heartstrings tingle ;
 I firèd, inspirèd,
 At every kindling keek,¹⁰
 But, bashing and dashing,¹¹
 I fearèd aye to speak.

But the most elevated and impassioned of the poems of this class is that entitled *The Vision*. It is too long to be quoted entire ; its course, however, will be understood from the following extracts : —

The sun had closed the winter day,
 The curlers quat¹² their roaring play,
 An' hungered mawkin¹³ ta'en her way
 To kail-yards¹⁴ green,

¹ Song.⁴ Without.⁶ Corps.⁸ Her cunning eyes.¹¹ Feeling abashed and dashed.¹³ The hare.² Barley.⁵ Harvest, or rather harvest-field.⁷ Good-looking, with some degree of *embonpoint*⁹ Caused, made.¹⁴ Colewort gardens.³ Weeding-hook.¹⁰ Sly look.¹² Quitted.

While faithless snaws¹ ilk² step betray
Whare³ she has been.

The thresher's weary flingin' tree⁴
The lee-lang⁵ day had tired me;
And, whan⁶ the day had closed his e'e⁷
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence,⁸ right pensivelie,
I gaed⁹ to rest.

There, lanely,¹⁰ by the ingle-cheek,¹¹
I sat and eyed the spewing reek,¹²
That filled wi' hoast-provoking smeeck¹³
The auld clay biggin';¹⁴
An' heard the restless rattons¹⁵ squeak
About the riggin'.¹⁶

All in this mottie,¹⁷ misty clime,
I backward mused on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done nae thing
But stringin' blethers¹⁸ up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,¹⁹
I might, by this,²⁰ hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank an' clarkit²¹
My cash account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,²²
Is a' the amount.

I started, muttering Blockhead! Coof!²³
And heaved on high my waukit loof,²⁴
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,²⁵

¹ Snaws.² Every.³ Where [pronounce *whar*].⁴ Flail.⁵ Livelong.⁶ When.⁷ Eye.⁸ Within in the sitting apartment.⁹ Went.¹⁰ Lonely¹¹ Fireside.¹² Smoke issuing out.¹³ Cough-provoking smoke.¹⁴ The old clay building, or house.¹⁵ Rats.¹⁶ The roof of the house.¹⁷ Full of notes¹⁸ Nonsense, idle words.¹⁹ Harkened.²⁰ By this time.²¹ Written.²² Half-shirted.²³ Fool.²⁴ My palm thickened (with labor).²⁵ Oath.

That I henceforth would be rhyme-proof
Till my last breath —

When click! the string the snick¹ did draw;
And jee! the door gaed to the wa';
An' by my ingle-lowe I saw,
 Now bleezin'² bright,
A tight, outlandish hizzie,³ braw,
 Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt I held my wisht;⁴
The infant aith, half-formed, was crushed;
I glowr'd as eerie's I'd been dushed⁵
 In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest worth, she blushed
 And steppit ben.⁶

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly boughs
Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows;
I took her for some Scottish Muse
 By that same token;
An' come to stop those reckless vows
 Would soon been⁷ broken.

A hair-brained, sentimental trace
Was strongly marked in her face;
A wildly witty, rustic gracie
 Shone full upon her;
Her eye, even turned on empty space,
 Beamed keen with honour

.

With musing, deep, astonished stare,
I viewed the heavenly-seeming fair;
A whispering throb did witness bear
 Of kindred sweet:
When, with an elder sister's air,
 She did me greet: —

“All hail! my own inspired bard!
In me thy native Muse regard!

¹ Latch.² Blazing.³ Hussy.^{*} Silence.⁴ I stared as frightened as if I had been attacked by a butting ram.⁵ Walked into the room.⁷ Which would soon have been

Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
 Thus poorly low !
 I come to give thee such reward
 As we bestow.

“ Know the great Genius of this land
 Has many a light aërial band,
 Who, all beneath his high command,
 Harmoniously,
 As arts or arms they understand,
 Their labours ply.

.

“ Of these am I — Coila my name ;
 And this district as mine I claim,
 Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
 Held ruling power : —
 I marked thy embryo tuneful flame
 Thy natal hour.

“ With future hope I oft would gaze
 Fond on thy little early ways,
 Thy rudely carolled chiming phrase
 In uncouth rhymes,
 Fired at the simple, artless lays
 Of other times.

“ I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
 Delighted with the dashing roar ;
 Or, when the North his fleecy store
 Drove through the sky,
 I saw grim nature’s visage hoar
 Struck thy young eye.

“ Or, when the deep-green-mantled earth
 Warm cherished every floweret’s birth,
 And joy and music pouring forth
 In every grove,
 I saw thee eye the general mirth
 With boundless love.

“ When ripened fields and azure skies
 Called forth the reapers’ rustling noise
 I saw thee leave their evening joys,

And lonely stalk
 To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
 In pensive walk.

“When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
 Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
 Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
 The adored name,
 I taught thee how to pour in song,
 To soothe thy flame.

“I saw thy pulse's maddening play
 Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
 Misled by fancy's meteor ray,
 By passion driven ;
 But yet the light that led astray
 Was light from heaven.

.

“To give my counsels all in one,
 Thy tuneful flame still careful fan ;
 Preserve the dignity of man
 With soul erect ;
 And trust the universal plan
 Will all protect.

“And wear thou this” — she solemn said,
 And bound the holly round my head :
 The polished leaves and berries red
 Did rustling play ;
 And, like a passing thought, she fled
 In light away.

Here again, in another style, is something which, although not very poetical, is, we think, very striking. Burns himself has spoken of it as a “wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification”; “but,” it is added, “as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over”:—

My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border, O ;
 And carefully he bred me in decency and order, O ;
 He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing, O ;
 For without an honest manly heart no man was worth regarding, O.

Then out into the world my course I did determine, O ;
 Though to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming, O ;
 My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education, O ;
 Resolved was I at least to try to mend my situation, O .

In many a way, and vain essay, I courted fortune's favour, O ;
 Some cause unseen still stept between to frustrate each endeavour, O ;
 Sometimes by foes I was o'erpowered, sometimes by friends forsaken, O
 And when my hope was at the top I still was worst mistaken, O .

Then sore harassed, and tired at last, with fortune's vain delusion, O,
 I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams, and came to this conclusion, O : —
 The past was bad, the future hid — its good or ill untried, O ;
 But the present hour was in my power, and so I would enjoy it, O .

No help, nor hope, nor view had I, nor person to befriend me, O ;
 So I must toil, and sweat and broil, and labour to sustain me, O ;
 To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me early, O ;
 For one, he said, to labour bred was a match for fortune fairly, O .

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor, through life I'm doomed to wander, O,
 Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slumber, O ;
 No view nor care, but shun what'er might breed me pain or sorrow, O,
 I live to-day as well 's I may, regardless of to-morrow, O .

But, cheerful still, I am as well as a monarch in a palace, O,
 Though fortune's frown still hunts me down with all her wonted malice, O
 I make, indeed, my daily bread, but ne'er can make it farther, O ;
 But, as daily bread is all I need, I do not much regard her, O .

When sometimes by my labour I earn a little money, O,
 Some unforeseen misfortune comes generally upon me, O ;
 Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my good-natured folly, O ;
 But, come what will, I've sworn it still I'll ne'er be melancholy, O .

All you who follow wealth and power with unremitting ardour, O,
 The more in this you look for bliss you leave your views the farther, O :
 Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you, O,
 A cheerful honest-hearted clown I will prefer before you, O .

These extracts, as extracts in every case must be, are only indications or hints of what is to be found in the body of poetry from which they are taken ; and in this instance, from various causes.

the impression so conveyed may probably be more than usually inadequate, for the strangeness of the dialect must veil much of the effect to an English reader, even when the general sense is apprehended; and, besides, their length, their peculiarly Scottish spirit and character, and other considerations have prevented us from quoting the most successful of Burns's pieces in some of the styles in which he most excelled. But still what we have transcribed may serve to give a more extended and a truer notion of what his poetry really is than is commonly entertained by strangers, among whom he is mostly known and judged of from two or three of his compositions, which perhaps of all that he has produced are the least marked by the peculiar character of his genius. Even out of his own country, his Songs, to be sure, have taken all hearts — and they are the very flane-breath of his own. No truer poetry exists in any language, or in any form. But it is the poetry of the heart much more than of either the head or the imagination. Burns's songs do not at all resemble the exquisite lyrical snatches with which Shakspeare, and also Beaumont and Fletcher, have sprinkled some of their dramas — enlivening the busy scene and progress of the action as the progress of the wayfarer is enlivened by the voices of birds in the hedgerows, or the sight and scent of wildflowers that have sprung up by the road-side. They are never in any respect exercises of ingenuity, but always utterances of passion, and simple and direct as a shout of laughter or a gush of tears. Whatever they have of fancy, whatever they have of melody, is born of real emotion — is merely the natural expression of the poet's feeling at the moment, seeking and finding vent in musical words. Since "burning Sappho" loved and sung in the old isles of Greece, not much poetry has been produced so thrillingly tender as some of the best of these songs. Here, for example, is one, rude enough perhaps in language and versification, — but every line, every cadence is steeped in pathos: —

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
 The castle o' Montgomery,
 Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
 Your waters never drumlie!¹
 There summer first unfauld her robes,
 And there the langest tarry!

¹ Turbid with mud.

For there I took the last farewell
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,¹
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow and locked embrace
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green 's the sod, and cauld 's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now those rosy lips
I aft hae kissed sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed² me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

These compositions are so universally known, that it is needless to give any others at full length; but we may throw together a few verses and half-verses gathered from several of them:—

When o'er the hill the eastern star
Tells bughtin'³ time is near, my joe;
And owsen⁴ frae the furrowed field
Return sae dowf⁵ and weary, O;
Down by the burn, where scented birks
Wi' dew are hanging clear, my joe,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,⁶
My ain⁷ kind dearie, O.

¹ Birch.² Loved.³ Folding.⁴ Oxen.⁵ Dull, spiritless.⁶ Grassy ridge.⁷ Own.

In mirkest¹ glen, at midnight hour,
 I'd rove, and ne'er be eerie,² O,
 If through that glen I gaed³ to thee,
 My ain kind dearie, O.
 Although the night were ne'er sae wild,
 And I were ne'er sae weary, O,
 I'd meet thee on the lea-rig,
 My ain kind dearie, O.

.

I hae sworn by the heavens to my Mary,
 I hae sworn by the heavens to be true;
 And sae may the heavens forget me,
 When I forget my vow!

O plight me your faith, my Mary,
 And plight me your lily-white hand;
 O plight me your faith, my Mary,
 Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
 In mutual affection to join;
 And cursed be the cause that shall part us!
 The hour, and the moment o' time!

O poortith⁴ cauld, and restless love,
 Ye wreck my peace between ye;
 Yet poortith a' I could forgive,
 An' 't were na for my Jeanie.

O why should fate sic⁵ pleasure have
 Life's dearest bands untwining?
 Or why sae sweet a flower as love
 Depend on fortune's shiing?

.

To thy bosom lay my heart,
 There to throb and languish,

¹ Darkest.

² Frightened by dread of spirits.

³ Went.

⁴ Poverty.

⁵ Such.

Though despair had wrung its sore,
That would heal its anguish.

Take away those rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure :
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure.

.

Here 's a health to ane I lo'e dear,
Here 's a health to ane I lo'e dear ;
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear, Jessy !

Although thou maun¹ never be mine,
Although even hope is denied,
'T is sweeter for thee despairing
Than aught in the world beside, Jessy !

.

Ae² fond kiss, and then we sever ;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever !

.

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met, or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.
Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest !
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest !

.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever ;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever !

.

In all, indeed, that he has written best, Burns may be said to have given us himself, — the passion or sentiment which swayed or possessed him at the moment, — almost as much as in his songs. In him the poet was the same as the man. He could describe

¹ Must.

² One

with admirable fidelity and force incidents, scenes, manners, characters, or whatever else, which had fallen within his experience or observation; but he had little proper dramatic imagination, or power of going out of himself into other natures, and, as it were, losing his personality in the creations of his fancy. His blood was too hot, his pulse beat too tumultuously, for that; at least he was during his short life too much the sport both of his own passions and of many other stormy influences to acquire such power of intellectual self-command and self-suppression. What he might have attained to if a longer earthly existence had been granted to him — or a less tempestuous one — who shall say? Both when his genius first blazed out upon the world, and when its light was quenched by death, it seemed as if he had been born or designed to do much more than he had done. Having written what he wrote before his twenty-seventh year, he had doubtless much more additional poetry in him than he gave forth between that date and his death at the age of thirty-seven, — poetry which might now have been the world's forever if that age had been worthy of such a gift of heaven as its glorious poet — if it had not treated him rather like an untamable howling hyena, that required to be caged and chained, if not absolutely suffocated at once, than as a spirit of divinest song. Never surely did men so put a bushel upon the light, first to hide and at last to extinguish it. As it is, however, the influence of the poetry of Burns upon the popular mind of Scotland must have been immense. And we believe it has been all for good — enlarging, elevating, and refining the national heart, as well as awakening it. The tendency of some things, both in the character of the people and in their peculiar institutions, required such a check or counteraction as was supplied by this frank, generous, reckless poetry, springing so singularly out of the iron-bound Calvinistic Presbyterianism of the country, like the flowing water from the rock in Horeb. What would not such a poet as Burns be worth to the people of the United States of America, if he were to arise among them at this moment? It would be as good as another Declaration of Independence. Nay, what would not such a popular poetry as his be worth in any country to any people? There is no people whom it would not help to sustain in whatever nobleness of character belonged to them, if it did not more ennoble them. For, whatever there may be to be disapproved of in the license or indecorum of some things that Burns

has written, there is at least nothing mean-souled in his poetry, any more than there was in the man. It is never for a moment even vulgar or low in expression or manner: it is wonderful how a native delicacy of taste and elevation of spirit in the poet have sustained him here, with a dialect so soiled by illiterate lips, and often the most perilous subject. Burns, the peasant, is perhaps the only modern writer of Scotch (not excepting even Sir Walter Scott) who has written it uniformly like a gentleman. Not that his language is not sometimes strong or bold enough, and even, on two or three occasions, coarse; but these momentary outbreaks of a wild levity have never anything in them that can be called base or creeping. On the other hand, some of the most tremulously passionate of his pieces are models of refinement of style. And such as is the poetry of Burns was his life. Even his faults of character and errors of conduct were those of a high nature; and on the whole were more really estimable, as well as more lovable, than the virtues of most other people. Misled he often was, as he has himself said in one of the pieces we have transcribed above:—

“ Misled by fancy’s meteor-ray,
 By passion driven;
 But yet the light that led astray
 Was light from heaven.”



REMAINING LITERATURE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE remaining literature of the closing portion of the eighteenth century may be very summarily dismissed. This was an age of popular song in England, as well as in Scotland: while Burns was in the last years of his life enriching Thomson’s Collection of Original Scottish Airs, and Johnson’s Musical Museum with words for the old melodies of his country that have become a part of the being of every Scotsman, Charles Dibdin, like another Tyrtaeus, was putting new patriotism into every English heart by his inspiring strains—some of the best of which Tyrtaeus never matched. Dibdin, who, besides his songs, wrote many pieces for the stage, survived till 1814, when he died about the age of seventy.

In prose literature, although there was book-making enough, not much that has proved enduring was done in England during the last decade and a half of the eighteenth century, at least if we except a few works produced by one or two of the great writers of the preceding time who have been already noticed, — such, for instance, as the three last volumes of Gibbon's History, published in 1788, and Burke's Reflections and other writings, chiefly on the subject of the French Revolution, which appeared between 1790 and his death in 1797. We may also mention here the publication in 1798, in five volumes 4to, of the first collected edition of the Works of Horace Walpole, comprising, along with other novelties, a volume of his always lively and entertaining and often brilliant Letters, the portion of his writings upon which his fame is probably destined chiefly to rest. His Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II., in two quarto volumes, were not given to the world till 1822; and their continuation, his Memoirs of the Reign of George III., only appeared in 1844–5.

In the Drama, with activity enough among a crowd of writers, very little was produced in this period that retains its place in our literature. Mrs. Inchbald, Thomas Holcroft, Thomas Morton, John O'Keefe, Charles Dibdin, and George Colman the Younger (already mentioned), Francis Reynolds, and Joseph George Holman were the principal writers who supplied the theatres with new pieces; and Holcroft's *Road to Ruin* (1792), Morton's *Speed the Plough* (1798), Mrs. Inchbald's *Wives as they Were and Maids as they Are* (1797), and Colman's *Sylvester Daggerwood*, originally entitled *New Hay at the Old Market* (1795), are all of more or less merit, and retain some popularity. No great comedy, however, belongs to this time. The tragedies produced were such as Madame d'Arblay's *Edwy and Elgiva*, brought out at Drury Lane in 1795, but never printed; Arthur Murphy's *Arminius* (1798), &c.

In the department of fictitious narrative there was more to boast of. William Godwin, already distinguished by his *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, made a great sensation in 1794 by his novel of *Things as they Are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams*, a remarkable example, certainly, of what can be done to give verisimilitude to the improbable by mere earnestness and vehemence of narration; and in 1799 the same writer achieved perhaps a still greater triumph by a different application of the same kind of power, in his *St. Leon*, in which even the supernatural and impos-

sible are invested with the strongest likeness to truth and reality. To her *Evelina* and *Cecilia* Miss Frances Burney (now Madame d'Arblay) added her *Camilla* in 1796. Mrs. Radcliffe (originally Miss Ann Ward) produced within this period her *Romance of the Forest* and her *Mysteries of Udolpho*; Mrs. Charlotte Smith (originally Miss Turner) her *Romance of Real Life*, and several other novels, all of superior merit; Dr. John Moore his *Zeluco*, his *Edward*, and his *Mordaunt*; Mrs. Inchbald, her *Simple Story* (in 1791).

In History, if we except the conclusion of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, no work that has any pretensions to be accounted classical was added to our literature. The first edition of Mitford's *History of Greece* was published in 1784; another *History of Ancient Greece*, in two volumes quarto, by Dr. John Gillies, who afterwards succeeded Dr. Robertson as Royal Historiographer for Scotland, appeared in 1786 (to which a continuation and completion in two more quartos was added in 1820); John Pinkerton published his *Dissertation on the Scythians or Goths* in 1787, his *Inquiry into the History of Scotland preceding the Reign of Malcolm III.* (forming an introduction to Lord Hailes's *Annals*) in 1789, and his *History of Scotland from the Accession of the House of Stuart to that of Mary* (filling up the interval between Hailes and Robertson) in 1797; all works of research and ingenuity, but of no merit as pieces of composition. The Rev. John Whitaker, who had previously made himself known by his *History of Manchester*, and his *Genuine History of the Britons Asserted*, published his *Mary Queen of Scots Vindicated* in 1787; and many minutiae of the national antiquities were illustrated, in the *Archæologia* or in separate publications, by Gough, the editor of Camden's *Britannia*, Dr. Samuel Pegge, and other patient and laborious inquirers. In Biography, historical and literary, besides Boswell's great work, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, which first appeared, in two quarto volumes, in 1790, there was Mr. Roscoe's elegant *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, published in 1795. The same writer's *Life and Pontificate of Leo X.* did not appear till 1805.

Of criticism and commentatorship of all kinds there was abundance. At least a brilliant beginning was made in the study of the literature of India and other Eastern countries by a few adventurous inquirers, led by Sir William Jones, whose French version of the *Life of Nadir Shah* from the Persian appeared in 1770; his

Persian Grammar in 1771; his Six Books of Commentaries, in Latin, on the Persian Poetry, in 1774; his translation of the *Moallakat* from the Arabic in 1783; his translation of the Sanscrit drama of *Sacontala* in 1790; his translation of the Ordinances of *Menu* in 1794; and his various disquisitions on the languages, learning, and history of the Oriental nations, printed in the *Asiatic Researches*, in the early volumes of that publication, begun in 1788. Jones also, besides his poetry already mentioned, and his *Essay on the Law of Bailments* and one or two other professional tracts, had in 1779 published a translation of the *Speeches of Isæus* from the Greek. Other translations from the ancient languages published during this period were that of Aristotle's *Treatise on Poetry* by *Pye* (afterwards poet-laureate) in 1788, that of the same work by the Rev. *Thomas Twining* in 1789, that of Aristotle's *Ethics and Politics* by *Dr. Gillies* in 1797, and that of the works of *Tacitus* by *Arthur Murphy* in 1793. *Harris's Hermes*, or a *Philosophical Enquiry concerning Language and Universal Grammar*, had appeared in 1757; the first volume of *Lord Monboddo's Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of Language* in 1774: but it was not till the year 1792 that the sixth and last volume of the latter saw the light. Meanwhile, the first part of what has proved a much more influential work, *Horne Tooke's celebrated Diversions of Purley*, appeared in 1786 in an octavo volume, afterwards expanded into a quarto, to which a second was added in 1805. The germ of his system, however, had been stated by *Tooke* in his *Letter to Mr. Dunning*, published in 1778. In Latin scholarship, the most remarkable production of this date was perhaps the edition of the rare work (originally published at Paris in 1615) of the Scottish writer *William Bellenden*, or *Bellendenus*, entitled *De Statu*, which appeared anonymously in 1787, with a long and eloquent Latin Preface, loud in its advocacy of the Whig politics and laudation of the Whig leaders of the day, now known to be the composition of the Rev. *Dr. Samuel Parr*, who had already some years before announced himself in a sermon published under the name of *Phileleutherus Norfolciensis*, and was for nearly forty years after this date to continue to make considerable noise in the literary world as theologian, critic, *Philopatris Varvicencis* (*Warwickshire Patriot*), &c. *Parr* was assisted in the preparation of his edition of *Bellendenus* by his friend *Henry Homer*, who published some good editions of *Horace*, *Cæsar*, and other Latin authors, but died at an

early age in 1791. Another reverend politician and classical scholar of this day was Gilbert Wakefield, who, being a dissenter, carried his liberalism both in politics and in divinity considerably farther than Dr. Parr, and was, from his twentieth year till his death in 1801, at the age of forty-five, one of the most restless of writers upon all sorts of subjects. Wakefield published an edition of Virgil's *Georgics* in 1788; his *Silva Critica* (a miscellany of Latin notes upon the Sacred Scriptures and other ancient writings) in 1789; and a complete translation of the New Testament in 1792; but his reputation as a scholar, whatever it may be, rests principally upon his work of greatest pretension, his collated and annotated edition of Lucretius, published in 1796 and 1797. He also gave to the world editions of several Greek tragedies, of Bion and Moschus, of Horace, and of Virgil; and among his numerous original works are an unfinished Inquiry into the Opinions of the Fathers concerning the Person of Christ, an Answer to Paine's *Age of Reason*, a Reply to (Watson) the Bishop of Llandaff's Address to the People of Great Britain (for the publication of which, in 1798, he was brought to trial by the government, and, being convicted of a seditious libel, was imprisoned for two years in Dorchester jail), and his *Memoirs of his Own Life*, first published in 1795. His *Correspondence with Charles Fox* was printed after his death. The excellent edition of Aristotle's *Treatise on Poetry*, which had been prepared by Thomas Tyrwhitt, the admirable editor of Chaucer, before his death in 1786, was brought out at Oxford, from the Clarendon press, in 1794. The reputation of Richard Porson, who had already given proof of his unrivalled acuteness in his *Letters to Archdeacon Travis* on the subject of the controverted passage about the three witnesses in the First Epistle of John, published in 1790, and who, in a mastery of the Greek language at once extensive and exact, is admitted to have had few superiors among modern scholars, was crowned by his edition in 1795 of the *Hecuba* of Euripides, followed by those of the *Orestes*, *Phœnissæ*, and *Medea*. Porson, upon whom the mantle of the great Bentley seemed to have descended, and who might perhaps have left a name as illustrious as his if unfortunate habits of life had not wasted as well as probably shortened his days, died at the age of forty-nine in 1808. Other active laborers during this period in the department of classical scholarship were Dr. Thomas Raddolph, who died Bishop of London in 1813 Dr. Thomas Burgess, Bishop

of Salisbury; and Dr. Herbert Marsh, Bishop of Peterborough, whose varied acquirements and literary performances embraced politics, theology, and German and Oriental learning, as well as Greek and Latin. The last thirty or forty years of the eighteenth century formed, moreover, the great age of commentatorship upon Shakspeare, and also upon some other portions of our old poetry. Dr. Johnson's first edition of Shakspeare, in eight volumes, appeared in 1765; George Steevens's edition of the *Twenty Old Quartos*, in four volumes, in 1766; Edward Capel's edition of all the Plays, in ten volumes, in 1768, but his *Notes*, in three volumes quarto, not till 1783, two years after the author's death; Sir Thomas Hanmer's, in six quartos, in 1771; that by Johnson and Steevens, in ten octavos, in 1773; their second edition in 1778; the Supplement to that edition by Edmund Malone, in two volumes, in 1780; Isaac Reed's first edition (sometimes called the third edition of Johnson and Steevens) in 1786; Malone's first edition, in ten volumes, in 1790:—which were followed by Isaac Reed's second edition, in twenty-one volumes, in 1803; Malone's second, in sixteen volumes, in 1816; and Malone's and Boswell's, in twenty-one volumes, now regarded as the standard *Variorum* edition, in 1821. We have already mentioned the two volumes on Ireland's forgeries (to the second of which, it may be here stated, an Appendix was added in 1800), by George Chalmers, the laborious author of many other works, generally written in the most fantastic style, on finance, economical science, and the politics of the day, as well as of various historical and antiquarian compilations, the most important of which, however, his *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, and his *Caledonia* (unfinished), were not published till after the commencement of the present century, as well as the editor of Allan Ramsay, Sir David Lyndsay, and others of our old poets. Following, also, in the path struck out by Warton and Percy, John Pinkerton, Joseph Ritson, David Macpherson, George Ellis, and others investigated, with more or less learning and acuteness, the history of our early poetry, or edited different portions of it.

