

A. R. THACKER, B. A.

A SHORT HISTORY
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE

PART I

FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO 1832.

K./Ü. „LOODUS“ / TARTUS

K./Ü. „LOODUSE“ saksa ja inglise kirjandus koolidele:

- 1) Rudyard Kipling: **The Cat that Walked by Himself.** 36 lhk. 2 joonist. Hind 35 mk.
- 2) Karl Schönherr: **Der Ehrenposten.**
12 lhk. Hind 15 marka.
- 3) Bertha Mercator: **Von dem Fuhrmann ohne Zorn und der weissen Blume in Korn.**
16 lhk. Hind 20 marka.
- 4) W. H. Riehl: **Der stumme Ratsherr.**
32 lhk. Hind 30 marka.
- 5) K. Ecke: **Murr.** 20 lhk. Hind 20 marka.
- 6) F. Treller: **Ein Abenteuer im Urwalde.**
20 lhk. Hind 20 marka.
- 7) W. Jacobs: **Der Bücking.** 20 lhk. Hind 20 marka.
- 8) Grimm: **Hans im Glück.** 16 lhk. 3 joonist. Hind 20 marka.
- 8) H. Scharrelmann: **Hexe Kaukau.** 16 lhk. Hind 20 mrk.
- 10) A. Vilmar'i ja Weinland'i järele: **Das Nibelungenlied. Ein Ostarafest.** 36 lhk. Hind 45 marka.
- 11) W. Hauff: **Das Märchen vom falschen Prinzen.**
36 lhk. Hind 40 marka.
- 12) P. Rosegger: **Als ich das erste Mal auf dem Dampfwagen sass.** 16 lhk. Hind 20 marka.
- 13) M. Jakobson: **Aschenbrödel.**
16 lhk. 3 joonist. Hind 20 marka.
- 14) H. Seidel: **Jorinde.** 20 lhk. Hind 25 marka.
- 15) P. Rosegger: **Ein Mann von 5 Jahren.**
16 lhk. Hind 20 marka.
- 16) H. Seidel: **Leberecht Hühnchen.**
20 lhk. Hind 25 marka.
- 17) P. Rosegger: **Auf der Wacht.** 16 lhk. Hind 20 marka.
- 18) L. Ganghofer: **Das Geheimnis der Mischung.**
16 lhk. Hind 20 marka.
- 19) **Dick Whittington and his Cat.** 20 lhk. Hind 35 marka.
- 20) E. von Wildenbruch: **Die Landpartie.**
24 lhk. Hind 30 marka.
- 21) R. Kipling: **His Wedded Wife.** Hind 30 marka.
- 22) M. v. Ebner-Eschenbach: **Krambambuli.**
24 lhk. Hind 25 marka.

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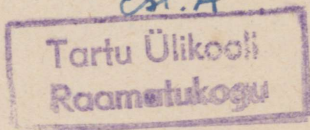
A. R. THACKER, B. A.

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K./Ü. „**LOODUS**“, TARTUS, 1925.

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Preface.

This little book represents an endeavour to stimulate in Esthonia an interest in English literature. It is, as far as the writer is aware, the first book on the subject to be actually written and printed in this country. It is intended for the use of Secondary School pupils, and covers the first half of the English Literature syllabus as laid down by the Board of Education. As first sketched out, the book would have contained a selection of extracts from the works of the principal writers, but this has been found impossible owing to lack of space. It may, however, be possible to make such a selection of extracts and publish them later as a companion volume. With regard to the question of the preferability of the extracts being contained in the same book, the writer would be pleased to receive suggestions.

In the absence of my own reference and note-books I have chiefly relied on Prof. Saintsbury's "Short History of English Literature", Prof. Morley's "First Sketch of English Literature", and Mr. Stopford R. Brooke's "Primer of English Literature", to all of which, and particularly to the last, I acknowledge considerable debt.

In conclusion, I may add that I shall be pleased to receive suggestions and criticism of any kind whatsoever, and can only hope that the book will fulfil in some degree the purpose for which it is designed.

A. R. Thacker, B. A.

Pernow, August 1925.

A SHORT HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

Introduction.

English Literature may be said to be the oldest of the modern literatures of Europe. It has its true beginnings in the old Heathen sagas of those peoples who crossed to Britain early in the fifth century. These tribes were three in number: the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes, and the first-named gave their name to their new country, and Britain became England, and its language, English.

English Literature is divided into three distinct periods:

1. **The Anglo-Saxon Period**, dating from the invasion of Britain by the Saxons (about 449 A. D.) to the breaking-up of the schools of annalists about 1154 A. D.
2. **The Middle English Period**, from 1150 until the time of the Reformation and the break between the Church of England and Rome (1533).
3. **The Modern Period**, from 1533 to the present day.

Chapter 1.

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD.

A. Beowulf.

When the Angles and Saxons invaded Britain and finally settled there, they had no written literature. Their songs and stories, — mostly, as is to be expected of a

warlike race, songs of war and heroes, — lived only in the memories of their gleemen or singers, and were handed on from father to son. Some of these men sang or recited the songs at the feasts, and others travelled about the country, chanting the stories wherever they could find an audience. Of all these war-songs the only one remaining to us is the Saga of Beowulf. It was composed in all probability while the Angles were still living on the Continent, but was never written down until about the 7th century, long after England had become Christian, and even this manuscript has not survived.

The poem is an epic, i. e. the story of the life and death of a hero, and runs briefly as follows: —

Hrothgar, King of the Danes, built a beautiful castle for himself and his followers, and lived there in peace. After a time, they began to be troubled by a monster called Grendel, who each night visited the castle and carried off one of the inmates. Finally, a brave warrior named Beowulf came to the help of Hrothgar, and, after a fierce fight, mortally wounded Grendel, who crept home to die. All was joy in the land, but the next night Grendel's mother, the Sea-wolf, came to revenge her son, and carried off one of the lords. Beowulf followed her to her home at the bottom of a pool and killed her, thus ridding the land of its greatest danger.

The second part tells of Beowulf's wise rule as King of the Goths, and his death while defending his country from a great dragon, which he killed before he himself died of wounds received in the struggle.

As we have the poem now, it is contained in a manuscript of the 10th century, written in the style used by the old minstrels. It consists of more than 6000 lines, and its

metrical system is alliteration, which was the chief characteristic of Old English verse, and remained in use until the time of Chaucer.

B. The Venerable Bede (673—735).

In 596 a number of Christian missionaries, the chief of whom was Augustine, landed in Kent, and began the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. Forty years afterwards some followers of St. Patrick crossed from Ireland and began the same work in the North of England. The chief scene of their work was Northumbria, i. e. the part of England north of the River Humber, and this district quickly became the centre of religious and cultured life in England, and monasteries were built in many parts of it. At one of these monasteries, near Jarrow, lived a monk who is known as the Venerable Bede. He was famous as a teacher, and the schools at Jarrow were always full of eager listeners, some of them from foreign countries.