In *Moral Speculation*, political, philosophical, and theological, among the principal names belonging to this age of our literature are (besides Burke), Paine, Godwin, Mary Wolstonecraft, Paley, Bishops Watson, Horsley, and Porteus, Priestley, Price, Dr. Geddes, Dr. Campbell of Aberdeen, Dr. MacKnight of Edinburgh,

Dr. Blair, &c. Of Thomas Paine's three dexterous and smartly-written works, the first, his *Common Sense*, was published in 1776; the next, his *Rights of Man*, in 1791-2; the last, his *Age of Reason*, in 1794-5. Mary Wolstonecraft's more declamatory *Vindication of the Rights of Women* came forth immediately after the *First Part of Paine's Rights of Man* — not unlike the hollow but imposing thunder of the artillery following the flash. Godwin's more systematic exposition of the new philosophy (not destined ever to grow old), his *Enquiry concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on general Virtue and Happiness*, appeared in 1793. Bishop Watson, who, besides five volumes of *Chemical Essays* and a variety of charges, sermons, addresses, and other occasional publications, had defended the cause of religion against the subtle learning of Gibbon in his *Apology for Christianity* in 1776, twenty years later wrote his *Apology for the Bible* in answer to the bold ignorance of Paine. All these performances, however, attacks and defences alike, having served each its temporary purpose, are already passed, or are fast passing, away into forgetfulness. Not so with Archdeacon Paley's works: his *Elements of Moral and Political Philosophy*, published in 1785; his *Horæ Paulinæ*, in 1790; his *View of the Evidence of Christianity*, in 1794; and his *Natural Theology*, in 1802, — all of which are characterized by a matureness in the conception, and a care and sterling ability in the execution, that will make it long before they are superseded. Finally, we ought not to omit to notice that the first edition of Mr. Malthus's celebrated *Essay on the Principle of Population* was published anonymously in 1798 in an octavo volume, although this original exposition of the new doctrine is charged with having differed not more in size than it did in substance from that given in the next edition of the work, which, expanded into a quarto, appeared in 1803.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

It might almost seem as if there were something in the impressiveness of the great chronological event formed by the termination of one century and the commencement of another that had been wont to act with an awakening and fructifying power upon literary genius in these islands. Of the three last great sunbursts of our literature, the first, making what has been called the Elizabethan age of our dramatic and other poetry, threw its splendor over the last quarter of the sixteenth and the first of the seventeenth century; the second, famous as the Augustan age of Anne, brightened the earlier years of the eighteenth; the nineteenth century was ushered in by the third. At the termination of the reign of George III., in the year 1820, there were still among us, not to mention minor names, at least nine or ten poetical writers, each (whatever discordance of opinion there might be about either their relative or their absolute merits) commanding universal attention from the reading world to whatever he produced:—Crabbe (to take them in the order of their seniority), Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, Campbell, Moore, Byron, Shelley, and perhaps we ought to add Keats, though more for the shining promise of his great but immature genius than for what he had actually done. Many other voices there were from which divine words were often heard, but these were oracles to whom all listened, whose inspiration all men acknowledged. It is such crowding and clustering of remarkable writers that has chiefly distinguished the great literary ages in every country: there are eminent writers at other times, but they come singly or in small numbers, as Lucretius, the noblest of the Latin poets, did before the Augustan age of Roman literature; as our own Milton and Dryden did in the interval between our Elizabethan age and that of Anne; as Goldsmith, and Burke, and Johnson, and then Cowper, and Burns, in twos and threes, or one by one, preceded and as it were led in the rush and crush of our last revival. For such single swallows, though they do not make, do yet commonly herald the summer; and accordingly those remarkable writers who have thus appeared between one great age

of literature and another have mostly, it may be observed, arisen not in the earlier but in the later portion of the interval — have been not the lagging successors of the last era, but the precursors of the next. However the fact is to be explained or accounted for, it does indeed look as if Nature in this, as in other things, had her times of production and of comparative rest and inactivity — her autumns and her winters — or, as we may otherwise conceive it, her alternations of light and darkness, of day and night. After a busy and brilliant period of usually some thirty or forty years, there has always followed in every country a long term during which the literary spirit, as if overworked and exhausted, has manifested little real energy or power of life, and even the very demand and taste for the highest kind of literature, for depth, and subtlety, and truth, and originality, and passion, and beauty, has in a great measure ceased with the supply — a sober and slumbrous twilight of imitation and mediocrity, and little more than mechanical dexterity in bookmaking, at least with the generality of the most popular and applauded writers.

After all, the reawakening of our English literature, on each of the three occasions we have mentioned, was probably brought about mainly by the general political and social circumstances of the country and of the world at the time. The poetical and dramatic wealth and magnificence of the era of Elizabeth and James came, no doubt, for the most part, out of the passions that had been stirred and the strength that had been acquired in the mighty contests and convulsions which filled, here and throughout Europe, the middle of the sixteenth century; another breaking up of old institutions and reëdification of the state upon a new foundation and a new principle, the work of the last sixty years of the seventeenth century, if it did not contribute much to train the wits and fine writers of the age of Anne, at least both prepared the tranquillity necessary for the restoration of elegant literature, and disposed the public mind for its enjoyment; the poetical dayspring, finally, that came with our own century was born with, and probably in some degree out of, a third revolution, which shook both established institutions and the minds and opinions of men throughout Europe as much almost as the Reformation itself had done three centuries and a half before. It is also to be observed that on each of these three occasions the excitement appears to have come to us in part from a foreign literature which had undergone a sim-

ilar reawakening, or put forth a new life and vigor, shortly before our own: in the Elizabethan age the contagion or impulse was caught from the literature of Italy; in the age of Anne from that of France; in the present period from that of Germany.

THE LAST AGE OF THE GEORGES.

WORDSWORTH.

THIS German inspiration operated most directly, and produced the most marked effect, in the poetry of Wordsworth. Wordsworth, who was born in 1770, has preserved in the editions of his collected works some of his verses written so long ago as 1786; and he also continued to the last to reprint the two earliest of his published poems, entitled *An Evening Walk*, addressed to a Young Lady, from the Lakes of the North of England, and *Descriptive Sketches*, taken during a pedestrian tour among the Alps, both of which first appeared in 1793. The recollection of the former of these poems probably suggested to somebody, a few years later, the otherwise not very intelligible designation of the Lake School, which has been applied to this writer and his imitators, or supposed imitators. But the *Evening Walk* and the *Descriptive Sketches*, which are both written in the usual rhyming ten-syllabled verse, are perfectly orthodox poems, according to the common creed, in spirit, manner, and form. The peculiarities which are conceived to constitute what is called the Lake manner first appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads*; the first volume of which was published in 1798, the second in 1800.

In the Preface to the second volume of the *Lyrical Ballads*, the author himself described his object as being to ascertain how far the purposes of poetry might be fulfilled "by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation." It might, perhaps, be possible to defend this notion by the aid of certain assumptions as to what is implied in, or to be understood by, a state of vivid sensation, which it may be contended is only another phrase for a state of poetical excitement: undoubtedly the language of a mind in such a state, selected,

or corrected, and made metrical, will be poetry. It is almost a truism to say so. Nay, we might go farther, and assert that, in the circumstances supposed, the selection and the adaptation to metrical arrangement would not be necessary; the language would flow naturally into something of a musical shape (that being one of the conditions of poetical expression), and, although it might be improved by correction, it would have all the essentials of poetry as it was originally produced. But what is evidently meant is, that the real or natural language of any and every mind when simply in a state of excitement or passion is necessarily poetical. The respect in which the doctrine differs from that commonly held is, that it assumes mere passion or vivid sensation to be in all men and in all cases substantially identical with poetical excitement, and the language in which passion expresses itself to be consequently always poetry, at least after it has undergone some purification or pruning, and been reduced to metrical regularity. As for this qualification, we may remark that it must be understood to mean nothing more than that the language of passion is improved with reference to poetical effect by being thus trained and regulated: otherwise the statement would be contradictory and would refute itself; for, if passion, or vivid sensation, always speaks in poetry, the metrical arrangement and the selection are unnecessary and unwarrantable; if these operations be indispensable, the language of vivid sensation is not always poetry. But surely it is evident from the nature of the thing that it is altogether a misconception of what poetry is to conceive it to be nothing more than the language naturally prompted by passion or strong emotion. If that were all, all men, all women, and all children would be poets. Poetry, in the first place, is an art, just as painting is an art; and the one is no more to be practised solely under the guidance of strong emotion than the other. Secondly, poetical emotion is something as distinct from mere ordinary passion or excitement as is musical emotion, or the feeling of the picturesque or the beautiful or the grand in painting or in architecture; the one may and often does exist where there exists nothing of the other. Nobody has ever thought of defining music to be merely the natural vocal utterance of men in a state of vivid sensation, or painting to be nothing more than their natural way of expressing themselves when in such a state by lines and colors: no more is poetry simply their real language, or expression by words, when in such a state.

It makes no difference that words are a mode of expression of which men have much more generally the use than they have the use of either colors or musical sounds; if all men could sing or could handle the brush, they still would not all be musicians and painters whenever they were in a passion.

It is true that even in the rudest minds emotion will tend to make the expression more vivid and forcible; but it will not for all that necessarily rise to poetry. Emotion or excitement alone will not produce that idealization in which poetry consists. To have that effect the excitement must be of a peculiar character, and the mind in which it takes place must be peculiarly gifted. The mistake has probably arisen from a confusion of two things which are widely different — the real language of men in a state of excitement, and the imaginative imitation of such language in the artistic delineation of the excitement. The latter alone will necessarily or universally be poetical; the former may be the veriest of prose. It may be said, indeed, that it is not men's real language, but the imitation of it, which is meant to be called poetry by Wordsworth and his followers, — that, of course, their own poetry, even when most conformable to their own theory, can only consist of what *they conceive* would be the real language of persons placed in the circumstances of those from whom it professes to proceed. But this explanation, besides that it leaves the theory we are examining, considered as an account or definition of poetry, as narrow and defective as ever, still assumes that poetical imitation is nothing more than transcription, or its equivalent, — such invention as comes as near as possible to what literal transcription would be; which is the very misapprehension against which we are arguing. It is equally false, we contend, to say that poetry is nothing more than either the real language of men in a state of excitement, or the mere imitation, the closer the better, of that real language. The imitation must be an idealized imitation — an intermingling of the poet with his subject by which it receives a new character; just as, in painting, a great portrait, or other picture from nature, is never a fac-simile copy, but always as much a reflection from the artist's own spirit as from the scene or object it represents. The realm of nature and the realm of art, although counterparts, are nevertheless altogether distinct the one from the other; and both painting and poetry belong to the latter, not to the former.

We cannot say that Wordsworth's theory of poetry has been altogether without effect upon his practice, but it has shown itself rather by some deficiency of refinement in his general manner than by very much that he has written in express conformity with its requisitions. We might affirm, indeed, that its principle is as much contradicted and confuted by the greater part of his own poetry as it is by that of all languages and all times in which poetry has been written, or by the universal past experience of mankind in every age and country. He is a great poet, and has enriched our literature with much beautiful and noble writing, whatever be the method or principle upon which he constructs, or fancies that he constructs, his compositions. His *Laodamia*, without the exception of a single line; his *Lone Leech-gatherer*, with the exception of very few lines; his *Ruth*, his *Tintern Abbey*, his *Feast of Brougham*, the *Water Lily*, the greater part of the *Excursion*, most of the *Sonnets*, his great *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality in Early Childhood*, and many of his shorter lyrical pieces, are nearly as unexceptionable in diction as they are deep and true in feeling, judged according to any rules or principles of art that are now patronized by anybody. It is true, indeed, that it will not do to look at anything that Wordsworth has written through the spectacles of that species of criticism which was in vogue among us in the last century; we believe that in several of the pieces we have named even that narrow and superficial doctrine (if it could be recalled from the tomb) would find little or nothing to object to, but we fear it would find as little to admire; it had no feeling or understanding of the poetry of any other era than its own, — neither of that of Homer, nor that of the Greek dramatists, nor that of our own Elizabethan age, — and it certainly would not enter far into the spirit either of that of Wordsworth or of any of his eminent contemporaries or successors. It is part, and a great part, of what the literature of Germany has done for us within the last sixty years, that it has given a wider scope and a deeper insight to our perception and mode of judging of the poetical in all its forms and manifestations; and the poetry of Wordsworth has materially aided in establishing this revolution of taste and critical doctrine, by furnishing the English reader with some of the earliest and many of the most successful or most generally appreciated examples and illustrations of the precepts of the new faith. Even the errors of Wordsworth's poetical creed and prac-

tice, the excess to which he has sometimes carried his employment of the language of the uneducated classes, and his attempts to extract poetical effects out of trivial incidents and humble life, were fitted to be rather serviceable than injurious in the highly artificial state of our poetry when he began to write. He may not have succeeded in every instance in which he has tried to glorify the familiar and elevate the low, but he has nevertheless taught us that the domain of poetry is much wider and more various than it used to be deemed, that there is a great deal of it to be found where it was formerly little the fashion to look for anything of the kind, and that the poet does not absolutely require for the exercise of his art and the display of his powers what are commonly called illustrious or distinguished characters, and an otherwise dignified subject, any more than long and learned words. Of all his English contemporaries Wordsworth stands foremost and alone as the poet of common life. It is not his only field, nor perhaps the field in which he is greatest; but it is the one which is most exclusively his own. He has, it is true, no humor or comedy of any kind in him (which is perhaps the explanation of the ludicrous touches that sometimes startle us in his serious poetry), and therefore he is not, and seldom attempts to be, what Burns was for his countrymen, the poetic interpreter, and, as such, refiner as well as embalmer of the wit and merriment of the common people: the writer by whom that title is to be won is yet to arise, and probably from among the people themselves: but of whatever is more tender or more thoughtful in the spirit of ordinary life in England the poetry of Wordsworth is the truest and most comprehensive transcript we possess. Many of his verses, embodying as they do the philosophy as well as the sentiment of this every-day human experience, have a completeness and impressiveness, as of texts, mottoes, proverbs, the force of which is universally felt, and has already worked them into the texture and substance of the language to a far greater extent, we apprehend, than has happened in the case of any contemporary writer.

Wordsworth, though only a few years deceased, for he survived till 1850, nearly sixty years after the publication of his first poetry, is already a classic; and, extensively as he is now read and appreciated, any review of our national literature would be very incomplete without at least a few extracts from his works illustrative of the various styles in which he has written. As a specimen of what

may be called his more peculiar manner, or that which is or used to be more especially understood by the style of the Lake School of poetry, we will begin with the well-known verses entitled *The Fountain, a Conversation*, which, in his own classification, are included among what he designates *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection*, and are stated to have been composed in 1799:—

We walked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true.

A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat ;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

“ Now, Matthew ! ” said I, “ let us match
This water’s pleasant tune
With some old Border-song, or catch
That suits a summer’s noon ;

Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here, beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made ! ”

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree ;
And thus the dear old man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee :

“ No check, no stay, this streamlet fears ;
How merrily it goes !
’Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain’s brink.

My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,

For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

Thus fares it still in our decay :
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

With nature never do they wage
A foolish strife ; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free :

But we are pressed by heavy laws ;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own,
It is the man of mirth.

My days, my friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me ; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

" Now, both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains !
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains,

And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee !"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
" Alas ! that cannot be !"

We rose up from the fountain-side ;
 And down the smooth descent
 Of the green sheep-track did we glide ;
 And through the wood we went ;

And, ere we came to Leonard's Rock,
 He sang those witty rhymes
 About the crazy old church-clock,
 And the bewildered chimes.

The following, entitled *The Affliction of Margaret*, dated 1804, and classed among the Poems founded on the Affections, is more impassioned, but still essentially in the same style : —

Where art thou, my beloved son,
 Where art thou, worse to me than dead ?
 Oh find me, prosperous or undone !
 Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
 Why am I ignorant of the same,
 That I may rest ; and neither blame
 Nor sorrow may attend thy name ?

Seven years, alas ! to have received
 No tidings of an only child ;
 To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
 And been for evermore beguiled ;
 Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss !
 I catch at them, and then I miss ;
 Was ever darkness like to this ?

He was among the prime in worth,
 An object beautiful to behold ;
 Well born, well bred ; I sent him forth
 Ingenuous, innocent, and bold :
 If things ensued that wanted grace,
 As hath been said, they were not base ;
 And never blush was on my face.

Ah ! little doth the young one dream,
 When full of play and childish cares,
 What power is in his wildest scream,
 Heard by his mother unawares !
 He knows it not, he cannot guess :

Years to a mother bring distress ;
But do not make her love the less.

Neglect me ! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought ; and, being blind,
Said, " Pride shall help me in my wrong :
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed : " and that is true ;
I 've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

My son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh ! do not dread thy mother's door ;
Think not of me with grief and pain :
I now can see with better eyes ;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And Fortune with her gifts and lies.

Alas ! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight ;
They mount — how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight !
Chains tie us down by land and sea ;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled, by inhuman men ;
Or thou, upon a desert thrown,
Inheritest the lion's den ;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

I look for ghosts ; but none will force
Their way to me : — 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead ;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night
With love and longings infinite.

My apprehensions come in crowds ;
 I dread the rustling of the grass ;
 The very shadows of the clouds
 Have power to shake me as they pass ;
 I question things, and do not find
 One that will answer to my mind ;
 And all the world appears unkind.

Beyond participation lie
 My troubles, and beyond relief :
 If any chance to heave a sigh,
 They pity me, and not my grief.
 Then come to me, my Son, or send
 Some tidings that my woes may end ;
 I have no other earthly friend !

This last piece is perhaps one of the most favorable examples that could be produced in support of such a theory of poetry as Wordsworth appears to have set out with, and is supposed in the common notion to have adhered to in nearly all that he has written. The language is for the most part direct and simple, not very much distinguished except by the rhyme from what might be poured out in the circumstances supposed on the mere impulse of natural passion ; and yet the lines are full of poetical power. Undoubtedly, passion, or strong feeling, even in the rudest natures, has always something in it of poetry, — something of the transforming and idealizing energy which gives both to conception and expression their poetical character ; still it is not true either that poetry is universally nothing more than vivid sensation, or that the real language of men, however much excited, is usually to any considerable extent poetry. Even in this poem, unadorned as it is for the greater part, there will be found to be a good deal besides metre added to the natural language of passion ; and the selection, too, must be understood as a selection of person as well as of language, for assuredly the Affliction of Margaret, even although it might have been as deeply felt, would not have supplied to one man or woman in a thousand or a million anything like either the diction or the train of reflection to which it has given birth in her, — or rather in the great poet of whose imagination she, with all she feels and all she utters, is the creation. For this, after all, is the fundamental fact, that there never has been and never can be poetry

without a poet ; upon whatever principle or system of operation he may proceed, whether by the selection and metrical arrangement of the real language of passion or in any other way, it is the poet that makes the poetry, and without him it cannot have birth or being : he is the bee, without whom there can be no honey, — the artist, or true creator, from whom the thing produced, whatever be its material, takes shape, and beauty, and a living soul.

The following, dated 1798, is from the same class, and in the same style, with the last. The verses are very beautiful ; they bear some resemblance to the touching old Scotch ballad called *Lady Anna Bothwell's Lament*, beginning

Balow, my boy, lie still and sleep ;
It grieves me sair to see thee weep, —

of which there is a copy in *Percy's Reliques*, and others, differing considerably from that, in other collections : —

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burned her coal-black hair ;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone :
And underneath the haystack warm,
And on the greenwood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

“ Sweet babe, they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad ;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing :
Then, lovely baby, do not fear !
I pray thee, have no fear of me :
But safe as in a cradle, here,
My lovely baby, shalt thou be :
To thee I know too much I owe :
I cannot work thee any woe.

A fire was once within my brain ;
And in my head a dull, dull pain ;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breast, and pulled at me ;

But then there came a sight of joy,
 It came at once to do me good ;
 I waked, and saw my little boy,
 My little boy of flesh and blood ;
 Oh joy for me that sight to see !
 For he was there, and only he.

Suck, little babe, oh suck again !
 It cools my blood, it cools my brain
 Thy lips I feel them, baby ! they
 Draw from my heart the pain away.
 Oh ! press me with thy little hand ;
 It loosens something at my chest ;
 About that tight and deadly band
 I feel thy little fingers prest.
 The breeze I see is in the tree :
 It comes to cool my babe and me.

Oh ! love me, love me, little boy !
 Thou art thy mother's only joy ;
 And do not dread the waves below
 When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go ;
 The high crag cannot work me harm,
 Nor leaping torrents when they howl ;
 The babe I carry on my arm
 He saves for me my precious soul ;
 Then happy lie ; for blest am I ;
 Without me my sweet babe would die.

Then do not fear, my boy ! for thee
 Bold as a lion will I be :
 And I will always be thy guide,
 Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
 I'll build an Indian bower ; I know
 The leaves that make the softest bed :
 And if from me thou wilt not go,
 But still be true till I am dead,
 My pretty thing, then thou shalt sing
 As merry as the birds in spring.

Thy father cares not for my breast,
 'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest ;
 'Tis all thine own ! — and, if its hue

Be changed, that was so fair to view,
 'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove !
 My beauty, little child, is flown,
 But thou wilt live with me in love ;
 And what if my poor cheek be brown ?
 'Tis well for thee, thou canst not see
 How pale and wan it else would be.

Dread not their taunts, my little life ;
 I am thy father's wedded wife ;
 And underneath the spreading tree
 We two will live in honesty.
 If his sweet boy he could forsake,
 With me he never would have stayed ;
 From him no harm my babe can take ;
 But he, poor man ! is wretched made ;
 And every day we two will pray
 For him that 's gone and far away.

I 'll teach my boy the sweetest things,
 I 'll teach him how the owlet sings.
 My little babe ! thy lips are still,
 And thou hast almost sucked thy fill.
 — Where art thou gone, my own dear child ?
 What wicked looks are those I see ?
 Alas ! alas ! that look so wild,
 It never, never came from me :
 If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
 Then I must be for ever sad.

Oh ! smile on me, my little lamb !
 For I thy own dear mother am.
 My love for thee has well been tried :
 I 've sought thy father far and wide.
 I know the poisons of the shade,
 I know the earth-nuts fit for food :
 Then, pretty dear, be not afraid :
 We 'll find thy father in the wood.
 Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away !
 And there, my babe, we 'll live for aye."

But much, perhaps we might say the greater part, of Wordsworth's poetry is in a very different style or manner. Take, for

example, his noble *Laodamia*, dated 1814, and in the later editions placed among what he calls *Poems of the Imagination*, though formerly classed as one of the *Poems founded on the Affections*: —

“ With sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired ;
And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required :¹
Celestial pity I again implore : —
Restore him to my sight — great Jove, restore ! ”

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the suppliant heavenward lifts her hands ;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens — and her eye expands ;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows ;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror ! what hath she perceived ? O joy !
What doth she look on ? Whom doth she behold ?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy ?
His vital presence ? his corporeal mould ?
It is — if sense deceive her not — 'tis He !
And a God leads him, winged Mercury !

Mild Hermes spake — and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear ; “ Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamia ! that at Jove's command
Thy husband walks the paths of upper air :
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space ;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face ! ”

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clasp ;
Again that consummation she assayed ;
But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.

¹ Is this alteration really an improvement, or is it only old familiarity and first love that makes us prefer the lines as they originally stood ? —

“ With sacrifice before the rising morn
Performed my slaughtered Lord have I required ;
And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
Him of the infernal Gods have I desired. ”

It seems to us that the more passionate boldness of this is more in accordance with what immediately follows.

The Phantom parts — but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

“Protesilaus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the Vision with thy voice:
This is our palace, — yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the Gods bestowed*
This precious boon; and blest a sad abode.”

“Great Jove, Laodamia! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect: — Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief — by Hector slain.”

“Supreme of Heroes — bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore:
Thou found'st — and I forgive thee — here thou art —
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
That thou should'st cheat the malice of the grave;
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

No Spectre greets me, — no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!”

Jove frowned in heaven : the conscious Parcae threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

“ This visage tells thee that my doom is past :
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys¹
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. — Earth destroys
Those raptures duly — Erebus disdains :
Calm pleasures there abide — majestic pains.

Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion : for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult of the soul ;
A fervent, not ungovernable love.
Thy transports moderate ; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn.” —

“ Ah, wherefore ? — Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian monster of the tomb
Alceste, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom ?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Aeson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

The Gods to us are merciful — and they
Yet further may relent : for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distress,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

But if thou goest I follow ” — “ Peace ! ” he said —
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered ;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled ;
In his deportment, shape, and mien appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive, though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure ;

¹ Its former editions : —

“ Know, virtue were not virtue if the joys.”

No fears to beat away — no strife to heal —
 The past unsighed for, and the future sure ;
 Spake of heroic acts in graver mood
 Revived, with finer harmony pursued ;

Of all that is most beauteous — imaged there
 In happier beauty ; more pellucid streams,
 An ampler ether, a diviner air,
 And fields invested with purpureal gleams ;
 Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
 Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the soul shall enter which hath earned
 That privilege by virtue. — “ Ill,” said he,
 “ The end of man’s existence I discerned,
 Who from ignoble games and revelry
 Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
 While tears were thy best pastime day and night :

And while my youthful peers before my eyes
 (Each hero following his peculiar bent)
 Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
 By martial sports, — or, seated in the tent,
 Chieftains and kings in council were detained ;
 What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

The wished-for wind was given : — I then revolved
 The oracle upon the silent sea ;
 And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
 That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
 The foremost prow in pressing to the strand, —
 Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

Yet bitter, oftentimes bitter, was the pang
 When of thy loss I thought, beloved wife !
 On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
 And on the joys we shared in mortal life, —
 The paths which we had trod — these fountains, flowers ;
 My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

But should suspense permit the foe to cry,
 ‘ Behold, they tremble ! — haughty their array,
 Yet of their number no one dares to die ? ’

In soul I swept the indignity away :
 Old frailties then recurred : — but lofty thought,
 In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
 In reason, in self-government too slow ;
 I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
 Our blest reunion in the shades below.
 The invisible world with thee hath sympathised ;
 Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend —
 Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
 Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end ;
 For this the passion to excess was driven —
 That self might be annulled ; her bondage prove
 The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.”¹

Aloud she shrieked ! for Hermes reappears !
 Round the dear shade she would have clung — ’tis vain
 The hours are past — too brief had they been years ;
 And him no mortal effort can detain :
 Swift, towards the realms that know not earthly day,
 He through the portal takes his silent way,
 And on the palace floor a lifeless corse she lay.

She — who, though warned, exhorted, and reproved,
 Thus died, from passion desperate to a crime —
 By the just Gods, whom no weak pity moved,
 Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
 Apart from happy ghosts, that gather flowers
 Of blissful quiet ’mid unfading bowers.²

¹ The reader of Milton will remember the same idea in the eighth book of *Paradise Lost* : —

“ Love refines
 The thoughts, and heart enlarges ; hath his seat
 In reason, and is judicious ; is the scale
 By which to heavenly love thou may’st ascend.”

² This is to us, we confess, a distressing alteration ; and such, we should think, would be nearly the universal feeling of those who may have been familiar with the original lines : —

“ Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved !
 Her who, in reason’s spite, yet without crime,
 Was in a trance of passion thus removed ;
 Delivered from the galling yoke of time,

Yet tears to mortal suffering are due ;
 And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
 Are mourned by man, — and not by man alone,
 As fondly he believes. — Upon the side
 Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
 A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
 From out the tomb of him for whom she died ;
 And ever, when such stature they had gained
 That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
 The trees' tall summits withered at the sight ;
 A constant interchange of growth and blight.

In the same grand strain is very much especially of Wordsworth's later poetry. Indeed, while the Lyrical Ballads have been ridiculed for their simplicity, the objection that has been commonly taken to most of that is, that it is too magniloquent, and soars too far above the earth and the ordinary thoughts and concerns of men. At any rate neither puerility nor over-familiarity of diction, with whatever other faults they may be chargeable, can well be attributed to either the Excursion, or the Sonnets, or the Odes, or indeed to almost anything else that he produced subsequently to the two volumes which first brought him into notice, both published, as we have seen, before the commencement of the present century. But it is, on the other hand, a gross misconception to imagine that this later poetry of Wordsworth's is especially remarkable for anything of a mystic character, that it is for the most part enveloped in a haze through which the

And these frail elements — to gather flowers
 Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.'

The primary object of the remodelling seems to have been to accommodate the narrative to the account given by Virgil, who, as it is observed in a note, "places the shade of Laodamia in a mournful region, among unhappy lovers." We confess to so much of "weak pity," both for the stanza as it formerly stood, and for poor Laodamia, that we should have gladly accepted the authority of the modern as quite as good as that of the ancient poet upon this occasion : but, at any rate, surely the verses might have been reformed without the aid of so desperate an expedient as that by which the second has been enabled to preserve its rhyme at the cost of every other poetical quality it possessed. We cannot think, either, that the gods, however pitiless, could with any justice or consistency, after having granted to Laodamia's passionate affection the temporary restoration of her husband, have doomed her to a place of punishment for merely suffering herself to be slain by the strength of the same affection. To expect that the warning exhortation and reproof should have so soon taken full efficacy, and already reduced a passion so omnipotent to complete subjection, seems quite unreasonable.

meaning is only to be got at by initiated eyes. Nothing like this is the case. The *Excursion*, published in 1814, for instance, with the exception of a very few passages, is a poem that he who runs may read, and the greater part of which may be apprehended by readers of all classes as readily as almost any other poetry in the language. We may say the same even of *The Prelude*, or *Introduction to the Recluse* (intended to consist of three Parts, of which *The Excursion* is the second, the first remaining in manuscript, and the third having been only planned), which was begun in 1799 and completed in 1805, although not published till a few months after the author's death in 1850; an elaborate poem, in fourteen books, of eminent interest as the poet's history of himself, and of the growth of his own mind, as well as on other accounts, and long before characterized by Coleridge, to whom it is addressed, as

“An Orphic song indeed,
A song divine of high and passionate thoughts
To their own music chanted.”

In some of his other compositions, again, Wordsworth showed his mastery over the most popular of all our poetic styles, that of the old romance, in its highest and most refined forms. *The Feast of Brougham* may be mentioned as one example; but his greatest poem in this kind is his *Egyptian Maid*, or, *The Romance of the Water Lily*, the concluding portion of which we will now give as our last specimen. The *Maid*, a daughter of the Egyptian monarch, and sent by him to Britain to be bestowed upon the worthiest Christian knight, having been found cast ashore from her shipwrecked vessel, has been brought by the enchanter Merlin to the court of King Arthur at Caerleon. The king, after lamenting her sad hap, has proposed to inter with the due rites the apparently lifeless corpse:—

“The tomb,” said Merlin, “may not close
Upon her yet, earth hide her beauty;
Not froward to thy sovereign will
Esteem me, Liege! if I, whose skill
Wafted her hither, interpose
To check this pious haste of erring duty.”

My books command me to lay bare
The secret thou art bent on keeping:

Here must a high attest be given,
What bridegroom was for her ordained by heaven :
 And in my glass significants there are
 Of things that may to gladness turn this weeping.

For this, approaching one by one,
 Thy knights must touch the cold hand of the *Virgin* ;
 So, for the favoured one, the flower may bloom
 Once more : but, if unchangeable her doom,
 If life departed be for ever gone,
 Some blest assurance, from this cloud emerging,

May teach him to bewail his loss ;
 Not with a grief that, like a vapour, rises
 And melts ; but grief devout that shall endure,
 And a perpetual growth secure
 Of purposes which no false thought shall cross,
 A harvest of high hopes and noble enterprises."

" So be it," said the King ; — " anon,
 Here, where the princess lies, begin the trial ;
 Knights, each in order as ye stand
 Step forth." To touch the pallid hand
 Sir Agravaire advanced ; no sign he won
 From heaven or earth ; — Sir Kaye had like denial.

Abashed, Sir Dinas turned away ;
 Even for Sir Percival was no disclosure ;
 Though he, devoutest of all champions, ere
 He reached that ebon car, the bier
 Whereon diffused like snow the damsel lay,
 Full thrice had crossed himself in meek composure.

Imagine (but, ye saints ! who can ?)
 How in still air the balance trembled —
 The wishes, peradventure the despites,
 That overcame some not ungenerous knights ;
 And all the thoughts that lengthened out a span
 Of time to lords and ladies thus assembled.

What patient confidence was here !
 And there how many bosoms panted !
 While, drawing towards the car, Sir Gawaine, mailed
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For tournament, his beaver veiled,
 And softly touched ; but to his princely cheer
 And high expectancy no sign was granted.

Next, disencumbered of his harp,
 Sir Tristram, dear to thousands as a brother,
 Came to the proof, nor grieved that there ensued
 No change ; — the fair Izonda he had wooed
 With love too true, a love with pangs too sharp,
 From hope too distant, not to dread another !

Not so, Sir Launcelot ; — from heaven's grace
 A sign he craved, tired slave of vain contrition ;
 The royal Guinever looked passing glad
 When his touch failed. — Next came Sir Galahad ;
 He paused, and stood entranced by that still face
 Whose features he had seen in noontide vision.

For late, as near a murmuring stream
 He rested 'mid an arbour green and shady,
 Nina, the good enchantress, shed
 A light around his mossy bed ;
 And, at her call, a waking dream
 Prefigured to his sense the Egyptian lady.

Now, while his bright-haired front he bowed,
 And stood, far-kenned by mantle furred with ermine,
 As o'er the insensate body hung
 The enrapt, the beautiful, the young,
 Belief sank deep into the crowd
 That he the solemn issue would determine.

Nor deem it strange ; the youth had worn
 That very mantle on a day of glory,
 The day when he achieved that matchless feat,
 The marvel of the PERILOUS SEAT,
 Which whosoe'er approached of strength was shorn,
 Though king or knight the most renowned in story.

He touched with hesitating hand —
 And lo ! those birds, far-famed through love's dominions,
 The swans, in triumph clap their wings ;
 And their necks play, involved in rings,

Like sinless snakes in Eden's happy land ; —

“ Mine is she ! ” cried the knight ; — again they clapped their pinions

“ Mine was she — mine she is, though dead,
 And to her name my soul shall cleave in sorrow ; ”
 Whereat, a tender twilight streak
 Of colour dawned upon the damsel's cheek ;
 And her lips, quickening with uncertain red,
 Seemed from each other a faint warmth to borrow.

Deep was the awe, the rapture high,
 Of love emboldened, hope with dread entwining,
 When, to the mouth, relenting death
 Allowed a soft and flower-like breath,
 Precursor to a timid sigh,
 To lifted eyelids, and a doubtful shining.

.

This will be admitted by all to be most graceful as well as expressive writing, and it has little or nothing of what are commonly regarded as the characteristic peculiarities of Wordsworth's manner, — nothing of the undignified or over-familiar phrasology on the one hand, or of the soaring out of sight or comprehension on the other, with which he has been charged, — only his easy power, the full flow and commanding sweep of his diction and his verse. Yet it is for its inner spirit that Wordsworth's poetry is admirable, rather than for its formal qualities. His style is for the most part direct and natural ; when the occasion requires, it rises to splendor and magnificence ; if it be sometimes too colloquial, it is often also dignified and solemn ; still, with all its merits, it has not in general much of true artistic exquisiteness. In only a few of his poems, indeed, is his diction throughout of any tolerable elaboration and exactness ; generally, both in his more familiar and in his loftier style, it is diffuse and unequal, a brittle mixture of poetical and prosaic forms, like the image of iron and clay in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The music of his verse, too, though almost always pleasing, and sometimes impassioned or majestic, has rarely or never much either of subtlety or originality.

COLERIDGE.

IN all that constitutes artistic character the poetry of Coleridge is a contrast to that of Wordsworth. Coleridge, born in 1772, published the earliest of his poetry that is now remembered in 1796, in a small volume containing also some pieces by Charles Lamb, to which some by Charles Lloyd were added in a second edition the following year. It was not till 1800, after he had produced and printed separately his *Ode to the Departing Year* (1796), his noble ode entitled *France* (1797), his *Fears in Solitude* (1798), and his translations of both parts of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, that he was first associated as a poet and author with Wordsworth, in the second volume of whose *Lyrical Ballads*, published in 1800, appeared, as the contributions of an anonymous friend, Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, *Foster Mother's Tale*, *Nightingale*, and *Love*. "I should not have requested this assistance," said Wordsworth, in his preface, "had I not believed that the poems of my friend would, in a great measure, have the same tendency as my own, and that, though there would be found a difference, there would be found no discordance, in the colours of our style; as our opinions on the subject of poetry do almost entirely coincide." Coleridge's own account, however, is somewhat different. In his *Biographia Literaria*, he tells us that, besides the *Ancient Mariner*, he was preparing for the conjoint publication, among other poems, the *Dark Ladie* and the *Christabel*, in which he should have more nearly realized his ideal than he had done in his first attempt, when the volume was brought out with so much larger a portion of it the produce of Wordsworth's industry than his own, that his few compositions, "instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter"; and then he adds, in reference to the long preface in which Wordsworth had expounded his theory of poetry, "With many parts of this preface in the sense attributed to them, and which the words undoubtedly seem to authorize, I never concurred; but, on the contrary, objected to them as erroneous in principle and 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."

Coleridge's poetry is remarkable for the perfection of its execu-

tion, for the exquisite art with which its divine spirit is endowed with formal expression. The subtly woven words, with all their sky colors, seem to grow out of the thought or emotion, as the flower from its stalk, or the flame from its feeding oil. The music of his verse, too, especially of what he has written in rhyme, is as sweet and as characteristic as anything in the language, placing him for that rare excellence in the same small band with Shakspeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher (in their lyrics), and Milton, and Collins, and Shelley, and Tennyson. It was probably only quantity that was wanting to make Coleridge the greatest poet of his day. Certainly, at least, some things that he has written have not been surpassed, if they have been matched, by any of his contemporaries. And (as indeed has been the case with almost all great poets) he continued to write better and better the longer he wrote; some of his happiest verses were the produce of his latest years. To quote part of what we have said in a paper published immediately after Coleridge's death: — "Not only, as we proceed from his earlier to his later compositions, does the execution become much more artistic and perfect, but the informing spirit is refined and purified, — the tenderness grows more delicate and deep, the fire brighter and keener, the sense of beauty more subtle and exquisite. Yet from the first there was in all he wrote the divine breath which essentially makes poetry what it is. There was 'the shaping spirit of imagination,' evidently of soaring pinion and full of strength, though as yet sometimes unskilfully directed, and encumbered in its flight by an affluence of power which it seemed hardly to know how to manage: hence an unselecting impetuosity in these early compositions, never indicating anything like poverty of thought, but producing occasionally considerable awkwardness and turgidity of style, and a declamatory air, from which no poetry was ever more free than that of Coleridge in its maturer form." Yet even among these juvenile productions are many passages, and some whole pieces, of perfect gracefulness, and radiant with the purest sunlight of poetry. There is, for example, the most beautiful delicacy of sentiment, as well as sweetness of versification and expression, in the following lines, simple as they are: —

Maid of my love, sweet Genevieve!
 In beauty's light you glide along;
 Your eye is like the star of eve,
 And sweet your voice as Seraph's song.

Yet not your heavenly beauty gives
 This heart with passion soft to glow :
 Within your soul a voice there lives !
 It bids you hear the tale of woe.
 When, sinking low, the sufferer wan
 Beholds no hand outstretched to save,
 Fair, as the bosom of the swan
 That rises graceful o'er the wave,
 I've seen your breast with pity heave
 And therefore love I you, sweet Genevieve !

And the following little picture, entitled 'Time, Real and Imaginary,' is a gem worthy of the poet in the most thoughtful and philosophic strength of his faculties : —

On the wide level of a mountain's head
 (I knew not where, but 'twas some fairy place),
 Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
 Two lovely children ran an endless race ;
 A sister and a brother !
 That far outstripped the other ;
 Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
 And looks and listens for the boy behind :
 For he, alas ! is blind !
 O'er rough and smooth with even step he passed,
 And knows not whether he be first or last.

In a different manner, and more resembling that of these early poems in general, are many passages of great power in the *Monody on the Death of Chatterton*, and in the *Religious Musings*, the latter written in 1794, when the author was only in his twenty-third year. And among other remarkable pieces of a date not much later, might be mentioned the ode entitled *France*, written in 1797, which Shelley regarded as the finest ode in the language ; his *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*, written, we believe, about the same time ; his ode entitled *Dejection* ; his blank verse lines entitled *The Nightingale* ; his *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and his exquisite verses entitled *Love*, to which last, for their union of passion with delicacy, and of both with the sweetest, richest music, it would be difficult to find a match in our own or any language.

“ Of Coleridge's poetry, in its most matured form and in its best specimens, the most distinguishing characteristics are vividness of imagination and subtlety of thought, combined with unri-

valled beauty and expressiveness of diction, and the most exquisite melody of verse. With the exception of a vein of melancholy and meditative tenderness, flowing rather from a contemplative survey of the mystery — the strangely mingled good and evil — of all things human, than connected with any individual interests, there is not in general much of passion in his compositions, and he is not well fitted, therefore, to become a very popular poet, or a favorite with the multitude. His love itself, warm and tender as it is, is still Platonic and spiritual in its tenderness, rather than a thing of flesh and blood. There is nothing in his poetry of the pulse of fire that throbs in that of Burns; neither has he much of the homely every-day truth, the proverbial and universally applicable wisdom, of Wordsworth. Coleridge was, far more than either of these poets, ‘of imagination *all compact.*’ The fault of his poetry is the same that belongs to that of Spenser; it is too purely or unalloyedly poetical. But rarely, on the other hand, has there existed an imagination in which so much originality and daring were associated and harmonized with so gentle and tremblingly delicate a sense of beauty. Some of his minor poems especially, for the richness of their coloring combined with the most perfect finish, can be compared only to the flowers which spring up into loveliness at the touch of ‘great creating nature.’ The words, the rhyme, the whole flow of the music seem to be not so much the mere expression or sign of the thought as its blossoming or irradiation — of the bright essence the equally bright though sensible effluence.”¹

The poem entitled Love is somewhat too long to be given entire; and it is, besides, probably familiar to most of our readers; but those of them to whom it is best known will not object to have a few of the verses again placed before them here: —

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
 Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
 All are but ministers of Love,
 And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
 Live o’er again that happy hour,
 When midway on the mount I lay,
 Beside the ruined tower.

¹ Printing Machine, No. 12, for 16th August, 1834.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
 Had blended with the lights of eve;
 And she was there, my hope, my joy,
 My own dear Genevieve!

She leaned against the armed man,
 The statue of the armed knight;
 She stood and listened to my lay,
 Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
 My hope, my joy, my Genevieve!
 She loves me best whenc'er I sing
 The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
 I sang an old and moving story —
 An old rude song, that suited well
 That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
 With downcast eyes and modest grace
 For well she knew I could not choose
 But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the knight that wore
 Upon his shield a burning brand;
 And that for ten long years he wooed
 The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined; and ah!
 The deep, the low, the pleading tone,
 With which I sang another's love,
 Interpreted my own.

.

All impulses of soul and sense
 Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;
 The music and the doleful tale,
 The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
 An undistinguishable throng,

And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long !

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love, and virgin shame ;
And like the murmur of a dream
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved — she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stept —
Then suddenly, with timorous eye,
She fled to me and wept.

She half inclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace ;
And, bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride ;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous bride.

Here is another melodious breathing of deeper and more thoughtful tenderness, entitled *Sonnet, To a Friend who asked how I felt when the Nurse first presented my Infant to me* : —

Charles ! my slow heart was only sad, when first
I scanned that face of feeble infancy :
For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst
All I had been, and all my child might be !
But when I saw it on its mother's arm,
And hanging at her bosom (she the while
Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile),
Then I was thrilled and melted, and most warm
Impressed a father's kiss ; and, all beguiled
Of dark remembrance and presageful fear,
I seemed to see an angel form appear : —
'Twas even thine, beloved woman mild !

So for the mother's sake the child was dear,
And dearer was the mother for the child.

From the loftier poetry of this early date, or a time not much later, all that we can give is a portion of the ode entitled Dejection : —

.

My genial spirits fail ;
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast ?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west :
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.
O Lady ! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live :
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud !
And, would we aught behold of higher worth
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah ! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the earth ; —
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element !

O pure of heart ! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be !
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.

Joy, virtuous Lady ! Joy, that ne'er was given
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life and life's effluence, cloud at once and shower
Joy, Lady ! is the spirit and the power
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud —
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud : —
We in ourselves rejoice !
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,

All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence fancy made me dreams of happiness ;
For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth ;
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,
But ah ! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can ;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man —
This was my sole resource, my only plan :
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

Some resemblance may be traced between the thought in a part of this extract and Wordsworth's noble ode entitled *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of early Childhood*, where he exclaims : —

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore ; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

.

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.

.

Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy ;
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy ;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended ;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

It is almost profanation to mutilate this magnificent hymn ; but, having given the above lines, we will add another passage, which can be separated with the least injury from the rest : —

 O joy ! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live,
 That Nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive !
 The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 Perpetual benediction : not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest ;
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast : —
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise ;
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings ;
 Blank misgivings of a creature
 Moving about in worlds not realised,
 High instincts before which our mortal nature
 Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised !

 But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which be they what they may,
 Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
 Are yet a master light of all our seeing ;
 Upholds us, cherish, and have power to make
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal silence : truths that wake

To perish never ;
 Which neither listlessness nor mad endeavour,
 Nor Man nor Boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
 Can utterly abolish or destroy !
 Hence in a season of calm weather,
 Though inland far we be,
 Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
 And see the children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song !
 And let the young lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound !
 We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,
 Ye that through your hearts to-day
 Feel the gladness of the May !
 What though the radiance which was once so bright
 Be now for ever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour
 Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower ;
 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind ;
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be ;
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering ;
 In the faith that looks through death,
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.

No comparison, of course, is to be instituted between this grand declamation and Coleridge's much less elaborate ode. As a remarkable illustration, however, of the difference between the poetical genius of the one and that of the other when exercised in a more light and fanciful manner, we will give an example of the treatment of the same subject by both. The following little poem by Wordsworth is entitled *The Complaint* : —

There is a change — and I am poor ;
 Your love hath been, not long ago,

A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow ;
And flow it did ; not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count !
Blest was I then all bliss above ;
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love
What have I ? shall I dare to tell ?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love — it may be deep —
I trust it is, — and never dry :
What matter ? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity ?
— Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

The following, entitled *The Pang more sharp than All*, an Allegory, is Coleridge's : —

He too has flitted from his secret nest,
Hope's last and dearest child without a name !—
Has flitted from me, like the warmthless flame,
That makes false promise of a place of rest
To the tired pilgrim's still believing mind ;—
Or like some elfin knight in kingly court,
Who, having won all guerdons in his sport,
Glides out of view, and whither none can find.

Yes ! He hath flitted from me — with what aim,
Or why, I know not ! 'Twas a home of bliss,
And he was innocent, as the pretty shame
Of babe, that tempts and shuns the menaced kiss,
From its twy-clustered hiding-place of snow !
Pure as the babe, I ween, and all aglow
As the dear hopes that swell the mother's breast —
Her eyes down-gazing o'er her elased charge ; —
Yet gay as that twice happy father's kiss,
That well might glance aside, yet never miss,
Where the sweet mark embossed so sweet a targe —
Twice wretched he who hath been doubly blest !

Like a loose blossom on a gusty night
 He flitted from me — and has left behind
 (As if to them his faith he ne'er did plight),
 Of either sex and answerable mind,
 Two playmates, twin-births of his foster-dame: —
 The one a steady lad (Esteem he hight)
 And Kindness is the gentler sister's name;
 Dim likeness now, though fair she be and good,
 Of that bright boy who hath us all forsook: —
 But, in his full-eyed aspect when she stood,
 And while her face reflected every look,
 And in reflection kindled, she became
 So like him, that almost she seemed the same!

Ah! he is gone, and yet will not depart! —
 Is with me still, yet I from him exiled!
 For still there lives within my secret heart
 The magic image of the magic child,
 Which there he made up-grow by his strong art,
 As in that crystal orb¹ — Wise Merlin's feat —
 The wondrous "World of Glass," wherein inisled
 All longed-for things their beings did repeat; —
 And there he left it, like a sylph beguiled,
 To live and yearn and languish incomplete!

Can wit of man a heavier grief reveal?
 Can sharper pang from hate or scorn arise? —
 Yes! one more sharp there is — that deeper lies,
 Which fond esteem but mocks when he would heal.
 Yet neither scorn nor hate did it devise,
 But sad compassion and atoning zeal!
 One pang more blighting-keen than hope betrayed!
 And this it is my woeful hap to feel,
 When, at her brother's hest, the twin-born maid,
 With face averted and unsteady eyes,
 Her truant playmate's faded robe puts on;
 And, inly shrinking from her own disguise,
 Enacts the faery boy that's lost and gone.
 O worse than all! O pang all pangs above
 Is Kindness counterfeiting absent Love!

But Wordsworth and Coleridge, each gaining and each losing something, come much nearer to one another in their later poetry:

¹ *Faerie Queene*, iii. 2, 19.

that of Wordsworth takes more of the sky, that of Coleridge more of the earth; the former drops a good deal of its excessive realism (to use the word in a somewhat peculiar, but sufficiently intelligible sense), the latter something of its over-idealism. Among those of Coleridge's poems, however, to which an early date is fixed, there are a few, the execution of which is so perfect, that we should be inclined to think they had undergone much revision before they were published, and that, in part at least, they are to be properly considered as really the produce of his later years. His *Christabel*, for instance, is stated to have been written, the First Part in 1797, the Second Part in 1800; but we cannot help suspecting that the following lines, from what is called the Conclusion to Part First, may have been an addition made not very long before the first publication of the poem in 1816: —

And see! the lady Christabel
 Gathers herself from out her trance;
 Her limbs relax, her countenance
 Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
 Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds —
 Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
 And oft the while she seems to smile
 As infants at a sudden light!
 Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
 Like a youthful hermitess,
 Beauteous in a wilderness,
 Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
 And, if she move unquietly,
 Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
 Comes back and tingles in her feet.
 No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
 What if her guardian spirit 'twere?
 What if she knew her mother near?
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,
 That saints will aid if men will call:
 For the blue sky bends over all!