Bede wrote a number of books in Latin, the chief of which is *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, and towards the end of his life translated the Gospel of St. John into English.

C. Cædmon (about 650).

About the time of Bede, or a little before it, there lived at another of the monasteries in the North of England, — that of Whitby — a man named Cædmon. Bede tells in his History how the power of song was given to this man in a dream. He was able to repeat a poem on the Creation of the World which he had made in a dream in response

to the bidding of a heavenly visitor who had appeared to him. Hilda, the Abbess of Whitby, hearing of this, took Cædmon to live in the convent, where he had been till that time only a neatherd. He then devoted the remainder of his life to composing metrical versions of the Bible stories which were read to him by the monks, and in this way became the author of verse Paraphrases of many parts of the Scriptures. He may thus be called "the father of Anglo-Saxon religious poetry". He found many imitators, and this form of writing became very popular with writers of the time. This kind of religious verse became popular to such an extent that the old heroic epic was quite lost sight of, and so failed to develop in old English as a literary form.

D. Cynewulf (8th Century).

The greatest of the successors of Cædmon was another monk named Cynewulf. He lived towards the end of the 8th century in one of the Northern monasteries. His chief work consists of two sacred epic poems *Christ* and *Elene*, the former telling of the coming of Christ and his work as the Healer of man. The latter describes how the Empress Helena found the "True Cross" or "Holy Rood" after a long search and many adventures.

E. Alfred the Great (849—901).

During the 9th century great changes took place in England. About the middle of the century Danish raiders began to appear, and the East coast naturally suffered most, especially the district of Northumbria. In a short time the great monasteries, with all their libraries, were swept away,

and the land was again in the hands of barbarians. This stopped very effectually all prospect of any further literary development in the North of England for many years. In this destruction all the manuscripts of the early Northumbrian literature perished, and the poems and other writings in their original form are unknown to us. They only exist now as they were rewritten later in the West Saxon dialect.

The only part of England which successfully resisted the Danes was Wessex, over which Alfred the Great ruled from 871—901. As soon as he had made his country safe from the invaders, he began to try to revive literature and learning. He established schools and monasteries, and invited learned men from other countries to teach in them. Moreover, he himself, when over forty years of age, learned the Latin tongue in order that he might translate into English works which he thought would be of benefit to his people. His work here, though, was more than mere translation. He commented and explained also where he thought it necessary, and in doing so showed real literary skill. On account of his work in this direction he is justly called "the father of English prose", and during his reign, his capital — Winchester — became the centre of learning in England. Among the books Alfred translated are Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, and possibly Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*.

From this time also date the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles. Many writers had a share in this undertaking, and most probably Alfred himself was the author of the history of his own times. These chronicles are the most important examples of Anglo-Saxon prose in existence, and were continued, in one instance, down to the year 1154.

After Alfred's death literature again almost ceased. The only writer of note during the next hundred years was the Abbot Alfric, who continued in some degree the prose style of Alfred. The condition of the country was too unsettled for any very important writing to be done. There was constant fighting with the Danes, whose periodical raids had now taken on the character of an invasion.

In 1066 came another and greater enemy. William of Normandy invaded the country, and finally became king. The Normans made themselves masters of England and the Anglo-Saxon language and literature vanished.

Chapter 2.

FROM "ANGLO-SAXON" TO "ENGLISH".

Before speaking of the writing of that period which we may think of as being intermediate between the Anglo-Saxon period and that which is definitely English, it is necessary to pay some attention to the changes in the language which occurred during that time. Before the Conquest there had been the Anglo-Saxon tongue (as we will continue to call it for the time) in use both in ordinary speech and in literature, and Latin, the language of the churches and schools. In addition, French had become popular to some degree at the court, owing to the residence abroad of King Edward the Confessor.

After 1066, Anglo-Saxon as a written language disappeared, although it of course still remained the language of the people, who comprised nine-tenths of the population. French was the language of the court and society, and of

“polite” literature. The Norman troubadour (the counterpart of the Anglo-Saxon „gleeman“) recited or sang his verse in Norman-French, while Latin was the language which the churchmen used in writing.

Though submerged in this way, Anglo-Saxon never lost its strength, but even (and this was of course helped by historical events) gradually became stronger, until it was first of all recognised as the language of the schools, and later on as the language of the law. During this time it had absorbed a great number of French words, so that beginning as a “pure” language it had now become a “mixed” tongue, through the addition of the Latin words it received when the land became Christian, and the French words, which came into it during the three centuries after the Conquest.

In addition to the changes in vocabulary we may note also how this time affected Literature more closely. The following are the principal points :

1. Many new literary models and subjects came in from the French literature.
2. The old Anglo-Saxon system of accent and alliteration gradually disappeared and rhyme took its place.
3. Most of the old clumsy endings of Anglo-Saxon grammar dropped away.

Literature in England during this Period.

The literature of this time need only be briefly sketched. It is only important in the effect it had on later writing, and its actual writings are really of little account.

Of the writers in Latin the most notable is a monk named *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, who finished in 1135 a book

entitled *The History of the Britons*. As history it is scarcely worth notice, but if we look upon it as a storehouse from which later writers received stories and ideas for other stories, it increases in importance. For instance, the story from which the first tragedy in English was written is contained in Geoffrey's "History". The tales of *King Lear*, and *Cymbeline* are also included in it, and lastly, the many stories of the ancient hero of the Britons, King Arthur, have been used many times as the themes of prose and poetry.

This work also led more directly to the writing of the first poem in English after the Norman Conquest. The book came into the hands of a Norman priest named Wace, who translated it into French. This French translation came in turn into the possession of an English priest named *Layamon*, who composed from it the poem which is generally known as *Layamon's Brut*. Layamon used the old Anglo-Saxon form of alliterative verse, but also used rhyme in some places, the frequency of rhyme increasing with the length of the poem, as the writer felt more and more the influence of the French original.

The *Brut* is important because it made known many of the old Celtic myths dealing with the history of the land, and also because it showed the possibility of using the Norman-French legends and romances in the native English literature.

Chapter 3.

THE AGE OF CHAUCER.

As we have before seen, the English language had, by about the middle of the fourteenth century, once more gained sufficient strength to be recognised as the language

of the schools and law courts (the latter event occurred in 1362). But while speaking generally in this way, it must not be imagined that it was one plain and simple language. It was nothing but a collection of dialects. The man who did more than anyone else to bring these dialects together into one living language was *Geoffrey Chaucer*.

A. Poetry.

Geoffrey Chaucer (1340—1400).

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London as the son of a wine merchant who supplied the royal household. At the age of seventeen he was appointed page to the wife of Lionel, son of Edward III, probably through his father's connection with the court. From this time, for nearly forty years, he was intimately connected with the court, which he knew under three kings. While still young, he accompanied Edward III to France and was taken prisoner at the siege of Rheims, but soon released. When he returned to England he became a personal attendant of the king, and not long after married one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting.