The filmy delicacy of this writing is exquisite; every word is light and music. Equally beautiful, and in the same style, is the following little fragment, being the introductory stanza of a poem on the Wanderings of Cain, in which we are led to understand some progress had been made at an early date, although this stanza, all

of the poem that has been preserved, was not published till towards the close of the author's life : —

Encinctured with a twine of leaves,
 That leafy twine his only dress,
 A lovely boy was plucking fruits,
 By moonlight, in a wilderness.
 The moon was bright, the air was free,
 And fruits and flowers together grew
 On many a shrub and many a tree :
 And all put on a gentle hue,
 Hanging in the shadowy air
 Like a picture rich and rare.
 It was a climate where, they say,
 The night is more beloved than day.
 But who that beauteous boy beguiled,
 That beauteous boy to linger here ?
 Alone, by night, a little child,
 In place so silent and so wild —
 Has he no friend, no loving mother near ?

In most of Coleridge's latest poetry, however, along with this perfection of execution, in which he was unmatched, we have more body and warmth — more of the inspiration of the heart mingling with that of the fancy. But, before quoting the specimens we intend to give of that, we would introduce a little piece, which seems to us eminently tender and beautiful, although less remarkable for high finish ; it is entitled *A Day Dream* : —

My eyes make pictures when they are shut :
 I see a fountain, large and fair,
 A willow and a ruined hut,
 And thee, and me, and Mary there.
 O Mary ! make thy gentle lap our pillow !
 Bend o'er us, like a bower, my beautiful green willow !

A wild-rose roofs the ruined shed,
 And that and summer well agree :
 And lo ! where Mary leans her head,
 Two dear names carved upon the tree !
 And Mary's tears, they are not tears of sorrow :
 Our sister and our friend will both be here to-morrow.

'Twas day, but now few, large, and bright
 The stars are round the crescent moon !

And now it is a dark warm night,
 The balmiest of the month of June!
 A glow-worm fallen, and on the marge remounting,
 Shines, and its shadow shines, fit stars for our sweet fountain.

O ever — ever be thou blest!
 For dearly, Asra, love I thee!
 This brooding warmth across my breast,
 This depth of tranquil bliss — ah me!
 Fount, tree, and shed are gone, I know not whither,
 But in one quiet room we three are still together.

The shadows dance upon the wall,
 By the still dancing fire-flames made;
 And now they slumber, moveless all!
 And now they melt to one deep shade!
 But not from me shall this mild darkness steal thee:
 I dream thee with mine eyes, and at my heart I feel thee!

Thine eye-lash on my cheek doth play —
 'Tis Mary's hand upon my brow!
 But let me check this tender lay,
 Which none may hear but she and thou!
 Like the still hive at quiet midnight humming,
 Murmur it to yourselves, ye two beloved women!

We will now present a few of those gems without a flaw which were the latest produce of Coleridge's genius. The following lines are entitled *Work without Hope*, and are stated to have been composed 21st February, 1827: —

All nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair —
 The bees are stirring — birds are on the wing —
 And winter, slumbering in the open air,
 Wears on his smiling face a dream of spring!
 And I, the while, the sole unbusy thing,
 Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
 Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
 Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,
 For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
 With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:
 And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?

That boon, which but to have possess
 In a belief gave life a zest —
 Uncertain both what it had been,
 And if by error lost, or luck ;
 And what it was ; — an evergreen
 Which some insidious blight had struck,
 Or annual flower, which, past its blow,
 No vernal spell shall e'er revive !
 Uncertain, and afraid to know,

Doubts tossed him to and fro :
 Hope keeping Love, Love Hope, alive,
 Like babes bewildered in the snow,
 That cling and huddle from the cold
 In hollow tree or ruined fold.

Those sparkling colours, once his boast,
 Fading, one by one away,
 Thin and hueless as a ghost,
 Poor fancy on her sick-bed lay ;
 Ill at a distance, worse when near,
 Telling her dreams to jealous fear !
 Where was it then, the sociable sprite
 That crowned the poet's cup and decked his dish !
 Poor shadow cast from an unsteady wish,
 Itself a substance by no other right
 But that it intercepted reason's light ;
 It dimmed his eye, it darkened on his brow :
 A peevish mood, a tedious time, I trow !
 Thank heaven ! 'tis not so now.

O bliss of blissful hours !
 The boon of heaven's decreeing,
 While yet in Eden's bowers
 Dwelt the first husband and his sinless mate !
 The one sweet plant, which, piteous heaven agreeing,
 They bore with them through Eden's closing gate !
 Of life's gay summer tide the sovran rose !
 Late autumn's amaranth, that more fragrant blows
 When passion's flowers all fall or fade ;
 If this were ever his in outward being,
 Or but his own true love's projected shade,
 Now that at length by certain proof he knows
 That, whether real or a magic show,

Whate'er it was, it is no longer so ;
 Though heart be lonesome, hope laid low,
 Yet, lady, deem him not unblest ;
 The certainty that struck hope dead
 Hath left contentment in her stead :
 And that is next to best !

And still more perfect and altogether exquisite, we think, than anything we have yet given, is the following, entitled Love, Hope, and Patience, in Education : —

O'er wayward childhood would'st thou hold firm rule,
 And sun thee in the light of happy faces ;
 Love, Hope, and Patience, these must be thy graces,
 And in thine own heart let them first keep school.
 For, as old Atlas on his broad neck places
 Heaven's starry globe, and there sustains it, — so
 Do these upbear the little world below
 Of Education, — Patience, Love, and Hope.
 Methinks, I see them grouped in seemly show,
 The straitened arms upraised, the palms aslope,
 And robes that touching, as adown they flow,
 Distinctly blend, like snow embossed in snow.

O part them never ! If Hope prostrate lie,
 Love too will sink and die.
 But Love is subtle, and doth proof derive
 From her own life that Hope is yet alive ;
 And, bending o'er with soul-transfusing eyes,
 And the soft murmurs of the mother dove,
 Woos back the fleeting spirit, and half supplies : —
 Thus Love repays to Hope what Hope first gave to Love.

Yet haply there will come a weary day,
 When overtasked at length
 Both Love and Hope beneath the load give way.
 Then, with a statue's smile, a statue's strength,
 Stands the mute sister, Patience, nothing loth,
 And both supporting does the work of both.

SOUTHEY.

COLERIDGE died in 1834; his friend Southey, born three years later, survived to 1843. If Coleridge wrote too little poetry, Southey may be said to have written too much and too rapidly. Southey, as well as Coleridge, has been popularly reckoned one of the Lake poets; but it is difficult to assign any meaning to that name which should entitle it to comprehend either the one or the other. Southey, indeed, was, in the commencement of his career, the associate of Wordsworth and Coleridge; a portion of his first poem, his *Joan of Arc*, published in 1796, was written by Coleridge; and he afterwards took up his residence, as well as Wordsworth, among the lakes of Westmoreland. But, although in his first volume of minor poems, published in 1797, there was something of the same simplicity or plainness of style, and choice of subjects from humble life, by which Wordsworth sought to distinguish himself about the same time, the manner of the one writer bore only a very superficial resemblance to that of the other; whatever it was, whether something quite original, or only, in the main, an inspiration caught from the Germans, that gave its peculiar character to Wordsworth's poetry, it was wanting in Southey's; he was evidently, with all his ingenuity and fertility, and notwithstanding an ambition of originality which led him to be continually seeking after strange models, from Arabian and Hindoo mythologies to Latin hexameters, of a genius radically imitative, and not qualified to put forth its strength except while moving in a beaten track and under the guidance of long-established rules. Southey was by nature a conservative in literature as well as in politics, and the eccentricity of his *Thalabas* and *Kehamas* was as merely spasmodic as the Jacobinism of his *Wat Tyler*. But even *Thalaba* and *Kehama*, whatever they may be, are surely not poems of the Lake school. And in most of his other poems, especially in his latest epic, *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*, Southey is in verse what he always was in prose, one of the most thoroughly and unaffectedly English of our modern writers. The verse, however, is too like prose to be poetry of a very high order; it is flowing and eloquent, but has little of the distinctive life or lustre of poetical composition. There is much splendor and beauty, however, in the *Curse of Kehama*, the most elaborate of his long poems.

As a specimen we will transcribe from the beginning of the Seventh Book or Canto the description of the voyage of the heroine, the lovely and virtuous Kailyal, through the air to the Swerga, or lowest heaven, with her preserver the Glendoveer, or pure spirit Ereenia : —

Then in the ship of heaven Ereenia laid
 The waking, wondering maid ;
 The ship of heaven, instinct with thought, displayed
 Its living sail, and glides along the sky.
 On either side, in wavy tide,
 The clouds of morn along its path divide ;
 The winds who swept in wild career on high
 Before its presence check their charmed force ;
 The winds that loitering lagged along their course
 Around the living bark enamoured play,
 Swell underneath the sail, and sing before its way.

That bark, in shape, was like the furrowed shell
 Wherein the sea-nymphs to their parent-king,
 On festal day, their duteous offerings bring.
 Its hue ? — Go watch the last green light
 Ere evening yields the western star to night ;
 Or fix upon the sun thy strenuous sight
 Till thou hast reached its orb of chrysolite.
 The sail, from end to end displayed,
 Bent, like a rainbow, o'er the maid.
 An angel's head, with visual eye,
 Through trackless space directs its chosen way ;
 Nor aid of wing, nor foot, nor fin,
 Requires to voyage o'er the obedient sky.
 Smooth as the swan when not a breeze at even
 Disturbs the surface of the silver stream,
 Through air and sunshine sails the ship of heaven

Recumbent there the maiden glides along
 On her aerial way,
 How swift she feels not, though the swiftest wind
 Had flagged in flight behind.
 Motionless as a sleeping babe she lay,
 And all serene in mind,
 Feeling no fear ; for that ethereal air
 With such new life and joyance filled her heart
 Fear could not enter there ;

For sure she deemed her mortal part was o'er,
 And she was sailing to the heavenly shore ;
 And that angelic form, who moved beside,
 Was some good spirit sent to be her guide.

Daughter of earth ! therein thou deem'st aright ;
 And never yet did form more beautiful,
 In dreams of night descending from on high,
 Bless the religious virgin's gifted sight,
 Nor like a vision of delight
 Rise on the raptured poet's inward eye.
 Of human form divine was he,
 The immortal youth of heaven who floated by,
 Even such as that divinest form shall be
 In those blest stages of our onward race,
 When no infirmity,
 Low thought, nor base desire, nor wasting care,
 Deface the semblance of our heavenly sire.

The wings of eagle or of cherubim
 Had seemed unworthy him ;
 Angelic power, and dignity and grace
 Were in his glorious pennons ; from the neck
 Down to the ankle reached their swelling web,
 Richer than robes of Tyrian dye, that deck
 Imperial majesty :
 Their colour like the winter's moonless sky,
 When all the stars of midnight's canopy
 Shine forth ; or like the azure steep at noon,
 Reflecting back to heaven a brighter blue.

Such was their tint when closed ; but, when outspread,
 The permeating light
 Shed through their substance thin a varying hue ;
 Now bright as when the rose,
 Beauteous as fragrant, gives to scent and sight
 A like delight ; now like the juice that flows
 From Douro's generous vine ;
 Or ruby, when with deepest red it glows ;
 Or as the morning clouds refulgent shine,
 When, at forthcoming of the lord of day,
 The orient, like a shrine,
 Kindles as it receives the rising ray,

And, heralding his way,
Proclaims the presence of the Power divine.

Thus glorious were the wings
Of that celestial spirit, as he went
Disporting through his native element.
Nor there alone

The gorgeous beauties that they gave to view ;
Through the broad membrane branched a pliant bone ;
Spreading like fibres from their parent stem,
Its veins like interwoven silver shone ;
Or as the chaster hue
Of pearls that grace some Sultan's diadem.
Now with slow stroke and strong behold him smite
The buoyant air, and now, in gentler flight,
On motionless wing expanded, shoot along.

Through air and sunshine sails the ship of heaven ;
Far, far beneath them lies
The gross and heavy atmosphere of earth ;
And with the Swerga gales
The maid of mortal birth
At every breath a new delight inhales.
And now towards its port the Ship of Heaven
Swift as a falling meteor shapes its flight,
Yet gently as the dews of night that gem
And do not bend the hare-bell's slenderest stem.
Daughter of earth, Ereenia cried, alight ;
This is thy place of rest, the Swerga this,
Lo, here my bower of bliss !

He furled his azure wings, which round him fold
Graceful as robes of Grecian chief of old.
The happy Kailyal knew not where to gaze ;
Her eyes around in joyful wonder roam,
Now turned upon the lovely Glendoveer,
Now on his heavenly home.

The affluence of imagery and gorgeousness of language here, and in other similar passages with which the poem abounds, is very imposing; and it is not to be denied that there is much of real descriptive power. Yet the glow that warms and colors the composition is perhaps more that of eloquence than of poetry; or, at least, it is something rather borrowed or caught by imitation,

and applied to the purpose in hand by dint of labor or mere general talent, than coming out of any strong original and peculiar poetic genius. The imagery, with all its copiousness and frequent magnificence and beauty, is still essentially commonplace in spirit and character, however strange in form much of it may seem; any apparent freshness it has lies for the most part merely in its Orientalism; whenever it is not outlandish, it is trite and tame; so that in this way when it is most natural it is least striking, and whenever it is very striking it is unnatural. Neither has it much real variety; it is chargeable at least with mannerism, if not with monotony; nor does it commonly penetrate through and through the thought, but rather only decorates it on the outside like a dress or lackerings. There is, in short, a good deal in this Indian poetry of Southey's that recalls the artificial point and sparkle of that of Darwin, though the glare is less brazen and oppressive, and the execution altogether much more skilful, as well as the spirit far larger and more genial. It is rightly remarked, however, by the author himself in the preface to the last edition which he superintended of his *Curse of Kehama*, that there is nothing Oriental in the style of the poem. By the style he here means simply the diction, including the verse. "I had learned," he adds, "the language of poetry from our own great masters and the great poets of antiquity." What of foreign inspiration, not derived from the common Greek and Latin sources, there was in Southey's poetry, he drew, not, like some of the most remarkable of his contemporaries, from the modern literature of Germany, but from the old ballad and romantic minstrels of Spain.



SCOTT.

WALTER SCOTT, again, was never accounted one of the Lake poets; yet he, as well as Wordsworth and Coleridge, was early a drinker at the fountain of German poetry; his commencing publication was a translation of Bürger's *Lenore* (1796), and the spirit and manner of his original compositions were, from the first, evidently and powerfully influenced by what had thus awakened his poetical faculty. His robust and manly character of mind, however, and his strong nationalism, with the innate disposition of his

imagination to live in the past rather than in the future, saved him from being seduced into either the puerilities or the extravagances to which other imitators of the German writers among us were thought to have, more or less, given way; and, having soon found in the popular ballad-poetry of his own country all the qualities which had most attracted him in his foreign favorites, with others which had an equal or still greater charm for his heart and fancy, he henceforth gave himself up almost exclusively to the more congenial inspiration of that native minstrelsy. His poems are all lays and romances of chivalry, but infinitely finer than any that had ever before been written. With all their irregularity and carelessness (qualities which in some sort are characteristic of and essential to this kind of poetry), that element of life in all writing, which comes of the excited feeling and earnest belief of the writer, is never wanting; this animation, fervor, enthusiasm,—call it by what name we will,—exists in greater strength in no poetry than in that of Scott, redeeming a thousand defects, and triumphing over all the reclamations of criticism. It was this, no doubt, more than anything else, which at once took the public admiration by storm. All cultivated and perfect enjoyment of poetry, or of any other of the fine arts, is partly emotional, partly critical;¹ the enjoyment and appreciation are only perfect when these two qualities are blended; but most of the poetry that had been produced among us in modern times had aimed at affording chiefly, if not exclusively, a critical gratification. The Lay of the Last Minstrel (1805) surprised readers of all degrees with a long and elaborate poem, which carried them onward with an excitement of heart as well as of head which many of them had never experienced before in the perusal of poetry. The narrative form of the poem no doubt did much to produce this effect, giving to it, even without the poetry, the interest and enticement of a novel; but all readers, even the least tinctured with a literary taste, felt also, in a greater or less degree, the charm of the verse, and the poetic glow with which the work was all alive. Marmion (1808) carried the same feelings to a much higher pitch; it is undoubtedly Scott's greatest poem, or the one at any rate in which the noblest passages are

¹ See, in an article on the State of Criticism in France, in the *British and Foreign Review*, No. xxxii. (for January, 1844), a speculation on the distinction between these two states of feeling, which will be admitted to be ingenious, novel, and suggestive, even by those readers who do not go with the writer the whole length of his conclusions

found; though the more domestic attractions of the *Lady of the Lake* (1810) made it the most popular on its first appearance. Meanwhile, his success, the example he had set, and the tastes which he had awakened in the public mind, had affected our literature to an extent in various directions which has scarcely been sufficiently appreciated. Notwithstanding the previous appearance of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and some other writers, it was Scott who first in his day made poetry the rage, and with him properly commences the busy poetical production of the period we are now reviewing; those who had been in the field before him put on a new activity, and gave to the world their principal works, after his appearance; and it was not till then that the writer who of all the poets of this age attained the widest blaze of reputation, eclipsing Scott himself, commenced his career. But what is still more worthy of note is, that Scott's poetry impressed its own character upon all the poetry that was produced among us for many years after: it put an end to long works in verse of a didactic or merely reflective character, and directed the current of all writing of that kind into the form of narrative. Even Wordsworth's *Excursion* (1814) is for the most part a collection of tales. If Scott's own genius, indeed, were to be described by any single epithet, it would be called a narrative genius. Hence, when he left off writing verse, he betook himself to the production of fictions in prose, which were really substantially the same thing with his poems, and in that freer form of composition succeeded in achieving a second reputation still more brilliant than his first.

We cannot make room for the whole of the battle in *Marmion*, and the following extracts, which describe the fighting, lose part of their effect by being separated from the picture of *Marmion's* death-scene, with the pathos and touching solemnity of which they are in the original canvas so finely intermingled and relieved; but, even deprived of the advantages of this contrast, most readers will probably agree with a late eloquent critic, that, "of all the poetical battles which have been fought from the days of Homer, there is none comparable for interest and animation — for breadth of drawing and magnificence of effect — with this":¹ —

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill;

¹ Jeffrey, in *Edinburgh Review*.

On which (for far the day was spent,
 The western sun-beams now were bent.
 The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
 Could plain their distant comrades view:
 Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
 "Unworthy office here to stay!
 No hope of gilded spurs to-day. —
 But see! look up — on Flodden bent,
 The Scottish foe has fired his tent."

And sudden, as he spoke,
 From the sharp ridges of the hill,
 All downward to the banks of Till
 Was wreathed in sable smoke.
 Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
 The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
 As down the hill they broke;
 Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
 Announced their march; their tread alone,
 At times one warning trumpet blown,
 At times a stifled hum,
 Told England, from his mountain throne
 King James did rushing come. —
 Scarce could they hear, or see, their foes,
 Until at weapon point they close.
 They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
 With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust;
 And such a yell was there
 Of sudden and portentous birth,
 As if men fought upon the earth
 And fiends in upper air;
 O life and death were in the shout,
 Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
 And triumph and despair.
 Long looked the anxious squires; their eye
 Could in the darkness nought descry.

At length the freshening western blast
 Aside the shroud of battle cast.
 And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
 Above the brightening cloud appears;
 And in the smoke the pennons flew,
 As in the storm the white sea-mew.
 Then marked they, dashing broad and far,

The broken billows of the war,
 And plumed crests of chieftains brave
 Floating like foam upon the wave ;
 But nought distinct they see :
 Wide raged the battle on the plain ;
 Spears shook and falchions flashed amain ;
 Fell England's arrow-flight like rain ;
 Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again,
 Wild and disorderly.

Amid the scene of tumult, high
 They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly :
 And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
 And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
 Still bear them bravely in the fight ;
 Although against them come
 Of gallant Gordons many a one,
 And many a stubborn Badenoch man,
 And many a rugged border clan,
 With Huntley, and with Home.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
 Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle ;
 Though there the western mountaineer
 Rushed with bare bosom on the spear,
 And flung the feeble targe aside,
 And with both hands the broadsword plied.
 'Twas vain : — but Fortune, on the right,
 With fickle smile cheered Scotland's fight.
 Then fell that spotless banner white,
 The Howard's lion fell ;
 Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
 With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
 Around the battle-yell.
 The Border slogan rent the sky !
 A Home ! a Gordon ! was the cry :
 Loud were the clanging blows ;
 Advanced, — forced back, — now low, now high
 The pennon sunk and rose ;
 As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
 When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
 It wavered 'mid the foes.
 No longer Blount the view could bear :
 " By Heaven, and all its saints ! I swear

I will not see it lost !
 Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
 May bid your beads, and patter prayer, —
 I gallop to the host.”
 And to the fray he rode amain,
 Followed by all the archer train.
 The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
 Made, for a space, an opening large, —
 The rescued banner rose ; —
 But darkly closed the war around ;
 Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
 It sunk among the foes.
 Then Eustace mounted too, yet staid,
 As loth to leave the helpless maid,
 When, fast as shaft can fly,
 Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
 The loose rein dangling from his head,
 Housing and saddle bloody red,
 Lord Marmion's steed rushed by ;
 And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
 A look and sign to Clara east,
 To mark he would return in haste,
 Then plunged into the fight.

.

The war, that for a space did fail,
 Now trebly thundering swelled the gale,
 And Stanley ! was the cry : —
 A light on Marmion's visage spread,
 And fired his glazing eye :
 With dying hand, above his head,
 He shook the fragment of his blade,
 And shouted “ Victory ! ” —
 “ Charge, Chester, charge ! On, Stanley, on ! ”
 Were the last words of Marmion.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
 Still rose the battle's deadly swell ;
 For still the Scots, around their king,
 Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
 Where's now their victor vaward wing ?
 Where Huntley, and where Home ?
 O, for a blast of that dread horn.

On Fontarabian echoes borne,
 That to King Charles did come,
 When Roland brave, and Olivier,
 And every paladin and peer,
 On Roncesvalles died !
 Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
 To quit the plunder of the slain,
 And turn the doubtful day again,
 While yet on Flodden side,
 Afar, the Royal standard flies,
 And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies
 Our Caledonian pride !
 In vain the wish — for far away,
 While spoil and havoc mark their way,
 Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray. —
 "O lady," cried the Monk, "away!"
 And placed her on her steed,
 And led her to the chapel fair
 Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.

.

But, as they left the darkening heath,
 More desperate grew the strife of death.
 The English shafts in volleys hailed ;
 In headlong charge their horse assailed ;
 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 billmen ply the ghastly blow,
 Unbroken was the ring ;
 The stubborn spearmen 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 ;
 Linked 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.
 Then skilful Surrey's sage commands

Led back from strife his shattered bands ;
 And from the charge they drew,
 As mountain waves from wasted lands
 Sweep back to ocean blue.
 Then did their loss his foemen know ;
 Their king, their lords, their mightiest low,
 They melted from the field as snow,
 When streams are swollen and south winds blow,
 Dissolves in silent dew.
 Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless splash,
 While many a broken band,
 Disordered, through her currents dash,
 To gain the Scottish land ;
 To town and tower, to down and dale,
 To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
 And raise the universal wail.
 Tradition, legend, tune, and song
 Shall many an age that wail prolong :
 Still from the sire the son shall hear
 Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
 Of Flodden's fatal field,
 Where shivered was fair Scotland's spear,
 And broken was her shield !

Scott, born in 1771, died in 1832.



CRABBE. CAMPBELL. MOORE.