For some years after this, Chaucer was frequently sent to France and Italy on royal business. In 1372 he visited Italy, and this journey had a very great effect on him, and through him, on English literature generally. This was the golden age of Italian literature. Dante had died not long before and his influence was still strongly felt, and Petrarch and Boccaccio were still living. Chaucer is said to have met the latter at Padua. Undoubtedly he got the plan of his greatest work from the Italian writer, and in addition two of the stories which he used in it.

Chaucer found a powerful friend and patron in John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who had married the sister of Chaucer's wife, Philippa. Through his influence well-paid posts were given to the poet. He was a very busy man for some time, until in 1384 he was given leave of absence, and this gave him leisure for poetry. Two years afterwards, however, he was deprived of all his posts through the influence of his enemies at court, and was now quite poor. It was during this time of poverty, though, that his greatest work, *The Canterbury Tales*, was written.

In 1399, on the accession of Henry IV, Chaucer became again comparatively rich, and was able to live in comfort. In the next year, however, he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey, his parish church.

Chaucer's Works.

In earlier days the volume of Chaucer's work was thought to be much greater than at present. Careful investigations have shown that some of these writings could not possibly be his, and most authorities are now agreed as to the extent of his work.

This work is now usually divided into three periods: (a) the French period (to about 1372) (b) the Italian period (1372—1384) and (c) the English period (1384 until his death).

(a) The French Period.

Chaucer seems to have begun to write about 1368. A number of early love poems probably gave him some fame as a poet, but none of them have survived. The *A*, *B*, *C*, a prayer to the Virgin, is generally looked upon as

one of his first poems. Then come *The Complaint unto Pity*, a beautiful little poem, and *The Book of the Duchess*, an allegory upon the death of the wife of John of Gaunt, Chaucer's patron. These, being written under the influence of French poetry, are generally known as the work of Chaucer's first, or French, period.

(b) The Italian Period.

Chaucer's second poetic period may be called the period of Italian influence, from 1372 to 1384. During this time, as we have already seen, he went on frequent journeys on royal business, and two of these were to Italy. These occurred at the time when Italian literature had reached a point of great excellence, and opened to Chaucer a new world. He shows himself familiar with Dante's work; he read the sonnets of Petrarch, and the tales and poems of Boccaccio, and in them first saw how a story could be beautifully told. When he returned from these journeys he was a changed man.

His chief work of this period is *Troilus and Criseyde* (1380—83) a translation, with many changes and additions, of one of Boccaccio's stories. At the same time he wrote some of the *Canterbury Tales*, the stories showing the influence of Boccaccio, and the form showing the influence of Petrarch.

The rest of his work of this period is comprised of: *The Complaint of Mars*; *The Parliament of Fowls*. *Boethius or Boece*, a prose translation of *De Consolatione*, the *House of Fame* and the *Legend of Good Women*, the last two showing in addition classical influence.

During this period appears the new Chaucer, the humorous poet of some of the *Canterbury Tales*. This is

most apparent in the creation of Pandarus in the poem *Troilus*, and in the fun of *The Parliament of Fowls*, and the art of these two poems lifted their author to a place among the great poets of the world.

(c) The English Period.

During the next period from 1384 to 1390, he left Italian influence behind him and became entirely English. He was during this time in comparative poverty, and the loss of his offices in 1386 may have given him more time for study. Before 1390, he had added to his greatest work its most English tales, and the Prologue to this work the *Canterbury Tales*, perhaps the most perfect example of all his work, was probably written in 1388. In these, their humour, the clearness of their portraits, the easy narration of the stories, and the variety of their characters, Chaucer is at his wonderful best.

During the last ten years of his life, which may be called the period of his decline, he wrote some small poems, another prose work, and three more of the *Canterbury Tales*, the last being written in the year of his death.

The Canterbury Tales.

Of the poets work it is not easy to speak briefly, because of its great variety. The *Canterbury Tales*, however, being the work by which he is chiefly known, and on which his fame chiefly rests, can be spoken of in some little detail.

As we have seen, all the stories were not written at one time. Some were composed quite separately and fitted afterwards into the general plan of the poem, and many which he intended to write to complete the scheme, were

never finished. The full idea was probably thought out about 1385, and the *Tales* which were written were completed, with the exception of three, before the end of 1390.

The scheme of the '*Canterbury Tales*' is as follows:

The poet joins a group of pilgrims who are going to visit the tomb of St. Thomas at Canterbury. These pilgrimages were the holiday excursions of the time, and this one, to the grave of Becket, was the most popular and, for Londoners especially, the most pleasant. The journey took three or four days, and in order to relieve its monotony, 'mine host' of the Tabard Inn proposed that each person should tell two stories on the way, the relater of the story judged the best to be rewarded with a dinner paid for by the remainder of the company on their return to London. In the Prologue, and in the prologues to the several tales, we have unforgettable pictures of the personages of this time. The knight and his squire, the miller, the pardoner, the talkative city wife, and the gentle nun are drawn vividly, and "their humours, their features and their dress are as distinct to us as if we had supped with them at the Tabard".

The *Tales* themselves differ very widely in character and in subject. There are the legend of the saint, the romance of the knight, the traveller's wonderful fable, the tale of common life, the love story, the allegory and the animal-fable. Chaucer is the greatest of the English storytellers in verse. His humour is beautiful and affectionate, and his pathos always natural.

Chaucer's verse is always musical. The English in which the tales are written is almost the English of the present day, and may, with the exception of a few obsolete words, be easily understood. He joined together the French and English elements of the language and made them definitely one. Because he was so free from all influence of

the troubles of the time, and because he cared greatly for the form in which he put his thoughts or feelings, he stands quite apart from all the other poets of his own time. He wrote because, as it seems, he was full of joy in his own thoughts, and thought that others would weep or be glad with him.

William Langland (1332—1400).

Almost exactly at the same time as Chaucer lived in England there were two other poets of some importance. The first of these was the author of *The Vision of Piers the Plowman*, now generally identified as William Langland. He was born about 1332 in Southern England. His *Vision* begins with a description of his sleeping on the Malvern Hills, and the first text of it was probably written in 1362. Its great popularity caused him to rewrite it in 1377 and again about 1386. In these texts he made many additions and almost doubled the length of the poem. His last poem was written in 1399, and he probably died in the next year.

Before speaking of the 'Vision' itself, it is perhaps necessary to glance at the social conditions of England at this period.

The first great point is that the condition of the poor was miserable in every way. The great French wars which began in 1337, and the consequent taxation, ground the poorer classes down. These wars and the "Black Death", a pestilence which swept the country, had greatly reduced the population, and there were frequent labour troubles. There was also a great cry against the class system of the Middle Ages, and in addition to all this the Church was absolutely corrupt.