CRABBE, Campbell, and Moore, were all known as poetical writers previous to the breaking forth of Scott's bright day : Crabbe had published his first poem, *The Library*, so far back as in 1781, *The Village* in 1783, and *The Newspaper* in 1785 ; Campbell, his *Pleasures of Hope* in 1799 ; Moore, his *Anacreon* in 1800. But Campbell alone had before that epoch attracted any considerable share of the public attention ; and even he, after following up his first long poem with his *Hohenlinden*, his *Battle of the Baltic*, his *Mariners of England*, and a few other short pieces, had laid aside his lyre for some five or six years. Neither Crabbe nor Moore had as yet produced anything that gave promise of the high

station they were to attain in our poetical literature, or had even acquired any general notoriety as writers of verse. No one of the three, however, can be said to have caught any part of his manner from Scott. Campbell's first poem, juvenile as its execution in some respects was, evinced in its glowing impetuosity and imposing splendor of declamation the genius of a true and original poet, and the same general character that distinguishes his poetry in its maturest form, which may be described as a combination of fire and elegance; and his early lyrics, at least in their general effect, are not excelled by anything he subsequently wrote, although the tendency of his style towards greater purity and simplicity was very marked in all his later compositions. It was with a narrative poem — his *Pennsylvanian Tale of Gertrude of Wyoming* — that Campbell (in 1809) returned to woo the public favor, after Scott had made poetry, and that particular form of it, so popular; and, continuing to obey the direction which had been given to the public taste, he afterwards produced his exquisite *O'Connor's Child* and his *Theodric*; the former the most passionate, the latter the purest, of all his longer poems. Crabbe, in like manner, when he at last, in 1807, broke his silence of twenty years, came forth with a volume, all that was new in which consisted of narrative poetry, and he never afterwards attempted any other style. Narrative, indeed, had formed the happiest and most characteristic portions of Crabbe's former compositions; and he was probably led now to resume his pen mainly by the turn which the taste and fashion of the time had taken in favor of the kind of poetry to which his genius most strongly carried him. His narrative manner, however, it is scarcely necessary to observe, has no resemblance either to that of Scott or to that of Campbell. Crabbe's poetry, indeed, both in its form and in its spirit, is of quite a peculiar and original character. It might be called the poetry of matter-of-fact, for it is as true as any prose, and, except the rhyme, has often little about it of the ordinary dress of poetry; but the effect of poetry, nevertheless, is always there in great force, its power both of stirring the affections and presenting vivid pictures to the fancy. Other poets may be said to exalt the truth to a heat naturally foreign to it in the crucible of their imagination; he, by a subtler chemistry, draws forth from it its latent heat, making even things that look the coldest and deadest sparkle and flash with passion. It is remarkable, however, in how great a degree, with all its originality, the poetical genius

of Crabbe was acted upon and changed by the growth of new tastes and a new spirit in the times through which he lived,—how his poetry took a warmer temperament, a richer color, as the age became more poetical. As he lived, indeed, in two eras, so he wrote in two styles: the first, a sort of imitation, as we have already observed, of the rude vigor of Churchill, though marked from the beginning by a very distinguishing quaintness and raciness of its own, but comparatively cautious and commonplace, and dealing rather with the surface than with the heart of things; the last, with all the old peculiarities retained, and perhaps exaggerated, but greatly more copious, daring, and impetuous, and infinitely improved in penetration and general effectiveness. And his poetical power, nourished by an observant spirit and a thoughtful tenderness of nature, continued to grow in strength to the end of his life; so that the last poetry he published, his *Tales of the Hall*, is the finest he ever wrote, the deepest and most passionate in feeling as well as the happiest in execution. In Crabbe's sunniest passages, however, the glow is still that of a melancholy sunshine: compared to what we find in Moore's poetry, it is like the departing flush from the west, contrasted with the radiance of morning poured out plentifully over earth and sky, and making all things laugh in light. Rarely has there been seen so gay, nimble, airy a wonder-worker in verse as Moore; rarely such a conjuror with words, which he makes to serve rather as wings for his thoughts than as the gross attire or embodiment with which they must be encumbered to render them palpable or visible. His wit is not only the sharpest and brightest to be almost anywhere found, but is produced apparently with more of natural facility, and shapes itself into expression more spontaneously, than that of any other poet. But there is almost as much humor as wit in Moore's gayety; nor are his wit and humor together more than a small part of his poetry, which, preserving in all its forms the same matchless brilliancy, finish, and apparent ease and fluency, breathes in its tenderer strains the very soul of sweetness and pathos. Moore, after having risen to the ascendant in his proper region of the poetical firmament, at last followed the rest into the walk of narrative poetry, and produced his *Lalla Rookh* (1817): it is a poem, with all its defects, abounding in passages of great beauty and splendor; but his *Songs* are, after all, probably, the compositions for which he will be best remembered.

No poetry of this time is probably so deeply and universally written upon the popular heart and memory as Campbell's great lyrics; these, therefore, it is needless to give here; some things that he has written in another style will have a greater chance of being less familiar to the reader. With all his classic taste and careful finish, Campbell's writing, especially in his earlier poetry, is rarely altogether free for any considerable number of lines from something hollow and false in expression, into which he was seduced by the conventional habits of the preceding bad school of verse-making in which he had been partly trained, and from which he emerged, or by the gratification of his ear lulling his other faculties asleep for the moment; even in his *Battle of the Baltic*, for instance, what can be worse than the two lines —

But the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene?

And a similar use of fine words with little or no meaning, or with a meaning which can only be forced out of them by torture, is occasional in all his early compositions. In the *Pleasures of Hope*, especially, swell of sound without any proportionate quantity of sense, is of such frequent occurrence as to be almost a characteristic of the poem. All his later poetry, however, is of much purer execution; and some of it is of exquisite delicacy and grace of form. A little incident was never, for example, more perfectly told than in the following verses: —

The ordeal's fatal trumpet sounded,
And sad pale Adelgitha came,
When forth a valiant champion bounded,
And slew the slanderer of her fame.

She wept, delivered from her danger;
But, when he knelt to claim her glove —
"Seek not," she cried, "oh! gallant stranger
For hapless Adelgitha's love.

"For he is in a foreign far land
Whose arm should now have set me free
And I must wear the willow garland
For him that's dead or false to me."

"Nay! say not that his faith is tainted!"
He raised his vizor — at the sight

She fell into his arms and fainted ;
It was indeed her own true knight.

Equally perfect, in a higher, more earnest style, is the letter to her absent husband, dictated and signed by Constance in her last moments, which closes the tale of Theodric : —

“Theodric, this is destiny above
Our power to baffle ; bear it then, my love !
Rave not to learn the usage I have borne,
For one true sister left me not forlorn ;
And, though you ’re absent in another land,
Sent from me by my own well-meant command,
Your soul, I know, as firm is knit to mine
As these clasped hands in blessing you now join :
Shape not imagined horrors in my fate —
Even now my sufferings are not very great ;
And, when your grief’s first transports shall subside,
I call upon your strength of soul and pride
To pay my memory, if ’tis worth the debt,
Love’s glorying tribute — not forlorn regret :
I charge my name with power to conjure up
Reflection’s balmy, not its bitter, cup.
My pardoning angel, at the gates of heaven,
Shall look not more regard than you have given
To me ; and our life’s union has been clad
In smiles of bliss as sweet as life e’er had.
Shall gloom be from such bright remembrance cast ?
Shall bitterness outflow from sweetness past ?
No ! imaged in the sanctuary of your breast,
There let me smile, amidst high thoughts at rest ;
And let contentment on your spirit shine,
As if its peace were still a part of mine :
For, if you war not proudly with your pain,
For you I shall have worse than lived in vain.
But I conjure your manliness to bear
My loss with noble spirit — not despair ;
I ask you by our love to promise this,
And kiss these words, where I have left a kiss, —
The latest from my living lips for yours.”

Words that will solace him while life endures :
For, though his spirit from affliction’s surge
Could ne’er to life, as life had been, emerge,
Yet still that mind, whose harmony elate
Rang sweetness even beneath the crush of fate, —

That mind in whose regard all things were placed
 In views that softened them, or light that graced, —
 That soul's example could not but dispense
 A portion of its own blest influence ;
 Invoking him to peace and that self-sway
 Which fortune cannot give, nor take away ;
 And, though he mourned her long, 'twas with such woe
 As if her spirit watched him still below.

It is difficult to find a single passage, not too long for quotation, which will convey any tolerable notion of the power and beauty of Crabbe's poetry, where so much of the effect lies in the conduct of the narrative — in the minute and prolonged but wonderfully skilful as well as truthful pursuit and exposition of the course and vicissitude of passions and circumstances ; but we will give so much of the story of the Elder Brother, in the *Tales of the Hall*, as will at least make the catastrophe intelligible. We select this tale, among other reasons, for its containing one of those preëminently beautiful lyric bursts which seem to contrast so strangely with the general spirit and manner of Crabbe's poetry. After many years, the narrator, pursuing another inquiry, accidentally discovers the lost object of his heart's passionate but pure idolatry living in infamy : —

Will you not ask, how I beheld that face,
 Or read that mind, and read it in that place ?
 I have tried, Richard, oftentimes, and in vain,
 To trace my thoughts, and to review their train —
 If train there were — that meadow, grove, and stile,
 The fright, the escape, her sweetness, and her smile ;
 Years since elapsed, and hope, from year to year,
 To find her free — and then to find her here !

But is it she ? — O ! yes ; the rose is dead,
 All beauty, fragrance, freshness, glory, fled ;
 But yet 'tis she — the same and not the same —
 Who to my bower a heavenly being came ;
 Who waked my soul's first thought of real bliss,
 Whom long I sought, and now I find her — this.

I cannot paint her — something I had seen
 So pale and slim, and tawdry and unclean ;
 With haggard looks, of vice and woe the prey,
 Laughing in languor, miserably gay :
 Her face, where face appeared, was amply spread,
 By art's warm pencil, with ill-chosen red

The flower's fictitious bloom, the blushing of the dead :
 But still the features were the same, and strange
 My view of both — the sameness and the change,
 That fixed me gazing, and my eye enchained,
 Although so little of herself remained ;
 It is the creature whom I loved, and yet
 Is far unlike her — would I could forget
 The angel or her fall ; the once adored
 Or now despised ! the worshipped or deplored !
 " O ! Rosabella ! " I prepared to say,
 " Whom I have loved ; " but Prudence whispered, *Nay,*
 And Folly grew ashamed — Discretion had her day.
 She gave her hand ; which, as I lightly pressed,
 The cold but ardent grasp my soul oppressed ;
 The ruined girl disturbed me, and my eyes
 Looked, I conceive, both sorrow and surprise.

.

If words had failed, a look explained their style ;
 She could not blush assent, but she could smile :
 Good heaven ! I thought, have I rejected fame,
 Credit, and wealth, for one who smiles at shame ?

She saw me thoughtful — saw it, as I guessed,
 With some concern, though nothing she expressed.
 " Come, my dear friend, discard that look of care," &c.

.

Thus spoke the siren in voluptuous style,
 While I stood gazing and perplexed the while,
 Chained by that voice, confounded by that smile.
 And then she sang, and changed from grave to *gay,*
 Till all reproach and anger died away.

" My Damon was the first to wake
 The gentle flame that cannot die ;
 My Damon is the last to take
 The faithful bosom's softest sigh :
 The life between is nothing worth,
 O ! cast it from thy thought away ;
 Think of the day that gave it birth,
 And this its sweet returning day.

" Buried be all that has been done,
 Or say that nought is done amiss

For who the dangerous path can shun
 In such bewildering world as this?
 But love can every fault forgive,
 Or with a tender look reprove;
 And now let nought in memory live,
 But that we meet, and that we love."

—
 And then she moved my pity; for she wept,
 And told her miseries, till resentment slept;
 For, when she saw she could not reason blind,
 She poured her heart's whole sorrows on my mind,
 With features graven on my soul, with sighs
 Seen, but not heard, with soft imploring eyes,
 And voice that needed not, but had, the aid
 Of powerful words to soften and persuade.
 "O! I repent me of the past;" &c.

.
 Softened, I said, "Be mine the hand and heart,
 If with your world you will consent to part."
 She would — she tried. — Alas! she did not **know**
 How deeply-rooted evil habits grow:
 She felt the truth upon her spirits press,
 But wanted ease, indulgence, show, excess,
 Voluptuous banquets, pleasures — not refined,
 But such as soothe to sleep the opposing mind —
 She looked for idle vice, the time to kill,
 And subtle, strong apologies for ill.
 And thus her yielding, unresisting soul
 Sank, and let sin confuse her and control:
 Pleasures that brought disgust yet brought relief,
 And minds she hated helped to war with grief.

.
 I had long lost her; but I sought in vain
 To banish pity; — still she gave me pain.

.
 — There came at length request
 That I would see a wretch with grief oppressed,
 By guilt affrighted — and I went to trace
 Once more the vice-worn features of that face,
 That sin-wrecked being! and I saw her laid

Where never worldly joy a visit paid:
 That world receding fast! the world to come
 Concealed in terror, ignorance, and gloom;
 Sin, sorrow, and neglect; with not a spark
 Of vital hope, — all horrible and dark. —
 It frightened me! — I thought, and shall not I
 Thus feel? — thus fear? — this danger can I fly?
 Do I so wisely live that I can calmly die?

.
 Still as I went came other change — the frame
 And features wasted, and yet slowly came
 The end; and so inaudible the breath,
 And still the breathing, we exclaimed — 'Tis death!
 But death it was not: when indeed she died
 I sat and his last gentle stroke espied:
 When — as it came — or did my fancy trace
 That lively, lovely flushing o'er the face?
 Bringing back all that my young heart impressed!
 It came — and went! — She sighed, and was at rest!

From Moore, whose works are more, probably, than those of any of his contemporaries in the hands of all readers of poetry, we will make only one short extract — a specimen of his brilliant Orientalism, which may be compared with the specimen of Southey's in a preceding page. Here is the exquisitely beautiful description in the *Fire Worshippers*, the finest of the four tales composing *Lalla Rookh*, of the calm after a storm, in which the heroine, the gentle Hinda, awakens in the war-bark of her lover Hafed, the noble Gheber chief, into which she had been transferred from her own galley while she had swooned with terror from the tempest and the fight: —

How calm, how beautiful comes on
 The stilly hour when storms are gone!
 When warring winds have died away,
 And clouds, beneath the dancing ray,
 Melt off, and leave the land and sea
 Sleeping in bright tranquillity —
 Fresh as if day again were born,
 Again upon the lap of morn!
 When the light blossoms, rudely torn
 And scattered at the whirlwind's will,
 Hang floating in the pure air still,

Filling it all with precious balm,
 In gratitude for this sweet calm : —
 And every drop the thunder-showers
 Have left upon the grass and flowers
 Sparkles, as 'twere that lightning gem
 Whose liquid flame is born of them !

When, 'stead of one unchanging breeze,
 There blow a thousand gentle airs,
 And each a different perfume bears, —

As if the loveliest plants and trees
 Had vassal breezes of their own,
 To watch and wait on them alone,
 And waft no other breath than theirs !
 When the blue waters rise and fall,
 In sleepy sunshine mantling all ;
 And even that swell the tempest leaves
 Is like the full and silent heavens
 Of lovers' hearts when newly blest —
 Too newly to be quite at rest !
 Such was the golden hour that broke
 Upon the world, when Hinda woke
 From her long trance, and heard around
 No motion but the water's sound
 Rippling against the vessel's side,
 As slow it mounted o'er the tide. —
 But where is she ? — her eyes are dark,
 Are wildered still — is this the bark,
 The same that from Harmoza's bay
 Bore her at morn — whose bloody way
 The sea-dog tracks ? — No ! strange and new
 Is all that meets her wondering view.
 Upon a galliot's deck she lies,

Beneath no rich pavilion's shade,
 No plumes to fan her sleeping eyes,

Nor jasmin on her pillow laid.
 But the rude litter, roughly spread
 With war-cloaks, is her homely bed,
 And shawl and sash, on javelins hung,
 For awning o'er her head are flung.
 Shuddering she looked around — there lay

A group of warriors in the sun
 Resting their limbs, as for that day
 Their ministry of death were done ;

Some gazing on the drowsy sea,
Lost in unconscious reverie ;
And some, who seemed but ill to brook
That sluggish calm, with many a look
To the slack sail impatient cast,
As loose it flagged before the mast.

Crabbe, born in 1754, lived till 1832 ; Campbell, born in 1777, died in 1844 ; Moore, born in 1780, died in 1851.

BYRON.

BYRON was the writer whose blaze of popularity it mainly was that threw Scott's name into the shade, and induced him to abandon verse. Yet the productions which had this effect — the *Giaour*, the *Bride of Abydos*, the *Corsair*, &c., published in 1813 and 1814 (for the new idolatry was scarcely kindled by the two respectable, but somewhat tame, cantos of *Childe Harold*, in quite another style, which appeared shortly before these effusions), were, in reality, only poems written in what may be called a variation of Scott's own manner — Oriental lays and romances, Turkish *Marmions* and *Ladies of the Lake*. The novelty of scene and subject, the exaggerated tone of passion in the outlandish tales, and a certain trickery in the writing (for it will hardly now be called anything else), materially aided by the mysterious interest attaching to the personal history of the noble bard, who, whether he sung of *Giaours*, or *Corsairs*, or *Laras*, was always popularly believed to be "himself the great sublime he drew," wonderfully excited and intoxicated the public mind at first, and for a time made all other poetry seem spiritless and wearisome ; but, if Byron had adhered to the style by which his fame was thus originally made, it probably would have proved transient enough. Few will now be found to assert that there is anything in these earlier poems of his comparable to the great passages in those of Scott — to the battle in *Marmion*, for instance, or the raising of the clansmen by the fiery cross in the *Lady of the Lake*, or many others that might be mentioned. But Byron's vigorous and elastic genius, although it had already tried various styles of poetry, was, in truth, as yet

only prelude to its proper display. First, there had been the very small note of the Hours of Idleness; then, the sharper, but not more original or much more promising, strain of the English Bards and Scotch Reviewers (a satirical attempt in all respects inferior to Gifford's Baviad and Mæviad, of which it was a slavish imitation), next, the certainly far higher and more matured, but still quiet and commonplace, manner of the first two cantos of Childe Harold; after that, suddenly the false glare and preternatural vehemence of these Oriental rhapsodies, which yet, however, with all their hollowness and extravagance, evinced infinitely more power than anything he had previously done, or rather were the only poetry he had yet produced that gave proof of any remarkable poetic genius. The Prisoner of Chillon and Parisina, The Siege of Corinth and Mazeppa, followed, all in a spirit of far more truth, and depth, and beauty than the other tales that had preceded them; but the highest forms of Byron's poetry must be sought for in the two last cantos of Childe Harold, in his Cain and his Manfred, and, above all, in his Don Juan. The last-mentioned extraordinary work is, of course, excluded by its levities and audacities from any comparison in which the moral element is taken into account with such poems as Young's Night Thoughts and Cowper's Task, or even with Thomson's Seasons or Wordsworth's Excursion; but looked at simply from an artistic point of view, and without reference to anything except the genius and power of writing which it manifests, it will be difficult to resist its claim to be regarded as on the whole the greatest English poem that had appeared either in the present or in the preceding century. It is unfinished, indeed; but so are both the Canterbury Tales of Chaucer and the Fairy Queen of Spenser. Even what of it is objectionable on moral grounds may still be of great literary brilliancy; and, at any rate, the merit of the rest would not be affected by what might be so excepted to. It contains abundance of poetry as exquisite as is to be found in any one of the other poetical works which were added to our literature within the period in question, and no other displays a poetic genius nearly so rich and various — so great in the most opposite kinds of writing, from the lightest play of wit and satire up to the noblest strains of impassioned song. We will quote only the letter of Julia to Juan in the First Canto, which may be compared with the letter of Constance in Campbell's Theodric, given a few pages back: —

"They tell me 'tis decided ; you depart ;
 'Tis wise — 'tis well, but not the less a pain ;
 I have no further claim on your young heart :
 Mine is the victim, and would be again ;
 To love too much has been the only art
 I used ; — I write in haste, and, if a stain
 Be on this sheet, 'tis not what it appears ;
 My eyeballs burn and throb, but have no tears.

"I loved, I love you, for this love have lost
 State, station, heaven, mankind's, my own esteem,
 And yet cannot regret what it hath cost,
 So dear is still the memory of that dream ;
 Yet, if I name my guilt, 'tis not to boast ;
 None can deem harshlier of me than I deem ;
 I trace this scrawl because I cannot rest —
 I've nothing to reproach, or to request.

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart ;
 'Tis woman's whole existence ; — man may range
 The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart ;
 Sword, gown, gain, glory offer in exchange
 Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
 And few there are whom these cannot estrange.
 Men have all these resources, we but one, —
 To love again, and be again undone.

"You will proceed in pleasure and in pride,
 Beloved and loving many ; all is o'er
 For me on earth, except some years to hide
 My shame and sorrow deep in my heart's core ;
 These I could bear, but cannot cast aside
 The passion which still rages as before ;
 And so farewell — forgive me, love me — No,
 That word is idle now, but let it go.

"My breast has been all weakness, is so yet ;
 But still I think I can collect my mind ;
 My blood still rushes where my spirits set,
 As roll the waves before the settled wind ;
 My heart is feminine, nor can forget —
 To all, except one image, madly blind ;
 So shakes the needle, and so stands the pole,
 As vibrates my fond heart to my fixed soul.

"I have no more to say, but linger still,
 And dare not set my seal upon this sheet ;
 And yet I may as well the task fulfil,
 My misery can scarce be more complete ;
 I had not lived till now could sorrow kill :
 Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet,
 And I must even survive this last adieu,
 And bear with life to love and pray for you !"

 SHELLEY.

YET the highest poetical genius of this time, if it was not that of Coleridge, was, probably, that of Shelley. Byron died in 1824, at the age of thirty-six ; Shelley in 1822, at that of twenty-nine. What Shelley produced during the brief term allotted to him on earth, much of it passed in sickness and sorrow, is remarkable for its quantity, but much more wonderful for the quality of the greater part of it. His *Queen Mab*, written when he was eighteen, crude and defective as it is, and unworthy to be classed with what he wrote in his maturer years, was probably the richest promise that was ever given at so early an age of poetic power, the fullest assurance that the writer was born a poet. From the date of his *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude*, the earliest written of the poems published by himself, to his death, was not quite seven years. The *Revolt of Islam*, in twelve cantos, or books, the dramas of *Prometheus Unbound*, *The Cenci*, and *Hellas*, the tale of *Rosalind and Helen*, *The Masque of Anarchy*, *The Sensitive Plant*, *Julian and Maddalo*, *The Witch of Atlas*, *Epipsychidion*, *Adonais*, *The Triumph of Life*, the translations of Homer's *Hymn to Mercury*, of the *Cyclops* of Euripides, and of the scenes from Calderon and from Goethe's *Faust*, besides many short poems, were the additional produce of this springtime of a life destined to know no summer. So much poetry, so rich in various beauty, was probably never poured forth with so rapid a flow from any other mind. Nor can much of it be charged with either immaturity or carelessness : Shelley, with all his abundance and facility, was a fastidious writer, scrupulously attentive to the effect of words and syllables, and accustomed to elaborate whatever he wrote to

the utmost ; and, although it is not to be doubted that if he had lived longer he would have developed new powers and a still more masterly command over the several resources of his art, anything that can properly be called unripeness in his composition had, if not before, ceased with his Revolt of Islam, the first of his poems which he gave to the world, as if the exposure to the public eye had burned it out. Some haziness of thought and uncertainty of expression may be found in some of his later, or even latest, works ; but that is not to be confounded with rawness ; it is the dreamy ecstasy, too high for speech, in which his poetical nature, most subtle, sensitive, and voluptuous, delighted to dissolve and lose itself. Yet it is marvellous how far he had succeeded in reconciling even this mood of thought with the necessities of distinct expression : witness his *Epipsychidion* (written in the last year of his life), which may be regarded as his crowning triumph in that kind of writing, and as, indeed, for its wealth and fusion of all the highest things, — of imagination, of expression, of music, — one of the greatest miracles ever wrought in poetry. In other styles, again, all widely diverse, are the *Cenci*, the *Masque of Anarchy*, the *Hymn to Mercury* (formerly a translation, but essentially almost as much an original composition as any of the others). It is hard to conjecture what would have been impossible to him by whom all this had been done.

It will suffice to give one of the most brilliant and characteristic of Shelley's shorter poems — his *Ode, or Hymn, as it may be called, To a Skylark*, written in 1820 : —

Hail to thee, blithe spirit,
 Bird thou never wert,
 That from heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
 From the earth thou springest ;
 Like a cloud of fire
 The blue deep thou wingest,
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
 Of the sunken sun,

O'er which clouds are brightening,
 Thou dost float and run ;
 Like an embodied¹ Joy whose race is just begun

¹ Undoubtedly the true word, though always perverted into *unbo-died*, as if a joy were a thing that naturally wore a body. The conception is of the same kind with what we have in the *Witch of Atlas* : —

“ — in that cave a dewy splendour hidden
 Took shape and motion: with the living form
 Of this embodied Power the cave grew warm.”

As the dewy splendor, on taking shape and motion, is called an “embodied Power” in the one poem, so the lark, winging the blue sky like a cloud of fire, and floating in the evening sunlight, is called an “embodied Joy” in the other. In the preceding verse, too, very absurdly, the cloud of fire which the bird has become in the poet’s imagination is, by the removal of the semicolon from its proper place at the end of the second line to the end of the third, represented, not as soaring in the blue deep of the sky, but as springing from the earth, — which is what nobody ever saw a cloud do, not a cloud of fire, or cloud glowing with colored radiance, at any rate, and would besides give us as forced and false an image of a lark commencing its ascent as could well be put into rhyme, or into words, — striking, too, all its lustre out of what follows, and turning the climax into an anti-climax, by substituting for the splendid picture of the blue deep winged by the radiant cloud the statement of its being simply winged by something, we are not told what, — for the cloud of fire was only, according to this pointless pointing, the appearance that the bird presented (and which yet it never could have presented) when rising from the earth. These are two examples of the misprints that swarm more especially in so much of Shelley’s poetry as was first given to the world in the edition brought out in 4 vols. under the care of his widow in 1839, and nearly all of which are repeated in the enlarged edition dated in the following year, notwithstanding we are told that in the latter some poems are presented “complete and correct” which had been till then “defaced by various mistakes and omissions.” We have noted the following in the fourth volume of the first edition alone : — In the *Witch of Atlas*, at p. 10, for —

“ Some weak and faint
 With the soft burden of intensest bliss:
 It is its work to bear ” —

read,

“ Some weak and faint
 With the soft burden of intensest bliss
 It is their work to bear.”

At p. 12, for “And her thoughts were each a minister,” read, probably, “And her own thoughts,” &c. At p. 28, for “And lived thenceforth as if some control,” read “And lived thenceforward,” &c. ; and for “Was a green and overarching bower,” read “Was as a green,” &c. In the *Epipsychidion*, — to say nothing of the strange commencement, in which it is difficult not to suspect something wrong, —

“ Sweet spirit! sister of that orphan one,
 Whose empire is the name thou weapest on ” —

we have at p. 66, “Though it is in the code,” instead of “Though it is the code,” — as the line is correctly given on p. 319 of the one-volume edition in the first of a few fragments described as “Gleanings from Shelley’s manuscript books and papers :

The pale purple even
 Melts around thy flight ;
 Like a star of heaven
 In the broad daylight,
 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

preserved not only because they are beautiful in themselves, but as affording indications of his feelings and virtues ;” — strangely enough, without its having been observed that this first fragment, in substance, and mostly in the same words, forms part of the *Epipsyehidion* ! At p. 76, in the same poem, we have the solitary misprint of the one edition which we find corrected in the other — “The blue Aegean girds” ludicrously corrupted into “The blue Aegean girls.” In the *Adonais*, again, at p. 94, in the line “A wound more fierce than his tears and sighs,” it is evident that something is wanting ; perhaps it should be “Than were his tears and sighs.” At p. 134, in the bridal song, read “Where strength and beauty met together kindle their image” (without the comma after *together*). At p. 140, we have certainly one misprint, if not two, in the three lines beginning “Pours itself on the plain, until wandering.” At p. 144, we have the pretty, and prettily expressed, thought entitled “Good night” half obliterated by the manner in which the third line of the second versè is printed, “Be it not said, thought, understood,” instead of “Be it not said, though understood.” At p. 178, in a poem which does not seem to be given at all in the second edition, we have “Within an Elysium air” for “With an Elysium air” (if, indeed, *Elysium* be the word) ; and at p. 180, in another, “Leave the naked to laughter” for “Leave thee naked,” &c. At p. 183, in the lines on Keats, “Time’s monthless torrent” is wrong of course ; it should probably be “Time’s smooth torrent.” At p. 191, in the dramatic fragment entitled “Charles the First,” “Scoffs at the stake” should apparently be “Scoffs at the state” ; and at p. 193, “Against innocent sleep” should be “Against the innocent sleep.” In the *Triumph of Life*, at p. 206, “And past in these performs” cannot be right ; at p. 207 “Those deluded crew” should be “that deluded crew” ; at p. 209 “Said my guide” should be “Said then my guide” ; at p. 217 “Touched with faint lips the cup she raised” should probably be “Touched with my fainting lips,” &c., and the line “Whilst the wolf from which they fled amazed” is evidently wrong ; as is also the line “Under the crown which girt with empire” on p. 222. In the *Hymn to Mercury*, at p. 245, the line “And through the tortoise’s hard strong skin” wants a word or a syllable somewhere ; at p. 270, in the line “the lyre — be mine the glory giving it” the words should stand “the glory of giving it” ; and lower down in the same page we should probably read

“But thou, who art as wise as thou art strong
 To compass all that thou desirest, I
 Present thee with,” &c.

instead of “*Can* compass,” with a full-point after “desirest.” In the translation of the *Cyclops*, at p. 295, the line “I have stolen out, so that if you will” should probably run “So that now if you will” ; and at p. 296, in the line “You think by some measure to despatch him,” “measure” cannot be right. In the *Scenes from the Magico Prodigiouso*, finally, at p. 314, the reading should be, apparently, “That which you know the best” (not “you know best”) ; at p. 316 “And you may not say that I allege” should probably be “And, that you may not,” &c., with the strong point removed from the end of the following line ; at p. 325 it should be “The whistling waves” (not “wave”) ; at p. 323 there is something wrong in

Keen as are the arrows
 Of that silver sphere,
 Whose intense lamp narrows
 In the white dawn clear,
 Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
 With thy voice is loud,
 As, when night is bare,
 From one lonely cloud
 The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not :
 What is most like thee ?
 From rainbow clouds there flow not
 Drops so bright to see
 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden,
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not :

Like a highborn maiden
 In a palace tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower :

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its aërial hue
 Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view :

“ And I have wandered o'er
 The expanse of these wide wildernesses ” ;

and at p. 329 the line “ Twixt thou and me be, that neither fortune ” is also certainly wrong, and should probably stand “ Twixt thou and me be set, that neither fortune. ” There may be many more instances of the same kind. On the other hand, the alterations in the second edition, some at least, are only additional blunders. One of the most flagrant occurs in the lines on Keats, already noticed, where, while the impossible nonsense of “ Time's monthless torrent ” is left untouched, the striking figure in the preceding line, “ Death, the immortalizing writer, ” is actually corrected into “ Death, the immortalizing winter ” !

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves :

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was
 Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine ;
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal,
 Or triumphal chant,
 Matched with thine would be all
 But an empty vaunt —
 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain ?
 What fields, or waves, or mountains ?
 What shapes of sky or plain ?
 What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?

With thy clear keen joyance
 Languor cannot be :
 Shadow of annoyance
 Never came near thee :
 Thou lovest ; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream,
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not ;

Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught ;
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
 Hate, and pride, and fear ;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound,
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow,
 The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

KEATS.

g 25 413
 KEATS, born in 1796, died the year before Shelley, and, of course, at a still earlier age. But his poetry is younger than Shelley's in a degree far beyond the difference of their years. He was richly endowed by nature with the poetical faculty, and all that he has written is stamped with originality and power ; it is probable, too, that he would soon have supplied, as far as was necessary or important, the defects of his education, as indeed he had actually done to a considerable extent, for he was full of ambition as well as genius ; but he can scarcely be said to have given full assurance by anything he has left that he would in time have produced a great poetical work. The character of his mental constitution, explosive and volcanic, was adverse to every kind of restraint and cultivation ; and his poetry is a tangled forest, beautiful indeed and glorious with many a majestic oak and sunny glade, but still with the unpruned, untrained savagery everywhere, constituting, apparently, so much of its essential character as to be inseparable

from it, and indestructible without the ruin at the same time of everything else. There is not only the absence of art, but a spirit antagonistic to that of art. Yet this wildness and turbulence may, after all, have been only an affluence of true power too great to be soon or easily brought under regulation, — the rankness of a tropic vegetation, coming of too rich a soil and too much light and heat. Certainly to no one of his contemporaries had been given more of passionate intensity of conception (the life of poetry) than to Keats. Whatever he thought or felt came to him in vision, and wrapped and thrilled him. Whatever he wrote burns and blazes. And his most wanton extravagances had for the most part a soul of good in them. His very affectations were mostly prompted by excess of love and reverence. In his admiration and worship of our Elizabethan poetry he was not satisfied without mimicking the obsolete syllabication of the language which he found there enshrined, and, as he conceived, consecrated. Even the most remarkable of all the peculiarities of his manner — the extent, altogether, we should think, without a parallel in our literature, to which he surrenders himself in writing to the guidance of the mere wave of sound upon which he happens to have got afloat, often, one would almost say, making ostentation of his acquiescence and passiveness — is a fault only in its excess, and such a fault, moreover, as only a true poet could run into. Sound is of the very essence of song; and the music must always in so far guide the movement of the verse, as truly as it does that of the dance. It only is not the all in all. If the musical form be the mother of the verse, the sense to be expressed is the father. Yet Keats, by what he has thus produced in blind obedience to the tune that had taken possession of him, — allowing the course of the composition to be directed simply by the rhyme sometimes for whole pages, — has shown the same sensibility to the musical element in poetry, and even something of the same power of moulding language to his will, which we find in all our greatest poets — in Spenser especially, whose poetry is ever as rich with the charm of music as with that of picture, and who makes us feel in so many a victorious stanza that there is nothing his wonder-working mastery over words cannot make them do for him. Keats's *Endymion* was published in 1817; his *Lamia*,¹ *Isabella*, *Eve of St. Agnes*, and the

¹ "If any one," Leigh Hunt has said, "could unite the vigor of Dryden with the ready and easy variety of pause in the works of the late Mr. Crabbe and the

remarkable fragment, *Hyperion*, together in 1820, a few months before his death. The latter volume also contained several shorter pieces, one of which, of great beauty, the *Ode to a Nightingale*, may serve as a companion to Shelley's *Skylark* : —

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-ward had sunk :
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thine happiness, —
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage that hath been
 Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth !
 O for a beaker full of the warm South,
 Full of the true, the blissful Hippocrene,
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stained mouth ;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 'And with thee fade away into the forest dim :

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs ;
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs ;
 Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away ! away ! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,

lovely poetic consciousness in the *Lamia* of Keats, in which the lines seem to take pleasure in the progress of their own beauty, like sea-nymphs luxuriating through the water, he would be a perfect master of rhyming heroic verse."

But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards!
 Already with thee! Tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-moon is on her throne,
 Clustered around by all her starry fays;
 But here there is no light
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But in embalmed darkness guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
 Fast-fading violets, covered up in leaves;
 And mid-day's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen, and, for many a time,
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,¹
 Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To seize upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still would'st thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
 No hungry generations tread thee down;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown;
 Perhaps the self-same song hath found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;

¹ Shelley had probably this line in his ear, when in the Preface to his *Adonais*, which is an elegy on Keats, he wrote — describing “the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants” at Rome, where his friend was buried — “The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.”

The same that oft-times lath
 Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my soul's self!
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fated to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music: — do I wake or sleep?



HUNT.

THESE last names can hardly be mentioned without suggesting another — that of one who has only the other day been taken from us. Leigh Hunt, the friend of Shelley and Keats, had attracted the attention of the world by much that he had done, both in verse and prose, long before the appearance of either. His *Story of Rimini*, published in 1816, being, as it was, indisputably the finest inspiration of Italian song that had yet been heard in our modern English literature, had given him a place of his own as distinct as that of any other poetical writer of the day. Whatever may be thought of some peculiarities in his manner of writing, nobody will now be found to dispute either the originality of his genius, or his claim to the title of a true poet. Into whatever he has written he has put a living soul; and much of what he has produced is brilliant either with wit and humor, or with tenderness and beauty. In some of the best of his pieces too there is scarcely to be found a trace of anything illegitimate or doubtful in the matter of diction or versification. Where, for example, can we have more unexceptionable English than in the following noble version of the *Eastern Tale*? —

There came a man, making his hasty moan,
 Before the Sultan Mahmoud on his throne,

And crying out — “ My sorrow is my right,
 And I *will* see the Sultan, and to-night.”
 “ Sorrow,” said Mahmoud, “ is a reverend thing ;
 I recognise its right, as king with king ;
 Speak on.” “ A fiend has got into my house,”
 Exclaimed the staring man, “ and tortures us ;
 One of thine officers — he comes, the abhorred,
 And takes possession of my house, my board,
 My bed : — I have two daughters and a wife,
 And the wild villain comes, and makes me mad with life.”
 “ Is he there now ? ” said Mahmoud : — “ No ; he left
 The house when I did, of my wits bereft ;
 And laughed me down the street, because I vowed
 I ’d bring the prince himself to lay him in his shroud.
 I ’m mad with want — I ’m mad with misery,
 And, oh thou Sultan Mahmoud, God cries out for thee ! ”

The Sultan comforted the man, and said,
 “ Go home, and I will send thee wine and bread ”
 (For he was poor), “ and other comforts. Go :
 And, should the wretch return, let Sultan Mahmoud know.”

In three days’ time, with haggard eyes and beard,
 And shaken voice, the suitor re-appeared,
 And said, “ He ’s come.” — Mahmoud said not a word,
 But rose and took four slaves, each with a sword,
 And went with the vexed man. They reach the place,
 And hear a voice, and see a female face,
 That to the window fluttered in affright :
 “ Go in,” said Mahmoud, “ and put out the light ;
 But tell the females first to leave the room ;
 And, when the drunkard follows them, we come.”

The man went in. There was a cry, and hark !
 A table falls, the window is struck dark :
 Forth rush the breathless women ; and behind
 With curses comes the fiend in desperate mind.
 In vain : the sabres soon cut short the strife,
 And chop the shrieking wretch, and drink his bloody **life**.

“ Now *light* the light,” the Sultan cried aloud.
 ’Twas done ; he took it in his hand, and bowed
 Over the corpse, and looked upon the face ;

Then turned and knelt beside it in the place,
 And said a prayer, and from his lips there crept
 Some gentle words of pleasure, and he wept.

In reverent silence the spectators wait,
 Then bring him at his call both wine and meat ;
 And when he had refreshed his noble heart,
 He bade his host be blest, and rose up to depart.

The man amazed, all mildness now, and tears,
 Fell at the Sultan's feet, with many prayers,
 And begged him to vouchsafe to tell his slave
 The reason, first, of that command he gave
 About the light ; then, when he saw the face,
 Why he knelt down ; and lastly, how it was
 That fare so poor as his detained him in the place.

The Sultan said, with much humanity,
 " Since first I saw thee come, and heard thy cry,
 I could not rid me of a dread, that one
 By whom such daring villanies were done
 Must be some lord of mine, perhaps a lawless son.
 Whoe'er he was, I knew my task, but feared
 A father's heart, in case the worst appeared ;
 For this I had the light put out ; but when
 I saw the face, and found a stranger slain,
 I knelt, and thanked the sovereign arbiter,
 Whose work I had performed through pain and fear ;
 And then I rose, and was refreshed with food,
 The first time since thou cam'st, and marr'dst my solitude."

Other short pieces in the same style are nearly as good — such as those entitled *The Jaffar* and *The Inevitable*. Then there are the admirable modernizations of Chaucer — of whom and of Spenser, whom he has also imitated with wonderful cleverness, no one of all his contemporaries probably had so true and deep a feeling as Hunt. But, passing over likewise his two greatest works, *The Story of Rimini* and *The Legend of Florence* (published in 1840), we will give one other short effusion, which attests, we think, as powerfully as anything he ever produced, the master's triumphant hand, in a style which he has made his own, and in which, with however many imitators, he has no rival : —

THE FANCY CONCERT.

They talked of their concerts, their singers, and scores,
 And pitied the fever that kept me in doors ;
 And I smiled in my thought, and said, " O ye sweet fancies,
 And animal spirits, that still in your dances
 Come bringing me visions to comfort my care,
 Now fetch me a concert, — imparadise air."

Then a wind, like a storm out of Eden, came pouring
 Fierce into my room, and made tremble the flooring,
 And filled, with a sudden impetuous trample
 Of heaven, its corners ; and swelled it to ample
 Dimensions to breathe in, and space for all power ;
 Which falling as suddenly, lo ! the sweet flower
 Of an exquisite fairy-voice opened its blessing ;
 And ever and aye, to its constant addressing,
 There came, falling in with it, each in the last,
 Flageolets one by one, and flutes blowing more fast,
 And hautboys and clarinets, acrid of reed,
 And the violin, smoothlier sustaining the speed
 As the rich tempest gathered, and buz-ringing moons
 Of tambours, and huge basses, and giant bassoons ;
 And the golden trombonë, that darteth its tongue
 Like a bee of the gods ; nor was absent the gong,
 Like a sudden fate-bringing oracular sound
 Of earth's iron genius, burst up from the ground,
 A terrible slave come to wait on his masters
 The gods, with exultings that clanged like disasters ;
 And then spoke the organs, the very gods they,
 Like thunders that roll on a wind-blowing day ;
 And, taking the rule of the roar in their hands,
 Lo ! the Genii of Music came out of all lands ;
 And one of them said, " Will my lord tell his slave
 What concert 'twould please his Firesideship to have ? "

Then I said, in a tone of immense will and pleasure,
 " Let orchestras rise to some exquisite measure ;
 And let there be lights and be odours ; and let
 The lovers of music serenely be set ;
 And then, with their singers in lily-white stoles,
 And themselves clad in rose-colour, fetch me the souls
 Of all the composers accounted divinest,
 And, with their own hands, let them play me their finest."

Then, lo! was performed my immense will and pleasure,
 And orchestras rose to an exquisite measure ;
 And lights were about me and odours ; and set
 Were the lovers of music, all wondrously met ;
 And then, with their singers in lily-white stoles,
 And themselves clad in rose-colour, in came the souls
 Of all the composers accounted divinest,
 And, with their own hands, did they play me their finest.

Oh! truly was Italy heard then, and Germany,
 Melody's heart, and the rich brain of harmony ;
 Pure Paisiello, whose airs are as new
 Though we know them by heart, as May-blossoms and dew ;
 And nature's twin son, Pergolesi ; and Bach,
 Old father of fugues, with his endless fine talk ;
 And Gluck, who saw gods ; and the learned sweet feeling
 Of Haydn ; and Winter, whose sorrows are healing ;
 And gentlest Corelli, whose bowing seems made
 For a hand with a jewel ; and Handel, arrayed
 In Olympian thunders, vast lord of the spheres,
 Yet pious himself, with his blindness in tears,
 A lover withal, and a conqueror, whose marches
 Bring demi-gods under victorious arches ;
 Then Arne, sweet and tricksome ; and masterly Purcell,
 Lay-clerical soul ; and Mozart universal,
 But chiefly with exquisite gallantries found,
 With a grove in the distance of holier sound ;
 Nor forgot was thy dulcitude, loving Sacchini ;
 Nor love, young and dying, in shape of Bellini ;
 Nor Weber, nor Himmel, nor Mirth's sweetest name,
 Cimarosa ; much less the great organ-voiced fame
 Of Marcello, that hushed the Venetian sea ;
 And strange was the shout, when it wept, hearing thee,
 Thou soul full of grace as of grief, my heart-cloven,
 My poor, my most rich, my all-feeling Beethoven.
 O'er all, like a passion, great Pasta was heard,
 As high as her heart, that truth-uttering bird ;
 And Banti was there ; and Grassini, that goddess !
 Dark, deep-toned, large, lovely, with glorious boddice ;
 And Mara ; and Malibran, stung to the tips
 Of her fingers with pleasure ; and rich Fodor's lips
 And, manly in face as in tone, Angrisani ;
 And Naldi, thy whim ; and thy grace, Tramezzani ;
 And was it a voice ? — or what was it ? — say —

That, like a fallen angel beginning to pray,
Was the soul of all tears and celestial despair !
Paganini it was, 'twixt his dark-flowing hair.

So now we had instrument, now we had song —
Now chorus, a thousand-voiced one-hearted throng ;
Now pauses that pampered resumption, and now —
But who shall describe what was played us, or how ?
'Twas wonder, 'twas transport, humility, pride ;
'Twas the heart of the mistress that sat by one's side ;
'Twas the graces invisible, moulding the air
Into all that is shapely, and lovely, and fair,
And running our fancies their tenderest rounds
Of endearments and luxuries, turned into sounds ;
'Twas argument even, the logic of tones ;
'Twas memory, 'twas wishes, 'twas laughters, 'twas moans ;
'Twas pity and love, in pure impulse obeyed ;
'Twas the breath of the stuff of which passion is made.

And these are the concerts I have at my will ;
Then dismiss them, and patiently think of your "bill." —
(*Aside*) Yet Lablache, after all, makes me long to go, still.

Leigh Hunt died, at the age of seventy-five, in 1859, — the last survivor, although the earliest born, of the four poets, with the other three of whom he had been so intimately associated, and the living memory of whom he thus carried far into another time, indeed across an entire succeeding generation.¹ To the last, even in outward form, he forcibly recalled Shelley's fine picture of him in his *Elegy* on Keats, written nearly forty years before : —

" What softer voice is hushed over the dead ?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown ?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan ?
If it be he, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one ;
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice."

¹ Hunt — Byron — Shelley — Keats, born in that order (in 1784, 1788, 1793, and 1796), died in exactly the reverse, and also at ages running in a series contrary throughout to that of their births ; — Keats, at 25, in 1821, — Shelley, at 29, in 1822, — Byron, at 36, in 1824, — Hunt, at 75, in 1859.

OTHER POETICAL WRITERS OF THE EARLIER PART OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

THE names that have been mentioned are the chief of those belonging, wholly or principally, to the earlier part of the present century, or to that remarkable literary era which may be regarded as having expired with the reign of the last of the Georges. Many others, however, also brighten this age of our poetical literature, which cannot be here enlarged upon, and some of which, indeed, have been already noticed: — Samuel Rogers, whose first publication, as has been recorded in a preceding page, appeared so long ago as the year 1786, and who died, at the age of ninety-two, only in 1855, after having produced his *Pleasures of Memory* in 1792, his *Human Life* in 1819, and his *Italy* in 1822, all characterized by a spirit of pensive tenderness, as well as by high finish; the Reverend W. Lisle Bowles, who, born in 1762, lived till 1850, and whose *Fourteen Sonnets*, his first publication, which appeared in 1793, were regarded alike by Coleridge, by Wordsworth, and by Southey, as having not only materially contributed to mould their own poetry, but heralded or even kindled the dawn of a new poetic day; Charles Lamb (b. 1775, d. 1835), whose earliest verses were published in 1797, at Bristol, along with those of their common friend Charles Lloyd, in the second edition of Coleridge's *Poems* (of which the first edition had appeared at London in the preceding year); the Rev. William Sotheby, whose translation of Wieland's *Oberon*, which appeared in 1798, was followed by a long succession of other works, both in rhyme and in blank verse, including translations of Virgil's *Georgics* and of the two great Homeric epics, and all distinguished by the combination of a flowing ease with a scholarly correctness, coming down to his death, at the age of seventy-seven, in 1833; Henry Kirke White, who, after putting forth some blossoms of fancy of considerable promise, was cut off, in his twenty-first year, in 1806; James Montgomery (b. 1771, d. 1854), whose *Wanderer of Switzerland* (1806), *West Indies* (1810), *World before the Flood* (1813), *Greenland* (1819), and *Pelican Island* (1827), with many minor pieces, always satisfying us by their quiet thoughtfulness and simple grace, made him with a large class of readers the most acceptable poetical writer of his time; Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet, whose first volume

of verse, not of a striking character, but yet not wanting either in cordiality of feeling or grace of manner, appeared in 1820; James Grahame (b. 1765, d. 1811), best known as the author of *The Sabbath*, originally published without his name in 1804, but whose *Birds of Scotland*, which followed in 1806, and his *British Georgics* in 1809, have also been highly praised for the truth and vividness, though in a style simple sometimes to homeliness, of their pictures of natural objects and scenery, — among others, James Montgomery going so far as to declare that, although his readers may be few, yet “whoever does read him will probably be oftener surprised into admiration than in the perusal of any one of his contemporaries”; John Leyden, whose philological as well as poetic ardor, and sudden extinction in the midst of his career (at Batavia, in 1811, at the age of thirty-six), have been sung by Scott: —

Quenched is that lamp of varied lore,
That loved the light of song to pour;
A distant and a deadly shore
Has Leyden's cold remains: —

the Rev. Charles Wolfe (b. 1791, d. 1823), an Irishman, the writer of the famous lines on the death of Sir John Moore, first given to the world in 1817; Reginald Heber, whose fine prize-poem of *Palestine* was produced in 1803, and who held the bishopric of Calcutta from 1823 till his lamented death, at the age of forty-three, in 1826; the Hon. and Rev. William Herbert (b. 1778, d. 1847), whose elegant and spirited *Translations from the Norse* appeared in 1806, and his original poems of *Helga* and *Attila* in 1815 and 1838; Robert Bloomfield (b. 1766, d. 1823), the self-taught author of *The Farmer's Boy*, first published in 1798, and of other pieces full of truth to nature and also not without something of conventional cultivation; John Clare, the Northamptonshire peasant, born in 1793, whose first volume of *Poems descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* appeared in 1820, and his *Village Minstrel and other Poems*, in two volumes, the year following, showing less indebtedness to books and more originality than Bloomfield; Hector M'Neill (b. 1746, d. 1818), who wrote only in his native Scottish dialect, but acquired great popularity among his countrymen, more especially by his *Will and Jean*, first published in 1795; Robert Tannahill (b. 1774, d. 1810), some of whose Scottish songs have almost the sweetness and pathos, though

none of the fire, of those of Burns; James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, as he was commonly called (b. 1772, d. 1835), who first made himself known by a volume of poems published in 1801 from which date his irregular but affluent and vigorous genius continued to pour forth both verse and prose at an accelerating rate as long as he lived, and whose *Queen's Wake*, produced in 1813, would, if he had never written anything else, have placed him perhaps at the head of the second or merely imitative class of the uneducated poets of Scotland — far, indeed, below Burns, but above Allan Ramsay; his countryman Allan Cunningham (b. 1784, d. 1842), the author of many clever songs, also, however, all of an imitative character, as well as an expert and voluminous writer in prose; William Tennant (b. 1774, d. 1848), another Scotsman, whose bright and airy *Anster Fair* appeared in 1812; John Wilson (b. 1788, d. 1855), the renowned Christopher North of *Blackwood's Magazine*, whose potent pen was wielded chiefly in prose eloquence, of every variety, from the most reckless comedy and satire to the loftiest heights of description, criticism, and declamatory denunciation, but who first became known by his two poems of *The Isle of Palms*, published in 1812, and *The City of the Plague*, in 1816, both rich in passages of tender and dreamy beauty; the late Lord Strangford, the translator of the minor poems of Camoens (1803); the late Lord Thurlow, the author of various volumes of verse, the earliest of which appeared in 1812; Matthew Gregory Lewis (b. 1773, d. 1818), whose *Tales of Wonder* appeared in 1801, and whose skill in the management of the supernatural and showy versification are still familiar to all readers in his tale of *Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogene*; the Right Hon. John Hookham Frere, notable for his metrical version in the English of the fourteenth century, first published in Ellis's *Specimens of the Poets*, of the Anglo-Saxon *Ode on Athelstan's Victory at Brunanburg*, executed while he was a schoolboy at Eton, — for a translation of almost unequalled merit from one of the old Spanish poetical romances, published (without his name) in Southey's *Chronicle of the Cid* (1808), — and for his *Prospectus and Specimen of an intended National Work*, by William and Robert Whistlecraft, &c., published (also anonymously) in 1817, which set the example of the new manner soon after adopted by Byron in his *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, — to say nothing of his translations from Aristophanes and other Greek poets, brought out at