In Langland's *Vision* we have a voice from the people themselves; it is written in the old English verse and manner

in such a way as to be clearly and easily understood by anyone, and it became the book of those who desired the reform of State and Church. It speaks for truth and purity in State, Church and private life, for honest labour, and against ill-gotten wealth; it maintains "the equality of men before God".

The Vision of Piers the Plowman.

In his poem the poet, as we have already seen, speaks of a dream which he had while sleeping on the slopes of the Malvern Hills. He sees a "fair field full of folk" and his description of this gives us almost as many typical characters as the *Tales* of Chaucer. This field lay between the Castle of Care on the one side and the Tower of Truth on the other. Introducing many different allegorical figures, such as Falsehood, Holy Church, Conscience & c he describes the actions and purposes of the people he sees. One part contains the confession of the Seven Deadly Sins, and is full of sharp pictures of friars, robbers, nuns, of village life and of London drinking-places. Then the search for Truth begins once more, and here the figure of Piers the Plowman appears for the first time. All who come to him are set to hard work, and it is here that occurs the description of the labouring poor and their miseries.

The second part of the poem is called Do-Well, Do-Better and Do-Best. These three characters are finally identified with Christ, who appears as Love in the dress of Piers. The first two of these are full of curious passages. In Do-Best he dreams again and sees evils attack the Church and mankind after the departure of Christ. Finally, Conscience, almost despairing, sets out into the world to find

Piers the Plowman, the Saviour. Then the dreamer wakes for the last time, weeping bitterly.

The poem shows us the side of English society which Chaucer had not touched upon. Its moral influence was great, and its fame was so great that it produced imitators. It is written in the old alliterative English verse, and contains only a small percentage of French words.

John Gower (1325?—1408).

Beside the somewhat shadowy figure of Langland, that of the other important poet of this period presents a great contrast. John Gower was born at Aldington, in Kent, about 1325 and seems to have lived in various places. He died in 1408 and his tomb is still to be seen in the church of St. Saviour in Southwark, London, the head of his effigy resting on his three great works.

His chief work consists of about fifty French ballads, and three volumes, each in a different language, a fact which clearly marks the unsettled state of the English tongue at that time.

The first of these is *Speculum Meditantis*, a moral poem written in French and divided into twelve parts, on Vices and Virtues. The second is *Vox Clamantis*, which is a dream passing into a sermon, and describes the vices of the time. This is written in Latin. The third part, *Confessio Amantis*, his English work, is a dialogue between a lover and his confessor. The book is in reality the best and largest collection of tales made in English up till the author's time. However, the telling of the tales is wearisome and the very smoothness of the verse makes them more tedious still. His last work was *The Tripartite Chronicle*, and is an account of the downfall of Richard II.

B. Prose.**John Wyclif 1320?—1384.**

Although Wyclif's name and life-work are so famous, the place and date of his birth are not definitely known. It is probable, however, that he was born at Wycliffe-on-Tees somewhere in the period 1320—1325. He was certainly Master of Ballial College, Oxford, in 1360 and was known to and described by those against whom he struggled for most of his life as an expert in matters of religion and in scholastic philosophy. The best known event in his life was his appearance at St. Paul's in 1377 on a charge of heresy, from which he was finally acquitted.

In 1374 he had received the living of Lutterworth, which he held till his death ten years later. His most important contribution towards the prose literature of this time was his translation of the Bible, which was finished about 1380.

Wyclif's Bible.

At the same time as Langlands 'Vision' was being eagerly read all over England, Wyclif, about 1378, determined on a full English translation of the Bible. He himself translated the New Testament, and was helped in the Old Testament by his assistant, Nicholas of Hereford. Some time after, John Purvey, under the guidance of Wyclif, revised the whole, corrected its errors, and made it definitely an English book, which had naturally a great power to preserve and fix words in the language.

In addition to this, Wyclif made English the popular language of religious thought and feeling. During his battle with the Church he appealed in the end to the whole of England in the speech of the people. He wrote and sent out into the land many tracts and sermons, written not in

the old dry style of the schoolmen, but in short sharp sentences full of the everyday, well-known words which he had used in his Bible. This work, considered carefully, certainly cannot be compared with that produced two centuries later, but both it and the tract-writing were important in connection with the development of English prose. Wyclif and his helpers were all very highly-trained and highly-educated men, for the course of study was a long one, not usually less than fourteen years, and included many different subjects. Yet these scholars had in their translation and tracts on the one hand to be exact in order to satisfy their opponents, and on the other hand to be clear in order to be easily understood by the common people. These things combined formed indeed a very good exercising ground for the beginnings of a new prose. The full consequences are not found in Wyclif himself or in any of his immediate successors, but we find approaches towards a style between the language of the old 'high' philosophy and that style which almost descended to mere dialect.

Chaucer.

Chaucer's prose is naturally far less important in the development of English literature than his work in verse, but it still requires some little attention. Those two of the *Canterbury Tales* written in prose are of very little importance, and show very little advance on the work of much earlier writers. They are in good straightforward English for the most part, but there is little attempt at style. His two other works, the translation of the *Boethius*, and the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, are better. Some passages of the former show a very distinct advance, and the whole shows that if Chaucer had chosen to do more original work

in prose he might have become as great a force in it as he did in verse. In the latter work, the *Astrolabe* he was held rather too close to his subject to produce really good prose. The astrolabe was a small scientific instrument and Chaucer wrote this treatise on it for the benefit of his little son, to whom the book is addressed. The chief interest of the work lies in the fact that it is one of the earliest examples of the literary handling of science.

John of Trevisa is another of the shadowy figures of this time. Very little is known of his life, and even the date of his death is uncertain, though it is usually placed in 1413. His work consisted of the translation of one of the historical surveys of the time and was finished in 1387. This translation is really the earliest description of England in English, and is interesting for the evidence it gives us of the growing wish to write of English matters in the English tongue. The work shows, indeed, that Trevisa was no genius in English, but — to quote a learned authority — “in his day a man deserved almost more credit for undertaking a long work in English than most men would deserve now for abstaining from it”.

The Travels of Sir John Maundevile.

Here we have what is really the first “story-book” in English, but the circumstances of its writing are altogether confused. It is even by no means certain whether it is original or a translation. If it is original, then it was most probably written by a Liège physician, usually known as John of Burgundy, who died in 1372. If it is a translation, the translator is unknown. But — to misquote Shakespeare — “the book’s the thing”, and concerning the importance of

it in the history of English prose there cannot be any doubt. It is the story of the travels of a mythical English knight, which was received with delight and belief by the world (there were certainly Latin and French versions also) and in no country with greater pleasure than in England.