Malta, where he had long been resident, and where he died, at the age of seventy-seven, in 1846; Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges, the first of whose many publications, both in verse and prose, a volume of *Sonnets and other Poems*, appeared in 1785, and who survived till 1837, cultivating literature throughout his long life always with enthusiasm, if at times with a somewhat eccentric and fantastic taste; Sir Martin Archer Shee, whose clever *Rhymes on Art* were first published soon after the commencement of the century; the brothers James and Horace Smith, the joint authors of the celebrated *Rejected Addresses* (1812), the happiest of modern *jeux d'esprit*; Thomas Pringle (b. 1788, d. 1834), whose verses, "Afar in the desert I love to ride," descriptive of the life he had known in South Africa, and throbbing with the patriotic longings of the exile, were admired by Coleridge; the Rev. George Croly (b. in Dublin, 1780, d. in London, 1860), whose first poetical work, *Paris* in 1815, was followed by *The Angel of the World*, *Gems from the Antique*, and others, and whose verse, more especially in his shorter pieces, sometimes surprises us with sudden felicities, although in general, perhaps, in everything at least except the sound, rather too like prose, as his prose certainly too much resembles verse; Savage Landor, Milman, and Procter ("Barry Cornwall"), who all still live and continue to write; Anster, whose most English of all our *Fausts*, published so long ago as 1835, will yet, it is to be hoped, be completed by an equally brilliant reproduction of the Second Part of the great German poem; Mrs. Barbauld (Anna Letitia Aikin, b. 1743, d. 1825), one of the most popular writers of her day, and the author of several volumes of careful and not inelegant verse, the first of which (her earliest publication) appeared in 1773; Mrs. Hunter (Anne Home, b. 1742, d. 1821), the wife of the great anatomist, whose widow, however, she had been for many years when she published in 1806 the first collection of her poems, which are radiant with no common lyrical beauty, and several of which still retain their hold of the national ear and heart; her husband's niece, Joanna Baillie (b. 1762, d. 1851), all whose poetry is classical and graceful, but who is best known for her series of dramas on the Passions, the first volume of which was published in 1798, and among which the tragedies are probably, with all their deficiencies, the best ever written by a woman; Mrs. Tighe (Mary Blackford), an Irish lady, the subject of Moore's beautiful song, "I saw thy form in youthful

prime" (she died, after years of suffering, in 1810, at the age of thirty-seven), and whose poem of Psyche, written in the Spenserian stanza, displays everywhere an imagination, immature, indeed, and wanting in vigor, but yet both rich and delicate, such as might have shone forth in Spenser himself if he had been a woman, or, as compared to that which we have in the Fairy Queen, something like what moonlight is to sunshine; Mrs. Grant (Anne Macvicar, b. 1754, d. 1838), best known through her Letters from the Mountains, and other prose works, but who began her literary career by the publication in 1803 of a volume of verse (Original Poems, with some Translations from the Gaelic); Mrs. Opie (Amelia Alderson), wife of Opie the painter, whom, however, she survived for nearly half a century, having died only in 1853, at the age of eighty-five, to be remembered chiefly, no doubt, for her exquisite Father and Daughter, and other prose works of fiction, but the authoress also of some very sweet and tender poetry; Mary Russell Mitford (b. 1789, d. 1855), whose popularity also in her latter days rested almost entirely on her prose writings, but who first attracted notice by several publications in verse, a volume of Poems in 1810, her Christina the Maid of the South Seas, in 1811, her Watlington Hill in 1812, and her Poems on the Female Character the same year, besides her three tragedies of Julian (1823), Foscari (1826), and Rienzi (1828); Mrs. Hemans (Feliccia Dorothea Browne), who, on the contrary, confined herself to verse, and was unquestionably the most of a born as well as of a trained poet of all the female writers of this period, and who scarcely ever allowed her pen to rest from the production of her first volume when she was only fifteen till her premature death in 1835, at the age of forty-one; and Letitia Elizabeth Landon (poor L. E. L.), who, after earning wide public favor by an untiring flow of occasional poetry, often full both of heart and of fancy, besides a long poem entitled The Improvisatrice, published in 1824, followed her in 1838 at that of thirty-six; to carry our enumeration no further. Some of those in this long list, indeed, may merit no higher designation than that of lively and agreeable versifiers; but others, even of this throng of minor voices, will be allowed to have received no stinted measure of the divine gift of song.

On the whole, this space of somewhat less than half a century, dating from the first appearance of Cowper and Burns, must be

pronounced to be the most memorable period in the history of our poetical literature after the age of Spenser and Shakspeare. And if, in comparing the produce of the two great revivals, the one happening at the transition from the sixteenth century into the seventeenth, the other at that from the eighteenth into the nineteenth, we find something more of freshness, freedom, raciness, and true vigor, warmth, and nature, in our earlier than in our recent poetry, it is not to be denied, on the other hand, that in some respects the latter may claim a preference over the former. It is much less debased by the intermixture of dross or alloy with its fine gold — much less disfigured by occasional pedantry and affectation — much more correct and free from flaws and incongruities of all kinds. In whatever regards form, indeed, our more modern poetry must be admitted, taken in its general character, to be the more perfect; and that notwithstanding many passages to be found in the greatest of our elder poets which in mere writing have perhaps never since been equalled, nor are likely ever to be excelled; and notwithstanding also something of greater boldness with which their position enabled them to handle the language, thereby attaining sometimes a force and expressiveness not so much within the reach of their successors in our own day. The literary cultivation of the language throughout two additional centuries, and the stricter discipline under which it has been reduced, may have brought loss or inconvenience in one direction, as well as gain in another; but the gain certainly preponderates. Even in the matter of versification, the lessons of Milton, of Dryden, and of Pope have no doubt been upon the whole instructive and beneficial; whatever of misdirection any of them may have given for a time to the form of our poetry passed away with his contemporaries and immediate followers, and now little or nothing but the good remains — the example of the superior care and uniform finish, and also something of sweetest and deepest music, as well as much of spirit and brilliancy, that were unknown to our earlier poets. In variety and freedom, as well as in beauty, majesty, and richness of versification, some of our latest writers have hardly been excelled by any of their predecessors; and the versification of the generality of our modern poets is greatly superior to that of the common run of those of the age of Elizabeth and James.

One remarkable distinction between the Elizabethan and the recent era is, that of the poetical produce of the latter a much

more inconsiderable portion ran into the dramatic form. Coleridge, indeed, translated Wallenstein, and wrote his tragedies of Zapolya and Remorse: Scott (but not till after all his other works in verse) produced what he called his "dramatic sketch" of Hali-don Hill, and his three-act plays of The Doom of Devorgoil and The Ayrshire Tragedy, in all of which attempts he seemed to be deserted both by his power of dialogue and his power of poetry: Byron, towards the close of his career, gave new proof of the wonderful versatility of his genius by his Marino Faliero, his Two Foscari, his Sardanapalus, and his Werner, besides his Manfred, and his mystery of Cain, in another style: and Shelley, in 1819, gave to the world perhaps the greatest of modern English tragedies in his Cenci. This, we believe, was nearly the sum total of the dramatic poetry produced by the more eminent poetical writers of the first quarter of the present century. The imitation of the old Elizabethan drama, of which we have since had so much, only began to become a rage after the day which these great names had illustrated began to decline. Joanna Baillie, indeed, as we have seen, had published the first volume of her Plays on the Passions so long ago as in 1798; and Lamb's tragedy of John Woodvil — which the Edinburgh Reviewers profanely said might "be fairly considered as supplying the first of those lost links which connect the improvements of Æschylus with the commencement of the art" — appeared the same year; but it attracted little notice at the time, though both by this production, and much more by his Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, first published in 1808, Lamb had a principal share in reviving the general study and love of our early drama. Something probably was also done to spread the fashion of that sort of reading by the fictitious quotations from old plays which headed the chapters of several of the Waverley novels. But, perhaps, if we except Miss Baillie's plays, which came rather too early, the first dramatic work studiously composed in imitation of the language of the Elizabethan drama which, meeting the rising taste, excited general attention, was Mr. Mitman's tragedy of Fazio, which appeared in 1815, and was followed by his Anne Boleyn, and several others in the same style.

PROSE LITERATURE.

AMONG the most distinguished ornaments of the prose literature of this recent era were some of the chief poetical writers of the time. Southey and Scott were two of the most voluminous prose writers of their day, or of any day; Coleridge also wrote much more prose than verse; both Campbell and Moore are considerable authors in prose; there are several prose pieces among the published works of Byron, of Shelley, and of Wordsworth; both Leigh Hunt and Wilson perhaps acquired more of their fame, and have given more wide-spread delight, as prose writers than as poets; Charles Lamb's prose writings, his golden *Essays of Elia*, and various critical papers, abounding in original views and the deepest truth and beauty, have made his verse be nearly forgotten. Among the other most conspicuous prose writers of the period we have been reviewing may be mentioned, in general literature and speculation, Sidney Smith, Hazlitt, Jeffrey, Playfair, Stewart, Alison, Thomas Brown; in political disquisition, Erskine, Cobbett, Mackintosh, Bentham, Brougham (alone, of so many, still preserved to us, with his laurels won in every field of intellectual contest, both mentally and physically one of the most *vital* of the sons of men); in theological eloquence, Horsley, Wilberforce, Foster, Hall, Irving, Chalmers; in history, Fox, Mitford, Lingard, James Mill, Hallam, Turner; in fictitious narrative, Miss Edgeworth, Mrs. Opie, Miss Owenson (*Lady Morgan*), Mrs. Brunton, Miss Austen, Madame d'Arblay (*Miss Burney*), Godwin, Maturin. The most remarkable prose works that were produced were Scott's novels, the first of which, *Waverley*,¹ appeared in 1814. A powerful influence upon literature was also exerted from the first by the *Edinburgh Review*, begun in 1802; the *Quarterly Review*, begun in 1809; and *Blackwood's Magazine*, established in 1817.

¹ With the second title of *'Tis Sixty Years Since*, the work professing (in the Introductory Chapter) to have been written, as it really was in part, nine years before.

PROGRESS OF SCIENCE.

A FEW of the most memorable facts connected with the progress of scientific discovery in England, during this period, may be very briefly noted. In astronomy Herschel continued to pursue his observations, commenced a short time before 1781, in which year he discovered the planet Uranus; in 1802, appeared in the Philosophical Transactions his catalogue of 500 new nebulae and nebulous stars; in 1803 his announcement of the motions of double stars around each other; and a long succession of other important papers, illustrative of the construction of the heavens, followed down to within a few years of his death, at the age of eighty-four, in 1822. In chemistry, Davy, who had published his account of the effects produced by the respiration of nitrous oxide (the laughing-gas) in 1800, in 1807 extracted metallic bases from the fixed alkalis, in 1808 demonstrated the similar decomposability of the alkaline earths, in 1811 detected the true nature of chloride (oxymuriatic acid), and in 1815 invented his safety lamp; in 1804 Leslie published his Experimental Enquiry into the Nature and Properties of Heat; in 1808 the Atomic Theory was announced by Dalton; and in 1814 its development and illustration were completed by Wollaston, to whom both chemical science and optics are also indebted for various other valuable services.

THE VICTORIAN AGE.

It sometimes happens that a new spirit, not in one thing but throughout almost the entire realm of opinion, so suddenly awakens, or at any rate reveals itself, in a country, that we might almost be tempted to suppose the population to have been changed to a man, and that the old Homeric similitude had been literally realized: —

Man's generations come and go as come and go the leaves :
This year's of life, wind-strewn on ground, the winter's cold bereaves ;
But spring brings forth the green again to crown another year ;
And so men too alternately grow up and disappear.

The effect is nearly the same as if this were indeed the way in which one generation is succeeded and displaced by another. The lead, at least, which is everything, has passed into new hands. Ideas of all kinds which had hitherto been quiescent or at a discount have all at once risen into the ascendant. Those, on the other hand, which had been wont to hold sway have fallen into discredit. The old traditions have lost their sacredness, and, if they still reign, no longer govern, or at any rate no longer govern alone, sitting enthroned in unquestioned supremacy. The river of thought has escaped from the plain, in which it had long flowed on with all the freedom that it desired or thought of, with all that it seemed to itself to need, and has gone impatiently in quest of other courses, though it should be to dash itself either over a precipice or against a mountain.

It is true that the passing away of what is old and the substitution of something else is a process that is continually going on in human affairs. Change is incessantly at work even in the quietest times. But the change which sometimes takes place is like the rush of a mass of pent-up water when it has burst its barrier. No doubt, however, in all such cases the force which seems so suddenly to have aroused itself from slumber had been long preparing and gathering, and it is the opposition it has met with, the restraint

under which it has for a time been kept down, that has made it at last so sweeping and irresistible.

Such a general breaking up of old ways of thinking and feeling very notably marked the completion of about the first third of the present century in these countries, if we should not say throughout a great part of Europe. The national change that is always best defined, and most conspicuous and indisputable, is a change in the government by the substitution whether of a new dynasty or even of only a new individual sovereign; and for this reason whatever other changes may happen about the same time are apt to be regarded as due to the action of that *primum mobile*. Nor may such a view of the matter be always wholly devoid of truth. Sometimes a change of the government or of the ruler of a country is only, like other visible changes, a sign or a consequence of the activity of forces at work beneath the surface of things, in the bosom of society and in the minds and hearts of men. It was so in France both when the elder branch of the Bourbons was expelled in 1830 and when the younger branch was expelled in 1848. But in England the termination of the reign of George IV., exactly a month before that of Charles X., was unconnected with anything in the preceding social condition of the country. And that change was probably not without considerable effect in aiding or facilitating the political and other social changes that followed it. At the least it was the removal of an impediment. It coöperated with the dynastic revolution that had taken place in France to put an end to the long domination of Toryism in England, and to bring about parliamentary reform, with all that has thence ensued. All these things, no doubt, would have happened at any rate; but probably not when they did happen, not so soon, if it had not been for the change in the occupant of the throne. It is in this way that the exit of the last of the Georges, though not, it may be, properly speaking, the originating cause of much, is yet a great epoch, or marking event, both in our political history and in our social history generally.

Whatever beliefs and opinions become prevalent among a people will, of course, color the national literature during the time of their predominance. Literature is the artistic expression in words of whatever men think and feel. It is the product of that. It is elaborated out of that, as honey is elaborated out of vegetable matter by the transmuting skill of the bee. The thought and feeling,

indeed, may be that only of the particular writer. And the more original the genius of a writer, the greater will be the extent to which this is the case. He will mould his age more than he is moulded by it. He will give more than he receives. For all literature is more or less both an effect and a cause, both a product and a power. It both follows and leads. It takes an impulse from its age, and it also gives an impulse to its age. This latter is the function in the discharge of which exclusively all that any writer has of positive force, all of his mental faculty that is really his own or properly a portion of himself, is employed. We have, indeed, been lately told that it is a mistake to regard literature as having any share in promoting the progress of civilization. "It is evident," it seems, "that if a people were left entirely to themselves [whatever may be the meaning of that qualification], their religion, their literature, and their government would be, not the causes of their civilization, but the effects of it."¹ It might as well be denied that a lighted candle could ever enable us to see any better than would the simple wax or tallow, or whatever it may be, of which the candle was composed. But, although literature makes really the chief nutriment and life of civilization, it is a condition of all literature that would aspire to be immediately influential that it should sympathize to a considerable degree with the reigning spirit of its age. Indeed, whatever may be its character in other respects, literature cannot but always take something from the condition of society in which it has been produced, and out of which it has sprung, any more than a river, be it ever so self-willed and impetuous, can take any other course in the main than the one marked out for it by the natural disposition of the ground, or can altogether avoid reflecting the banks between which it flows.

But, besides the changes in its moral spirit to which it is thus liable in common with all the other products or expressions of the national mind, the literature of every country or language is subject also to transformations and revolutions of altogether another kind under the operation of principles or tendencies inherent in and peculiar to its own nature.

There is, for one thing, such change as takes place in the mere fashion of expression, in the words and in the senses in which they are used. This is merely a thing of the same kind with any change which might be introduced in the composition of the

¹ Buckle's *History of Civilization*, i. 232.

bronze employed in statuary, or of the stone or other material employed in architecture. It belongs properly to the history not of the national literature but of the national language. Such changes are continually occurring; and, like everything appertaining to language, for the most part without being traceable to any deliberate contrivance or direct human agency. For almost as little can be done here by any effort of man as in directing the course of the wind, which "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." It is a natural law not of our making, or a mystery into which we cannot penetrate. Of two words which have been equally long in the language and equally in familiar use, one shall continue to be employed by everybody, and the other shall become obsolete; the one shall live, the other shall die; and in many or in most cases their respective fates could no more have been predicted than it could usually be predicted which was to die first of two men of equal age and both apparently in good health. Why a particular phrase or vocable has dropped out of the language, or at least out of use, cannot even be always satisfactorily explained after the event. But when a word has thus fairly ceased, from whatever cause, to perform its proper functions, it would seem to be nearly as impossible to recall it to a really living or working condition as it is to raise the dead in any other case. Pope, indeed, has spoken of commanding "old words that long have slept to wake"; and, of course, any writer or speaker may employ antiquated terms to any extent that he pleases. But they may remain still as much asleep as ever for all that. They may be patronized by his disciples, imitators, and admirers. Yet they may have no power of taking root anew in the soil of the language. Perhaps, indeed, nothing else, any more than a word, that has once thus lost its hold of life can ever be really revived and rejuvenated. Let it be but such a thing as a fashion in dress; even in that what is called a restoration of the old is usually in fact a novelty in the main. Certain it is, at any rate, that very little of genuine revivification has ever been accomplished in human speech; you will sooner introduce into a language a hundred or a thousand new words than you will reëstablish in the general acceptance ten old ones that have been for some time thrown aside. It would almost seem as if words too, as well as we who use them, were doomed to wither and decay with age, and all at one date or

another to lie down and fall asleep in death. It may be observed, also, that, besides the many words which have actually perished and been forgotten, there is in every language a very large body of words which are either no longer used at all, or not in the senses which they formerly had, although they yet continue to be generally understood, and to be familiar to all persons of any reading or cultivation. Our own literature of two or three centuries back, much of which is still in the hands of everybody, presents such words in great numbers; above all, our English Bible is full of them. I have elsewhere remarked that "they are the veterans or *emeriti* of the language, whose regular term of active service is over, but who still exist as a reserve force or retired list, which may always be called out on special occasions."¹ They might rather, perhaps, be imaged as the spirits of words departed, which sometimes, when solemnly invoked, revisit the scene in the affairs of which they once bore an active part.

Even so much of style or manner as is in the main, or in its general character, what a writer finds made to his hand rather than what he makes for himself, not his own invention but the product and property of his age, must deeply mark and color the literature of a country throughout its whole course, and would alone always suffice to discriminate any one stage of it more or less clearly from every other. Probably in any language which has been long subjected to literary cultivation the style of every successive half-century could thus be detected by shades of difference altogether distinct from anything impressed by the peculiar genius of each writer. This is no more than is done in other departments of artistic production. An architectural structure belonging to the early part of the sixteenth century could hardly, it is presumed, be assigned by any competent judge to the latter part of the century. A portrait by Holbein is unmistakably a work of the sixteenth century, and one by Vandyck as unmistakably a work of the seventeenth. Neither artist would or could have painted exactly as he did if he had lived in the time of the other, or in any age except that in which he actually appeared.

The number of old words and old senses of words which have dropped out of the English language since so recent a date as the latter part of the last century is probably much more considerable than is commonly supposed. Nobody now calls civilization *civility*;

¹ English of Shakespeare, 2d edit. p. 196.

but that is always Johnson's word; in none of his own editions even of his Dictionary does the other appear in the sense which it has now acquired, and for which it has come to be our only expression. We have lost or discarded, and scarcely found an equivalent for, a term employed by Burke in writing to Dr. Lawrence in 1797 (the year in which he died), when, speaking of a paper drawn up by him some years before only for his most intimate friends which had been surreptitiously printed, he says that there would have been many *temperaments* of its roughness and sharpness if he had designed it for general perusal. A year or two before we have Godwin, in his *Caleb Williams*, still repeatedly using the word *ingenuity* for what we now call ingenuousness, just as everybody did in the preceding century: — "Mr. Falkland, with great ingenuity and candor of mind";¹ "while I was won over by your seeming ingenuity";² though elsewhere we have also the word bearing its modern sense: — "It is not in the power of ingenuity to subvert the distinctions of right and wrong."³ The number of new words, again, and of new applications of words, that have been introduced since the date in question, is undoubtedly very great; and the recent adoption of many of them is probably in general quite unsuspected. Scientific terms, every one is aware, have been fabricated by hundreds and thousands; but the words and modes of expression referred to belong to the flesh and blood of the language, and are not fabricated, but rather grow, or are born, like ourselves. It might almost be said that among words too there is something like a succession of generations. Or the airy population is recruited by supplies drawn from other languages or other lands. The late Rev. Jonathan Boucher, the learned author of the *Glossary*, thus writes in the year 1800 in the Introduction to that work: — "The United States of America, too proud, as it would seem, to acknowledge themselves indebted to this country for their existence, their power, or their language, denying and revolting against the two first, are also making all the haste they conveniently can to rid themselves of the last. With little or no dialect, they are peculiarly addicted to innovations; but such as need not excite our envy, whether we regard their elegance or their propriety."⁴ And then he proceeds in a note to justify, as he says, what he has thus asserted, and to

¹ Vol. i. p. 48 (2d edit. 1796).

² Vol. ii. p. 155.

³ Vol. ii. p. 188, and in other places.

⁴ Page xxiii.

show by a few examples "collected from some of their recent publications," "how very poorly" the Americans "are qualified to set up for reformers of language." What are the Americanisms, as he calls them, which he produces? They are, the verb *to advocate*, the adjective or participle *démoralizing* and the substantive *démoralization*, the verb *to progress*, the substantive *grades*, the verb *to memorialize*, the use of *alone* for only (as in "the alone minister"), the adjectives *inimical* and *influential* (applied in a moral sense), the substantive *a mean*. These forms are now nearly all in universal currency among us; and with the exception of two, or at most three, have the air of having been as long in the language and of being as much its rightful property, or of as legitimate origin, as half the vocables composing it. Yet here we have them denounced at the beginning of the present century as having been all then newly imported, if indeed they had been yet actually imported, from a foreign soil where they had sprung up under the fostering heat of ignorance, presumption, and barbarism.¹

There can be little doubt that some change has taken place in the current vocabulary of the language even within the last thirty or forty years; such a movement is what is always going on; so that the natural style of the year 1860 will not be quite the same with that of the year 1830 or 1820. The difference, though it may not be perceptible to us, may be clearly discerned by the critics of a future generation from their more advantageous point of view. Still, as has been said, this is a change that does not affect the literature of the country in anything really essential to it.

It is the same with whatever change may have taken place in the general spirit of society. The religious element, the clerical element, the feminine element, the juvenile element, the zoölogical element, and the physical-science element in all its modifica-

¹ The anti-republican zeal, however, of the reverend lexicographer would seem to have carried him too far in regard to some of these words. The verb *to advocate* is used by Milton; *to progress* (but with the accent on the first syllable, and perhaps only in his customary way of making a verb of any substantive) is used by Shakspeare ("This honourable dew That leisurely doth progress on thy cheeks," in *King John*, v. 2); of *inimical*, Walker says in his *Pronouncing Dictionary*, first published in 1772, "This word sprung up in the House of Commons about ten years ago, and has since been so much in use as to make us wonder how we did so long without it"; in his preface, too, he speaks of it as having been evidently omitted in Johnson's *Dictionary* "merely by mistake," along with *predilection*, *respectable*, *descriptive*, *sulky*, *interference*, and many others; and *a mean* belongs to a comparatively early stage of the language.

tions, have each acquired a vast increase of influence within the last thirty years. "The proper study of mankind is man": "On earth, there is nothing great but man; in man, there is nothing great but mind": — these accepted faiths of the last age have had their dominion seriously weakened in the present by the passion that has seized so many persons for the study rather of boys and girls, of the lower animals, and of dead matter. But, although all this, of course, makes itself felt, like everything else that agitates our humanity, in the moral tone and temper of our literature, with its artistic character such changes of opinion and sentiment have nothing to do. We do not judge of the quality of a mirror by the objects which it reflects, but by the manner in which it reflects them.

1. The most conspicuous of the substantial distinctions between the literature of the present day and that of the first quarter or third of the century may be described as consisting in the different relative positions at the two dates of Prose and Verse. In the Georgian era verse was in the ascendant; in the Victorian era the supremacy has passed to prose. It is not easy for any one who has grown up in the latter to estimate aright the universal excitement which used to be produced in the former by a new poem of Scott's, or Byron's, or Moore's, or Campbell's, or Crabbe's, or the equally fervid interest that was taken throughout a more limited circle in one by Wordsworth, or Southey, or Shelley. There may have been a power in the spirit of poetry which that of prose would in vain aspire to. Probably all the verse ages would be found to have been of higher glow than the prose ones. The age in question, at any rate, will hardly be denied by any one who remembers it to have been in these countries, perhaps from the mightier character of the events and circumstances in the midst of which we were then placed, an age in which the national heart beat more strongly than it does at present in regard to other things as well as this. Its reception of the great poems that succeeded one another so rapidly from the first appearance of Scott till the death of Byron was like its reception of the succession of great victories that, ever thickening, and almost unbroken by a single defeat, filled up the greater part of the ten years from Trafalgar to Waterloo — from the last fight of Nelson to the last of Wellington. No such huzzas, making the welkin ring with the one voice of a whole people, and ascending alike from every city and town

and humblest village in the land, have been heard since then. An ingenious writer in one of the Magazines a few months ago — and not at all in jest but quite seriously — set himself to prove that the common notion of our having been at peace for forty years after 1815 was all a delusion; and he found no difficulty in filling some columns with a chronological enumeration of military expeditions and hostile operations of one kind and another in which we had been engaged in the course of that long space of time. But these petty wars were to the great war with Napoleon no more than what the little ordinary ailments from which almost every one occasionally suffers are to an invasion of disease which oppresses the whole system, and is from first to last a struggle between life and death. Such things are of those that are to be weighed, not counted — *haud numeranda, sed ponderanda*. You might as well reckon new farthings against old sovereigns as even Chinese and Crimean wars against that tremendous contest in which, sometimes standing alone against the world in arms, England fought, not for some point of foreign policy, but for her very existence. Victory there was not only glory and triumph, but deliverance from destruction. The difference was as great as between catching a pickpocket at your handkerchief and feeling a knife at your throat.

Of course, there was plenty of prose also written throughout the verse era; but no book in prose that was then produced greatly excited the public mind, or drew any considerable amount of attention, till the Waverley novels began to appear; and even that remarkable series of works did not succeed in at once reducing poetry to the second place, however chief a share it may have had in hastening that result. Of the other prose writing that then went on what was most effective was that of the periodical press, — of the Edinburgh Review and Cobbett's Register, and, at a later date, of Blackwood's Magazine and the London Magazine (the latter with Charles Lamb and De Quincey among its contributors), — much of it owing more or less of its power to its vehement political partisanship.

A descent from poetry to prose is the most familiar of all phenomena in the history of literature. Call it natural decay or degeneracy, or only a relaxation which the spirit of a people requires after having been for a certain time on the wing or on the stretch, it is what a period of more than ordinary poetical productiveness

always ends in. Prose may be said to have originally sprung from poetry. Everywhere the earliest form of composition seems to have been verse. It was only after verse had done its work that prose was attempted in any department of knowledge or speculation. The first laws were in verse; the first philosophy was in verse; the first history of every kind, whether true or invented, was all in verse. The only Roman history, for example, that existed for many ages was contained, according to the commonly accepted theory, in songs and ballads. Not till the original high and soaring national spirit, and the creative and conquering genius which founded the state, had begun to sober down and give way, was writing in prose ever thought of. Then the verse and the music were thrown away or abandoned, and their place taken by prose, as bounding boyhood or visionary youth is transformed into thoughtful manhood, or as the rich and variegated coloring of dawn passes off into the common day-sky. Even the first national histories and chronicles in prose have usually been preceded by others equally or still more elaborate in verse, and the former have sometimes been altogether fabricated out of the latter. In our own country it was only when such writing was left to the clergy that it was otherwise. Our earliest histories and chronicles written after the Conquest for popular reading, whether in English or in French, were all in verse. Such were those of Wace, of Layamon, of Peter de Langtoft, of Robert of Gloucester, and others. Not till we come down to a much later age have we any histories in prose except those written by the clergy for the use of foreigners and the learned. But the case that may be said most nearly to resemble the present is that of the general transformation of the old metrical romance, both French and English, from verse to prose in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. That change, indeed, was brought about not altogether by the decay of the old power of verse, but partly no doubt by the rise and growth of the new power of prose. Yet both in England and in France a decided declension of literature, and of civilization generally, marked the period in which the change took place.

The present age boasts of a greater number of poetical writers than any other in the history of our literature. Some pages might be filled with their names alone. Never were poetical talent and the accomplishment of verse so largely diffused. Nay, more; never before was so much poetry produced of really superior

quality as is produced among us at present. Nor, it may be added of the respectable poetry that is written and published was there ever before so small a portion of only the lowest order of merit. But this is only the natural consequence of the extension of intellectual culture by which the age is distinguished. There is more good poetry written, and less of a very inferior kind, just as the average of every other kind of writing is higher than it ever was before. The same thing is true, indeed, of the ordinary kinds of production in nearly every department of ingenuity and skill, whether mental or manual. Our common pottery is better made than it ever was before, as well as our common poetry; even our chairs and our tables are continually getting to be fabricated with more and more perfection of workmanship.

Of much, perhaps of most, of the poetry that has been published within the last thirty years it would be quite unjust not to admit that it has been far above mediocrity. In other words, it has been really poetry, not merely what called itself such. It has been a true gift of the gods, and a light and joy to men,— as well as more or less satisfactory to the booksellers. It has already made a permanent addition to our literature of large amount and value. And the precious store is continually growing; nor can it be conjectured what heights of song may yet be reached by some one, or two, or three, even of the voices whose earlier music we have already heard.

Nevertheless, it will hardly be disputed that, with all this performance and all this promise, the only really eminent poets that the age can boast of are Tennyson, and Robert Browning, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.¹ If there be another, it is Hood, who, indeed, has produced as little as any of his contemporaries that it is likely after-times will be willing to let die. These three or four names are what this age has to set against those of Scott, and Byron, and Campbell, and Crabbe, and Moore, and Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Southey, and Shelley, and Keats, which adorn the preceding quarter of a century. But even this is a very inadequate statement of the difference. The way in which poetry has for many years past stirred the popular heart has been mostly

¹ While these pages are passing through the press the sad intelligence has been received of the death of the authoress of *Aurora Leigh*, at Casa Guidi, in Florence, where she and her husband had for some years resided, on the morning of Saturday the 29th of June (1861).

only by brief lyrical pieces, some half-dozen, perhaps, of which have, indeed, not only made a great immediate sensation, but wrought themselves into the memory of all persons who read, one or two of them even into that of many who rarely or never open a book — *Songs of the Shirt*, *Locksley Halls*, and others. Only one great poem in the ordinary sense of the expression, Mrs Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, has achieved an extensive popularity. Neither Tennyson's *In Memoriam* nor his *Idyls of the King* can properly be reckoned as more, either of them, than a collection of so many short poems relating to the same subject. Here then, to be sure, is indeed a sufficiently continuous flow of poetical production. But still there is no growth of a great poetical literature. It is like the succession of wars in which the ingenious political speculator in the magazine has discovered that we have been engaged almost without intermission ever since the year 1815. One distinction, whatever others there may be, of these later wars is, that they have mostly been undistinguished by great battles. No victories of Talavera, of Vittoria, of Leipsic, of Waterloo. The ordinary observation of men, if not history, ignores such wars. To the common understanding, and in common parlance, the time is not a time of war, but a time of peace.

2. The next most remarkable distinction of our present literature is the great preponderance in it of the element of narrative. This character, as we have seen, had at an early stage begun to be assumed by the poetry of the preceding era; and nothing, therefore, could be more natural than that it should show itself strongly in the prose of the present, which has to so large an extent taken the place of that poetry. Accordingly nearly all the writing power that has shown itself among us for some time past of the highest order, — whatever can be said to have given anything of a new eloquence to the language, — has occupied itself chiefly with narrative of one kind or another; Mr. Dickens and Mr. Thackeray (to confine ourselves to writers in prose) with fiction; the late Lord Macaulay and Mr. Carlyle with what is distinctively called history. The only remarkable exception is Mr. Ruskin; even of what the late Thomas de Quincey has left us a considerable portion is in the form of narrative. And then there are the large additions that have been made within the last few years to our classical English historical literature by such works as those of which Mr. Grote's noble *History of Greece* is the greatest.

3. This predominance of the narrative spirit, again, has naturally brought along with it or helped to produce a further effect which makes a third characteristic of our current literature. Perhaps the kind of writing for which the female genius is best adapted is that of narrative — especially of such narrative as does not demand a rigid adherence either to any particular series of facts or to any particular form of composition, but in its entire freedom from all rules and shackles of every description comes nearest of all writing to ordinary conversation. Undoubtedly by far the most perfect representation of real life to be found in literature is the modern novel. Far as it may be from any pretension to be regarded as belonging to the highest department of the artistic in writing, it is yet in its capacities of faithful portraiture almost perfect. It is in this respect what photography is to painting. Its artistic shortcomings contribute to its excellence here. Bound to look to nothing whatever except only truth and vividness of representation, it may make its pictures much more exact reproductions of reality than are or can be either those of the poetical epic or those of the drama, or even those of history itself. At the same time, like photography, it by no means refuses all association with art; it only declines to acknowledge the artistic for its first principle, to be guided in all its movements by a regard to that. It claims to be emancipated from any universal subjection to the artistic, as well as from any such necessary subserviency to truth or matter of fact. And, while thus freer than poetry in one way and than history in another, it holds itself entitled to avail itself whenever it chooses of the prerogatives of either. There is nothing, in short, that the novel may not include, as there is nothing that even a good novel may not dispense with except only that spirit of life breathed into it wanting which a book addressing itself to the imagination wants everything. Moreover, the realm of the novel is the widest in the whole world of artistic literature, and there is no end to the number and diversity of the provinces comprehended in it; so that true narrative and imaginative genius, of whatever kind, is always sure to find somewhere in so ample a range its proper region.

As Maria Edgeworth (born 1767, died 1849) and Jane Austen (born 1775, died 1817) will be generally admitted to have been the first female novelists of the last age, so the late Charlotte Brontë (born 1816, died 1855) and the gifted authoress of Adam

Bede, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Silas Marner*, must be held to stand out with equal distinctness in the present from a much more numerous and a much more brilliant assemblage.

Nor is the novel the only department of our prose literature in which female genius has in our day achieved eminent success. To pass over less remarkable instances, what other pen, wielded by any writer of either sex, has shown itself readier or sharper in true history as well as in fiction, or ranged with more grace as well as versatility over the whole field of social and political speculation, than that of a lady who is well known to have been all the while, and still to be, in such a state of health that this unintermitting mental activity, which would have exhausted a less ardent spirit, would seem to have been what alone has kept her lamp of life from going out?

The effect produced upon the general character of our current literature by this more extended coöperation of the other sex will probably be more discernable to those who shall be able to look back upon it from the distance of a generation or two than it is to ourselves. But some effect there can hardly fail to be. It cannot be the same thing to any department of artistic production whether it is freely entered by both sexes or left to the almost exclusive possession of one of them. It may be, indeed, that the only result of the intermixture in any case will be the growth of two distinct schools, a male one and a female one. So, now that both our prose and our verse of all kinds is the produce of Scotland and Ireland as well as of England, we have yet, perhaps, not one literature combining all that is best in the genius of each of the three countries, but rather three literatures, each having a character of its own or marked by something peculiar to itself.

4. Be this, however, as it may, there is one kind of intermixture or exposure to a new influence, by which it is impossible that a national literature should not be affected. Let there suddenly spring up in a country, under whatever circumstances, a greatly increased study of and familiarity with some foreign literature, and its own can hardly fail to take something of a new form or color. Literature is of all things the most sympathetic, and it is a necessity of its constitution to be always to some extent imitative in one way or another. The literature of every age is in great part an imitation of that of the immediately preceding age. That is all that would usually happen if there were only one national literature in the world.

That is all that did actually happen for many ages in the case of the literature of ancient Greece : whatever it may have been in its origin, it was completely removed throughout the entire time of its growth, and rise to perfection, from any possibility of being acted upon for better or worse by any other literature. Greek civilization was then the only civilization of the European world, even including under that name the western portion of Asia. With the literature of Rome the case was altogether different ; that was almost from its birth to a great extent an imitation of the elder literature of Greece. In other cases, again, one literature has been acted upon by another not constantly or habitually but only at a particular crisis. That is what has happened to our own. At one time, as has been pointed out in a preceding page, we find it more especially reflecting something of that of France, at another something of that of Italy, at another something of that of Germany. It used to be chiefly or almost exclusively in our poetry that this foreign inspiration showed itself. In particular, what of the influence of the modern literature of Germany began to appear in our own in the earlier part of the present century was entirely confined to a certain class or school of our writers in verse. But now, that, in the middle period of the century, prose has, as we have seen, taken the place which in the last age belonged to verse, this latest foreign affection which has seized upon our literature has naturally acquired a much more extended range. Besides this, the peace and our renewed free intercourse with the Continent have no doubt given rise to a greatly more diffused study of and familiarity with foreign literature generally in this country than existed among us at the beginning of the century ; so that for one educated Englishman who read German in the last generation there are probably a hundred in the present. And as for the consequences likely to result from the imitation of foreign models, it is not to be forgotten that it is in this way that every considerable modern European literature has been in great part built up ; they have all borrowed more or less largely from one another ; no one of them, at any rate, not even the German, for all its boast of a pure barbaric origin, has escaped the influence upon either its outward mould or its inner spirit of the great exemplary literature of the old classic world. Nor, probably, can a literature or a language be permanently debased or in any way injured by so much of any foreign element whatever as it will retain ; it will retain nothing

which it did not really want, or which it cannot assimilate and convert into an integral part of itself. Least of all can our own English set up any pretensions to the absolute purism which is sometimes held to be the chief virtue that a language can possess. The English, whatever it may have once been, is now at least no longer a maiden language but a married one. It has been that for these last six centuries, and our literature for all that time has been continually receiving new blood or new life from some other literature. As for the Latin part of the language, which it is common to hear spoken of contemptuously as its foreign element, the alloy of the native gold, it has been largely and freely employed by every one of our great writers, whether in verse or in prose, without a single exception, from Chaucer downwards, but never more largely and freely than by some of the most popular writers of the present day. What would either the prose of Macaulay or the poetry of Tennyson or of Mrs. Browning be without its words of Latin derivation? Then, for Carlyle, with what is popularly regarded as his Germanism both in expression and in thought. There can be no doubt that Mr. Carlyle's is a somewhat peculiar style, and some few of its peculiarities may have been borrowed from the German. But his mind is a strongly original one; and he would certainly have thought and expressed himself in a way of his own if no such thing as the language or literature of Germany had ever been heard of. Let the attempt be made to rewrite one of his more characteristic passages in other words and another manner, and the result will probably surprise the sceptical experimenter. It will not be easy to find anything which could be changed for the better or without a loss of part of the meaning or effect designed to be conveyed. For, unquestionably, a more careful writer, one more attentive to all the minutiae of expression, is not to be found in the language. And this rapid, elliptical, richly allusive style will be found to be, with all its startling qualities, one of the most exactly grammatical in our literature. In this respect it ranks with that of Sterne and that of Rabelais. Nor is there anything about it of that kind of outlandishness which we find, for instance, in Gibbon, whose numerous violations of our English idiom, it is instructive to remark, have, for all the prestige of his genius, wholly failed in compelling the language to receive them, and have been one and all rejected by it as something that it could not digest or absorb. Carlyle's Germanisms

are a thing of a different nature altogether from Gibbon's Gallisms. Nor, if his flashing narrative may sometimes elude or perplex a dull apprehension, is it ever ambiguous or obscure from any affected and unnatural indirectness such as Gibbon habitually indulges in.

5. Not unnaturally accompanying that last mentioned, but yet distinct from it and by no means its necessary associate, is another characteristic discriminating our present literature from that of the immediately preceding age, which may perhaps be regarded as a more doubtful sign ;—its much greater impatience of all old bonds, and the far stronger degree in which it is possessed and animated by the sheer impulse of innovation. Of course, it runs after novelty in the hope or belief that there is to be found in that what is better than anything the ancient ways could lead to. But still what urges it on is in the main a sort of blind passion. It merely feels that "of old things all are over old, of good things none are good enough." The case is like that of a people seized with a passion of emigration. It is true that we cannot dispense with something of this spirit in any department of human affairs. Literature and all other forms of the artistic have also, as well as states and forms of polity, in the natural course of things, their times when much is questioned that had been long universally accepted and submitted to, without which, perhaps, all life would gradually die out from them. "The changes we have seen in our time," to borrow the clear explanation of a recent thoughtful writer, "are natural to human progress ;—excessive addiction for a season to great masters and exemplars, and then a violent revolt against them. A great artist is a man of original genius, who transfuses outward nature with the color of his own thought and feeling, and then so represents what he sees that it shall appear under the same aspects to other eyes. The crowd of imitators look at nature with his eyes, and adopt his models and procedures as if they were natural objects and processes, so that at length, by convention and tradition, his works and methods are authenticated into canonical types and established truths. But, in consequence of frequent and imperfect copying, with the variations of addition and subtraction made by strong individualities, the models come at last to be but faint shadows of the original thoughts, and much less do they represent the original outward nature. Then arises the necessity for the revolution which our

own times have witnessed, and with it the foundation of a school of *naturalisti*.”¹ This is said of the art of painting, and the insurrection which has recently broken out there against both the doctrine and practice of the last three hundred years. But literature is subject to the action of exactly the same process; and, indeed our literature is actually undergoing it at present as well as its sister art. Fortunately, in such regions no real harm can ever be done by any amount of this kind of agitation and commotion, however revolutionary or heretical. It is not as in a commonwealth, where usually so many material interests must be rudely disturbed, so much of shelter and solid support shaken or laid in ruins, by even the most necessary reformation. The only question, the only thing to be considered, here is, whether the new views are true. And that time will very speedily and very conclusively determine. For, again, it is not with art as it is with metaphysics. No artistic doctrine or system can stand, or long continue to find acceptance, which does not, like a tree bearing fruit, prove its soundness by what it produces. And nothing really excellent in art can be permanently discredited by any mere violence of denunciation. On the other hand, it is good for every kind of truth to be now and then put upon its defence. A new doctrine may be true, or a new practice right, in part, without being wholly so. It is quite possible, however, that its attraction may lie all in its novelty, which is a quality that will always command a certain amount of temporary attention and admiration. In some things, indeed, novelty is almost all in all; in some, as for instance in a fashionable article of dress, it is at least absolutely indispensable; the coat or bonnet may have all the other recommendations that could be desired, but without novelty, according to our modern notions, it cannot be fashionable. Still even in such matters there are probably some points, both of convenience and of taste, that have always remained the same, and hardly admit of alteration. In literature mere novelty cannot be admitted to have any legitimate attractiveness whatever. What is ever so old may be just as good as what is ever so new. And, although it is true that, quite distinct as they are, art exists only in virtue of its being a reflection of nature, it does not follow that we always get at the original by turning our backs on the reflection. The school of would-be *naturalisti* may prove to be only a school of *fantastici*. The history of every department of the

¹ Ten Years. By J. A. Symonds, M. D., &c., 1861, p. 38.

artistic is crowded with such ambitious enterprises ending in such ludicrous discomfitures. And in literature at least they have, even when headed by men of true genius, as has often also been the case, more frequently perhaps heralded an age of decadence than one of revival. Not that we are to charge the meteoric outbreak with having brought or made the cold ungenial weather by which it was followed. It was no doubt only an indication. But certainly even so brilliant a writer as Tacitus would be more naturally expected towards the close than at the commencement of a great literary era. The transparency and freshness of Herodotus at the dawn, — the full and flowing eloquence of Livy, the perfection at once of nature and of art, at the height of the day, — the pyrotechnic blaze of Tacitus when the shadows of evening have begun to gather, — that would seem to be the appropriate succession. Then, there are two dangers always attendant upon striking into a new path. First, there is the opportunity constantly presenting itself, of achieving at least a present success by mere trickery. Many things that could not be ventured upon in a style professing to be observant of established models may count securely upon being tolerated and admired as being in the very spirit of one which has thrown off all such restraints. Partly, people are really charmed by the false brilliancy; partly, they are ready to take upon trust from a favorite writer much in which they can hardly perceive either any beauty or sometimes even any meaning. Even a man of true and powerful genius may not always write the better for feeling himself thus left entirely to be a law to himself, or lifted above all law (even such as he might have prescribed to himself) by the huzzas of a mob. Secondly, a manner strongly marked by an original and peculiar character is the kind of manner at once the most unsuited for imitation and the most tempting to imitators. It is the easiest of all manners to imitate, and yet the imitation is almost sure to be in the main an extravagance and an absurdity. It is an absurdity, in fact, and worse, in virtue of the very object which it proposes to itself. A new and peculiar style is as much the property of its inventor, of the writer who has first employed it, as anything else that most belongs to him. It is the expression of his mind, and cannot possibly be also the fit expression of yours. It is, in truth, as has been well said, the man himself. Your assumption of it is a piece of arrant dishonesty. It is a thing that would not be done by any one having the slightest respect either

for himself or for the rights of his neighbor. You might as well go about mimicking another person's voice and manner of speaking, and pretending to be he. This kind of imitation, indeed, can never be, properly speaking, anything but mimicry. And certainly nothing could give us a livelier illustration than some of the specimens we have had of it, in their contrast with what they would emulate, of the difference between a man and an ape.

6. Lastly, if there be not really more of art in our present literature than there is in that of the last age, there is certainly much more of the appearance, we might almost say the ostentation, of it. We have fallen off decidedly in the art of concealing our art. Byron has said of two of his heroines, that the difference between them —

“Was such as is between a flower and gem”;

but the general difference between the most highly finished poetry of the last and of the present age might rather be compared to that between a natural flower and an artificial one. The latter is possibly a very elaborate and perfect piece of workmanship; there may be an exactness in what is cut in ivory which is never found in nature. But, as Burke has observed, “it is the nature of all greatness not to be exact.” The poetry of Virgil is more exact than that of Homer; but the *Æneid* is not therefore a greater poem than the *Iliad*. It may be doubted if some of the most remarkable poetry of the last age would have found any acceptance at all if it had been produced in the present. What would have been thought of Crabbe, for instance, with his habitual carelessness both of rhyme and of grammar, and his innumerable passages, not unfrequently of considerable length, which evidently have not received any dressing whatever? Nay, what reception would some of our old poetry have had of far greater renown than his? The steady progress we have been making towards more and more of mere grammatical correctness for more than a century must, indeed, be obvious to every student of our literature; but it may occasion some surprise to find how far we have advanced in that direction in the course of a single generation. Or, if we would measure the change that the lapse of two generations has made, we may compare Burke and Macaulay. The freedom of Burke's style in all his more characteristic writings would be altogether strange and startling in a writer of the present day. It is something that we have either lost or laid aside. We have, in fact,

outgrown it. Whether we have thereby been gainers or losers may be a question. It is common to assume that the greater regularity of our present style is an evidence of our literature having got past its manhood and entered upon its old age. But correctness is not in itself a defect. It has been always the reproach of our English literature with other nations that it has so little, if it have anything at all, to boast of which is at the same time of great excellence and free from great faults. We ourselves may hold, perhaps, that this comparative lawlessness with which our literature is charged is only a thing of the same kind with the spirit of freedom which animates our political institutions. Still it is impossible to found any system either of art or of politics upon the principle of insubordination. Wherever rules exist, they exist to be obeyed, not to be violated or neglected. And strength is always most shown in conforming to law, not in disregarding it. It never can be admitted, therefore, that it is better for any age to write incorrectly than correctly, — although it may be only a declining age that will make correctness its first aim. For it is a kind of excellence the utmost possible degree of which is soon reached; and what alone makes it of any value is its combination with higher things. Our literature was never so generally distinguished by elaborateness of finish as it is at the present day; but the perfection of its workmanship does not look so much a part of itself as in the best specimens of the last age. The secret by which that effect was attained seems to be lost. Even where the faultlessness is as complete in Tennyson as it is in Shelley, the spontaneousness, or semblance of spontaneousness, which charms us in Shelley is wanting. The art, exquisite as it is, is no longer the same true counterpart and wonderful rival of nature.

Such appear to be the chief essential differences. Others that might be noticed are rather of external circumstances; such as the extension of Criticism, of Journalism, and of Anonymous writing. These three things naturally go together, and they had all attained considerable growth in the last age; but they have been much more largely developed in the present. In no preceding time, in our own or in any other country, has Anonymous Periodical Criticism ever acquired nearly the same ascendancy and power. It might be interesting to consider how and in how far, if at all, our literature may be likely to be thereby affected, whether in its actual

state or in its tendencies and prospects. As for the Anonymity, however, which might seem to be the most important of the three combined elements, it is for the greater part only formal. Of writing the authorship of which is really unknown there probably never was less than there is in the present day. And the custom according to which the name of the writer is withheld in certain cases is obviously one of great convenience. More especially, it is indispensable for any free criticism touching living persons in regard to such points as are never discussed with or in the presence of a man himself in ordinary society. Not, indeed, that the necessary boldness and effrontery, or honesty, if you will, might not be forthcoming in abundance under a system which allowed no public writer to assume a mask or a veil ; but that the proceeding would outrage our notions of common decency and common humanity. The only way in which the truth, all the truth, and nothing but the truth can be spoken in the case supposed is by means of a voice, which is no doubt that of an individual, and may even be perfectly well known to be that of a certain individual, but yet does not offensively proclaim itself as such, nay, rather claims to be taken for that of nobody in particular. The old proverb would have us say nothing but what is good, nothing but what is complimentary, of the dead : *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* ; but in point of fact it is rather of the living that we usually speak under that restriction. Neither, besides, is it easy often to make up one's mind about even the greatest man while he is still running his course. He dazzles you, or he eludes you. Not till the night of death has closed upon him does any calm and clear observation of him become practicable. The stars themselves are invisible in the daytime.

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