The great point of interest is that here, for the first time, the subject and the manner of the author produce a style. He mostly uses short sentences, and nearly always begins them with "and", a method which the story-tellers usually like, as having an exciting effect with the promise of something fresh. The vocabulary is simple and fairly modern. Above all, the writer knows when he has said enough, thus avoiding a fault very common with the earlier writers. The book became a model of prose, and in it we definitely see the rise of a literary prose style in English.

Chapter 4.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

A. The English Chaucerians.

The hundred years following the death of Chaucer are the most barren in English literature. Nevertheless the period gives us one or two names which must be glanced at, and cannot be entirely ignored. Moreover, the time which shows us first progress in, and then the final stoppage of alliteration, and the probable beginning of the English ballad cannot be entirely passed over.

The other writers of this period, both Scotch and English, placed by the side of Chaucer and Gower a third poet whom they respected as the equal of his two illust-

rious predecessors. This was **John Lydgate**, the "Monk of Bury".

Lydgate's earliest known work is the *Troy Book* (1421), followed by *The Story of Thebes* (1424—5). The latter, which was obviously intended as an addition to Chaucer's "*Knights Tale*", contains about four thousand words and begins as a "Canterbury Tale" with a prologue. The most important thing about it, however, is the evidence which it gives of the fact that the poets of this time had not the mastery over versification which Chaucer had possessed in so great a degree. Probably this is accounted for most easily when it is said that Chaucer was far in advance of his time in perceiving the capabilities of the English language. The poet's efforts were made more difficult also by the quick changes in the language at this time. Lydgate used the heroic couplet, but even while in some lines we may find ten syllables by actually counting them, the lines lose all rhythm, and in many others the position is still worse: they will not even give up ten syllables to the fingers!

The true worth of Lydgate may be given in a few words. He is a maker of verse rather than a poet; an interesting figure in a time of darkness, groping for the light.

Thomas Occleve is another poet of this time whose name is usually coupled with that of Lydgate.

His principal work is a translation from the Latin, usually known as *The Gouvernail of Princes*, and is preceded by a long introduction, the chief interest of this work being that it contains what is probably the best portrait in existence of his "master dear", Chaucer. As for the poem itself, the some faults in versification appear as in Lydgate, only to a greater degree in many instances.

From this time, there are only a few minor poets who do little more than to make it possible to say that poetry was still being written. One **Osborn Bokenham** wrote the *Legends of the Saints*, a long poem of over 10,000 lines. The verse itself is a little better than some of his contemporaries could produce, but it has no sparkle or fire. There were in addition **William of Nassington**, a Yorkshire writer of religious verse; **Hugh Campden**, the author of a moral romance; **George Ashby** who wrote a moral poem *On the Active Policy of a Prince* for the son of Henry VI, and one of the earliest books to be printed in English is a verse translation of Cato's *Morals*, by **Benedict Burgh**. Finally the last quarter of the century produced some curious verses on alchemy, written by **George Ripley** and **Thomas Norton**. So ends the literary history of this century in England.

Although their work belongs to the beginning of the sixteenth century rather than to the fifteenth, there are two writers who should really be thought of here, as they are what may be called Chaucerians also.

The first of these, **Stephen Hawes** by name, probably died about 1523 in early middle age.

The work by which he is chiefly known at the present time is the *Pastime of Pleasure*, published in 1509. It is an allegory of the life of man. The work is, however, dull and dead, although even in that respect an improvement on Occleve. The verse, as in the other writers already mentioned, has very strange lapses, and Hawes seems to have been incapable of keeping up any standard of correct versification. In addition, the allegory is "ever-present"; pushed right to the front as if determined not to be overlooked.

The *Example of Virtue* is a poem of much the same stamp and merit, but perhaps even more dull, and with the allegory even more prominent. It may be said to have some

merit because there is perhaps in it, as well as in the "Pastime", a faint shadow of what was to come later in the *Faerie Queene* — but it is indeed a faint shadow. The writer does indeed show poetic flashes; some "flowers of fancy", — but they are few.

The other poet is **John Skelton**, and he provides a great contrast to Hawes. His birth was probably about 1460, and he is mentioned by Caxton in 1490 as being "Poet Laureate in the University of Oxford". Later he was tutor to Henry VIII, and became rector of Diss in Norfolkshire some time before 1504. He was afterwards suspended from this office and went to London. He was favoured by his old pupil, Henry VIII, but in some way became the enemy of Wolsey, a former friend. As a result of several satires on that powerful minister he was forced to take sanctuary in Westminster, where he died in 1529.

In speaking of his work, the first point to be noticed is that it is, nearly all of it, thoroughly alive. His first works indeed do not reach this standard, but give promise of better things. His first work of "life" is a ballad of triumph over the Duke of Albany, who had made an inglorious retreat during a battle. The lines are almost of the shortest possible character, often of two feet only, rhymed in couplets strongly alliterated, and the whole poem is intensely alive. Another poem *Against the Scots* a triumph for the Battle of Flodden, is almost exactly the same in manner and spirit, written partly in these short lines, and partly in eight-syllable lines. After a few serious pieces comes Skelton's most vigorous piece, though by no means the most elegant, the *Tunning of Eleanor Ruming*, the story of the brewing and drinking of some ale by a country alewife and her customers. His other works contain his political satires against Wolsey, and the *Book of Philip*

Sparrow his most graceful work, a story of mourning for the pet bird of Mistress Joan Scrope.

In all Skelton's poems there appears a restless spirit without a proper means of expression, and not quite possessing the intelligence and originality to provide itself with one. The way in which he wrote is obviously a strong attempt to break away from the dryness of the writings of the early fifteenth century writers.

This sudden great decline in English poetry cannot be explained. It lasted about 150 years. Before it was Chaucer, and after it the great Elizabethans, seemingly able to take the definite metrical forms and make of them what music they would. Between the early master and this later group — chaos; with Skelton the only light of brightness in the heavy darkness of intolerable dulness.

B. Scottish Poetry.

Scottish poetry is poetry written in English by men living in, or natives of Scotland. It is distinguished from "English" poetry in some different ways, usually of Celtic origin. The first of these differences is love of nature for its own sake. Next is love of colour, and thirdly there is almost always present a much coarser humour than in English. Then the long struggles between England and Scotland left their traces on the national verse. It is always fiercely patriotic. Scotland, its heroes, and its thirst for liberty are always to the front. In the descriptive poetry it is always the scenery of their native land which the poets portray. Not a conventional landscape which might fit any country, but — Scotland. This is ever the case with those poets who imitate Chaucer.

The first of the Scottish poets is **John Barbour**, Archdeacon of Aberdeen. His long poem of *The Bruce*, 1375—7 (about 12,000 lines) gives really the whole story of the Scottish fight for liberty. What real history is contained in it is by no means certain, as very little which is really definite is known about the great Scottish hero. Later came the writer usually known as **Blind Harry** who, about 1461, wrote, in the heroic couplet of Chaucer, a long poem on the deeds of a later Scottish hero, William Wallace.

Andrew of Wyntoun, somewhere between 1413 and 1422 wrote his *Original Chronicle of Scotland*, one of the rhyming chronicles of this time.

In the next poet, we find first the full influence of Chaucer, which, it may be noted in passing, was much more definitely and strongly felt in Scotland than in England. This poet was **King James the First of Scotland**, who was taken prisoner in 1403, when quite a boy, and was kept a captive in England for more than nineteen years. There he studied and became a warm admirer of Chaucer. Later he fell in love with Lady Jane Beaufort. The poem which he wrote, usually known as the *King's Quair* (quire, or book) is in imitation of Chaucer and in his seven-lined stanza, which is said to derive its name "rhyme-royal" from the young king's use of it. The poem describes the king's love and its happy ending, and is sweeter and purer than any verse before Spenser's, in the middle of the next century. The work contains an original element, while being also to some degree imitative of Chaucer. This element consists of more varied description, brighter colour, and a quality of self-reflection.

Robert Henryson, who died about 1500, was also an imitator of Chaucer, and his *Testament of Cresseid* continues his "master's" work. In his definitely original work

his treatment of the fables of Æsop must be mentioned. He makes them into long stories, full of pleasant dialogue. They show distinct Scottish feelings and give many descriptions of Scottish scenery. *Robert and Makyne* is a short pastoral poem with a natural dialogue, and his originality again appears in his sketch of the graces of womanhood, the "*Garment of Good Ladies*".

William Dunbar carries the influence of Chaucer on to the end of the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth. His two earliest poems *The Thistle and the Rose* (1503) and *The Golden Terge* (1508), are in the manner and on the plan of Chaucer. The first is on the marriage of James IV to Margaret Tudor, and the second an allegory on Love, Beauty, Reason and the Poet. In both however, the natural description is Scottish, and the national spirit of the poet is strongly shown. Later his work became quite original. *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins* shows the real command of metre which this poet evidences in all his works, and contrasts greatly with the work of his English contemporaries. The poem gives lurid, sharp pictures, a mixture of horror and humour which makes it almost unique.

Of his minor works are to be noticed (a) the *Lament for the Makers*, written when he was at one time ill; (b) a sharp satirical description of Edinburgh Sessions; and (c) a rather amusing *Poem to a Blackamoor*. Nearly all of these are out of the common way of literature of the time.

C. Later Romances.

During the fifteenth century the same stories continued to be used as the subjects of romance. The chief of these were the Charlemagne stories derived from the French, and

the legends of the early King of the Britons, Arthur. In verse, very little of any account was accomplished. The best of them (and it may be added, also the worst) belonged to the group which had for their subjects the Arthurian legends. At the head of the former stands the beautiful poem of *Sir Launfal*, adapted from the French, and much improved, by Thomas Chester, who lived early in the fifteenth century. The story, which is beautiful in itself, is here beautifully and touchingly told, and the metre used in it is almost entirely free from the "sing-song" monotony which so often disfigured it in the hands of other writers.

Next to this in merit, and of great interest as having served as the original of a great prose romance written not much later, comes the *Morte Arthur*, a piece of some 4000 lines. *Lancelot of the Laik*, written either in Scottish or a Northern dialect of English, is usually thought to have been composed towards the end of the century, and if so is the latest genuine poem of this kind in English Literature.

At the other end of the scale may be mentioned the work of **Henry Lonelich**. This included the poems *Merlin* and *The Holy Grail*. The second of these is almost a curiosity, as with the wonderful charm and interest of his subject the writer manages to produce a work which is almost terrible in its dulness and lack of anything approaching fire or life. Most of the lines appear to have been made with a hammer. From this it is a relief to turn to the first of the great prose romances, which may also be looked upon as probably the greatest of all English romances, prose or verse. Although in its material it is only a compilation of the Arthurian stories it is a great and original book. It was printed in 1485 by Caxton, who said the *Morte d'Arthur* had been translated fifteen years before

by **Sir Thomas Malory**. Of the author practically nothing is known, and there is no real evidence to show where or when he lived, or the time at which the work was executed. Whenever it was done, it fixed for ever a glorious picture of the days of chivalry and romance, then almost dying out. The book is often criticised in various ways, but Malory seems to have made excellent choice in the stories which were to be used or neglected. He also seized on the chief point of the story, the combination of the story of the search for the Holy Grail with the loves of Lancelot and Queen Guinevere. Above all, the beauty of the prose which he wrote is great enough to give a very direct answer to most of these criticisms. On two counts the book stands sure and safe against all criticism: the music and chivalrous feeling of its prose, and the fact that it will always remain as the one great storehouse of a famous and wonderfully beautiful story.

Of the other Romance prose writers of this period perhaps **Lord Berners** is the most important. He lived from 1467 to 1532, and had much experience of war and diplomacy. Most of his work seems to date from the last period of his life, during which he was Governor of Calais. His translation of Froissart began to appear in 1523, and he also translated the great romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*, and also the *Dial for Princes*, which is thought to have had much influence on the development of the florid literary style known as Euphuism.

Berners' style is almost perfectly suited to the matter of his writings. He is at his best in the translation of Froissart, but in the translation of *Huon of Bordeaux* he takes full advantage of the opportunities afforded him by the original. Between the work of Malory and that of Berners, Cax-

ton and his successors had made many more additions to the stock of Romance in English. All of their books must have had a great effect on the first generation or two of the readers of printed books, but later on, with the revival of the study of the classics themselves, comes a disgust for these earlier romances. However that may be, these stories certainly had very much to do with the high and noble enthusiasm of Elizabethan days.

E. Miscellaneous Prose.

The prose of the 15th century taken as a whole does not show anything really enjoyable to the ordinary reader, but when looked upon in the light of literary history it is greatly important. The period may be taken as the exercise-ground of English prose. The experiments, for such only can they be called, of the earlier writers, were expanded and multiplied by many authors in all branches of literature, from history to philosophy.

Reginald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, is an important figure of this period. He was born about 1395 and studied at Oxford. In 1431 he became Master of Whittington College, London, and thirteen years later Bishop of St. Asaph. Until this time he appears to have lived quietly and happily, but soon afterwards he experienced a great change of fortune. Both in his sermons and works he attempted to justify orthodoxy by irregular kinds of reasoning. In what is perhaps his best known work, *Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, written against Lollardy, his enemies found, or affected to find arguments which were as heretical as the views against which they were written. In 1450 he became Bishop of Chichester and seven years later was accused of heresy. He afterwards recanted and

probably lived in strict confinement until his death about 1460. The question of his style is important, especially when we remember that he was really forced to create one. Theological argument up to this time had always been conducted in Latin, whereas Pecock used English. The extent to which he succeeded in creating this style is of great importance. The vocabulary which he adapted is also important. He brought into the language many 'Englished' forms of Latin and Greek words, and although many of these did not survive in the language owing to the classical revival his works actually did exercise English in form, and enrich it in means of expression.

Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, born about 1465, was educated at Cambridge, and was later Chancellor of the University. During the reign of Henry VIII he was imprisoned for treason, and then his election as a cardinal angered the king and he was beheaded in 1535.

Fisher's English works consist almost wholly of writings on religion, mostly sermons which he had delivered. He is one of the earliest writers in English who seem to make a deliberate attempt to achieve style. He knew of the aid given to effect in prose by the mixture of long and short sentences, and also the construction and true use of the paragraph.

To **Sir Thomas More** (1478—1535), whose fame rests chiefly on the authorship of *Utopia*, is perhaps given more credit at times than is strictly his due. *Utopia* was written by him in Latin, and never translated till after his death, so that it cannot possibly be quoted as belonging to English prose. His chief work actually written in English, the *History of Richard III*, is not as good in its style as the work of either Berners or Fisher.

F. The Ballads.

The question of the origin and the date of the ballad in English is a rather obscure one, but it seems now to be generally accepted that the special time of ballad-production was the fifteenth century, thus saving the reputation for poetry of that period from utter oblivion. The famous *Ballad of Chevy Chase*, the oldest of its class and probably of all the Ballads, was almost certainly written within ten years of the event which it celebrates, the Battle of Otterburn (1388). The most important collection of ballads in English is the *Percy Folio*, the writing of which is not older than the middle of the seventeenth century. Some of the poems are of that date; others are much older, but not older than the fifteenth century.

The two best of these are the ballad of the *Nut-browne Mayde* and the beautiful carol beginning *I sing of a Maiden*. The first of these appeared in a book printed at Antwerp in 1502. The swing of the metre, and the high skill of the manner in which it is varied to prevent monotony, make it in an example of beautiful poetry. The second equals it in charm and beauty, and is a remarkable example of the poetry of its kind.

Of the rest of the ballads, some of which come near in charm to those already quoted, only the different groups need be noted. There comes first a group of ballads concerning the life and adventures of the celebrated outlaw, Robin Hood. Probably some of these date from as far back as the fourteenth century, while some may be even almost modern. Then comes a group of ballads concerning the Arthur legends, broken up and modernised. Connected with these is a still larger group of miscellaneous romances of adventure, some of which are known in longer form in

prose, and some of which only exist in the shorter form. Another class which is important consists of the Historical Ballads, of which most concern the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Chapter 5.

ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE.

In order to explain, or rather better to understand the sudden and glorious rise of Elizabethan literature, it is necessary to take a glance at the historical events which preceded it, and which may be said to have done much to make it possible. The most important of these events are two: The Reformation and the "Renaissance".

The "Renaissance", or re-birth, really began in Italy, following the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. After this event many of the Greek scholars went to Italy, taking with them a special knowledge of the ancient classics, particularly Greek, a fact which led in the end to great enthusiasm for the study of them. Every department of the ancient Greek culture was soon studied enthusiastically, and scholars from all parts of Europe visited Italy for this purpose. These scholars then carried the New Learning to all parts of Europe, and the learned men of England were by no means unrepresented among them.

The break-up of the power of the Church, the movement which usually bears the name of the Reformation, had been long foreshadowed. It may be said to have occurred on the continent in the early years of the 16th century, and a little later in England. It led in the end to new ideals of liberty of conscience and thought, and so was, broadly speaking, moving towards the same end as the Renaissance,

although in effect the two movements were strongly opposed to each other.

England was at this time well fitted to receive the New Learning. The predecessors of Elizabeth, and especially Henry VII and his son Henry VIII, were clever scholars, and in addition the former had so governed as to give the country a long period in which it was untroubled by any wars. During their reigns the universities were enlarged, and Greek and other new subjects began to be taught there. In England, too, the movements of the Renaissance and the Reformation were well balanced, as the leaders of the former thoroughly understood the evils which were to be found within the Church, and fought hard against them.

The results of the new ideas were soon apparent. A new era of literature began during the reign of Henry VIII, and some good prose and efforts towards a better poetry were produced. The actual break with the Papacy in 1534, and the consequent unrest, checked the movement for about thirty years, but during the early years of Elizabeth's reign great progress was made, and about twenty years after her accession (the date may be fixed with the appearance of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* in 1579) began the most brilliant period in the whole of English literature.

A. Poetry and Prose.

The fresh beginnings of poetry, which swelled later into the greatness of the Elizabethan period, are really to be found in the writings of **Sir Thomas Wyatt** and the **Earl of Surrey**. They had both travelled in Italy and studied the models of Italian literature. Their poetry was much more personal than it had ever been before in English, and gradually developed into what is usually known as the

"Sonnet sequence", a number of sonnets forming practically a connected story, the subject of which was usually the joys and sorrows of love. In addition, Surrey first used the ten-syllable, unrhymed verse, which is usually called "blank verse", in his translation of Vergil's Aeneid. In 1557 appeared the first printed book of English poetry, a book usually known at the present day as *Tottel's Miscellany*. Poetry actually produced during the reign of Elizabeth is first represented by **Lord Sackville**. In *The Mirror for Magistrates*, published in 1559, were contained the *Induction* and one tale by Sackville. The book is a collection of tragic tales, the subjects of which are usually the fall of some great ruler.

In the following years many translations were made. The translations are really not good, but they served to bring the English people into contact with the classical spirit, a fact from which followed great and far-reaching results. Another and rather curious result was that these translations brought a craze for the introduction of the classical metres into English, but this also finally had a good effect, for when the poets found the metres unsuited for English, they made experiments in several directions until, with Spenser as a notable example, they perfected metres which actually did suit the language. Writings were also made in connection with religion and history, and at this time **Stow** and **Holinshed** wrote works which were at least of use in the later study of historical documents. The ordinary stories of romance, ballads, stories of all kinds were printed in great numbers and eagerly bought and read by the people. Masques, pageants, interludes and plays written during these years are numberless. The great seamen of England were at this time beginning their voyages into the New World and bringing back wonderful stories of their

adventures there and of the wonderful animals and savages which they had seen there. The effect of these stories may be traced all through Elizabethan Literature.

Another great point to be noticed was the free literary criticism which was to be found during this time. Everything which appeared was freely discussed and the men who like Surrey had been in Italy and knew what was good, could recognise it when it came to them afresh in England. For some time writers were not very favourably regarded, but when such a great man as **Sir Philip Sidney** was known as an author, opinion quickly changed, and many fresh writers appeared.

Of the prose of this time there should be noticed **Lyly's Euphues** (1579) and **Sir Philip Sidney's Apologie for Poetry**. The first was tremendously popular when it appeared. It was supposed to be the account of the travels of a young man on the continent and in England. Its style was very extravagant, but it did some good in softening the prose which had preceded it. Later we find Shakespeare using this style in prose dialogue, sometimes merely in caricature, but at other times quite seriously. But when it is used seriously it admirably suits the characters into whose mouths it is put. Sidney's *Apologie* was written practically in answer to an earlier book which had attacked poetry and plays.

At this point also must be noticed **Bacon's Essays Civil and Moral** (1597). They are written in charming prose and show great directness and fulness of thought. The rest of the prose literature of the time is composed of that dealing with travel, notably **Hakluyts Navigation, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation**, and the many tales which came from the press at this time, many of them translations of the French romances, and of the Italian poets.

The greatest figure in the poetry of this time is that of **Edmund Spenser**. He was born in London in 1552, educated at Merchant Taylors' Grammar School, and proceeded to Cambridge in 1569. Among his friends at college was a certain **Gabriel Harvey**, a well-known scholar and critic, who made a great attempt to interest Spenser in the classical metres, and their adaptation to English poetry. Spenser left Cambridge in 1576 and three years later became acquainted with Sir Philip Sidney through the latter's uncle, the Earl of Leicester. In the same year the *Shepherd's Calendar* appeared, and it was obvious that a great and original poet had appeared. It contained twelve eclogues or short pastoral poems, one for each month of the year. The English of Chaucer is used, but there is a new and original spirit in the work.

In 1580 Spenser went to Ireland as the secretary of the Lord Lieutenant and that country was his home for nearly all the rest of his life. He lived for the greater part of the time at Kilcolman Castle, on an estate which had been given to him from confiscated lands after one of the frequent risings of the time. It was here, in 1589, that he read the first three books of the *Faerie Queene* to one of Elizabeth's most distinguished courtiers, Sir Walter Raleigh. The latter was delighted with the work, and urged the poet to take his work to England and read it before the Court. This was done. The work won the high approval of the queen, as well it might have done on account of the many flattering references to herself in it. The poet received a pension of £ 50 per annum. On his return to Ireland he published a poem *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, which describes the life and manners of the court. The next two years were occupied by his courtship and marriage, and this time brought a series of beautiful sonnets, *Amoretti*,

describing his wooing, and *Epithalamion*, his marriage hymn, the most beautiful example of its kind in the English language. These were published in 1595 and at the end of the same year he again visited England, taking with him a further three books of the *Faerie Queene*. In 1598 a fresh rising brought sorrow into his life. His home was burnt by the rebels, and he went to London, where he died early in the next year, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, being followed to his tomb by a great company of his friends, who included all the great literary men of the day.

The *Faerie Queene*.

Before beginning the poem Spenser had described the plan of it in a letter to Raleigh. It was to have consisted of twelve books, each telling of the adventures of a knight, who should represent a certain virtue. The knights were sent out from the court of Gloriana, Queen of Faeryland, to combat those vices which are in opposition to the different virtues. The hero of the whole poem was Arthur, in whose character all the virtues resided, and who was in the end to win in marriage the *Faerie Queene*, representing the glory of God. Only six of these books were finished, and a seventh probably begun. The allegory is, though, at the same time confused with a political allegory, and with references to current affairs of the day, so that the whole is at times a little bewildering. The first two books are clear, but later the poet introduces many things which cloud the original story. The whole is told however, in a verse so musical and free that it is delightful to read. Taken as a whole too, it fully represents the spirit of the age; the re-awakened love of chivalry; love of England and hatred of Spain; the strange, almost fanatic, worship of the queen.

B. The Rise of the Drama.

The English Drama grew from the Misterie and Miracle play, the Morality and the Interlude. The Misterie was the representation of the events of the Bible. It first took place in the church, the parts being acted by the clergy themselves. The events described were shown as living incidents; the Misterie Plays became the picture-books of the children of religion. Later on the plays grew in size and differed in treatment; the place of their performance moved to outside the church and finally into the streets of the towns; the actors now became the artisans belonging to the different guilds, and the clergy retired from them altogether. The Miracle Play was usually the representation of some legendary story taken from the life of a saint or martyr, and this gave a greater freedom to the speech of the plays and a greater range of characters, besides providing the opportunity for the comic element. Before long the plays fell into two distinct classes, usually presented at Christmas and Easter, and about the middle of the thirteenth century were undertaken altogether by the town guilds. In the fourteenth century the two series were brought together into one, and acted on a large moveable stage, which went from one open place to another in the towns. The series then consisted of a number of short plays, often written by different authors, and each guild took the play which suited it best. They were then usually acted on Corpus Christi Day, and practically every town of even moderate size had its own play or series of plays. Of these sets of plays the best known are the *Towneley* collection, 32 in all; *York* (48), *Chester* (24), and a number of unconnected plays usually known as the *Coventry Collection*.

This style of drama really lasted for nearly 500 years, beginning about 1110 and ending in 1580, when we last hear of the representation of a miracle play at Coventry.

Besides the series of plays, separate plays were also acted on certain saints' days etc. The movement spread to the villages also, and secular subjects began to be treated. In this way came a play about Robin Hood, acted on May Day, which belongs to the 16th century; one called the *Play of St. George*, and others of the same type.

The Morality Play appears about the beginning of the 14th century. The earliest, however, which are possessed in manuscript, belong to the early fifteenth century. The titles of some of them — *Humanity, Spirit, Will and Understanding* — explain their character. The Morality was a play in which the characters were the vices and virtues, to which were later added allegorical personages, such as Riches, Truth, Good Deeds, Death etc. The characters were brought together in a rough story, at the end of which virtue triumphed.

As may be easily seen, the Morality drew nearer to the actual drama. Its plot and story had to be invented, and a clear end had to be given to it. Later, it really approached even closer to actual drama by the introduction of actual historical characters, celebrated for a virtue or vice, in place of the allegorical figures.

The Interludes came next. The exact meaning of this title in this connection is not clearly known, but usually it is given its actual Latin meaning, and it is thought the interludes were in the first place played between the longer acts of the Miracle and Morality Plays in order to stimulate the people's interest. There had been short, humorous pieces in the Miracle Plays, which were continued in the Moralities, purely for the amusement of the audience.

Now, between 1520 and 1540, the Interlude took an actual place in Literature. The name usually identified with them is that of **John Heywood**. With his work the Interlude became a kind of farce, with the characters drawn from real life, and in many cases bearing the names of men and women. They were not high either in their humour or literary worth, but they did represent a distinct advance towards regular drama. Perhaps the best known example of this style of play is *The Four PP*, which may be taken as a fair example of the whole. It tells of a Palmer, a Pardoner, a 'Pothecary and a Pedlar, who tell tales of their trades, and then engage in a competition to see who can tell the biggest lie. The prize is gained by the Palmer, who says he has never seen a woman out of temper!

The Regular Drama.

The actual transition from the Interlude to the regular drama would be too long and too difficult to trace here. It is enough to say that the first English comedy was *Ralph Royster Doyster*. The author was **Nicholas Udall**, headmaster of the great public school of Eton, and later of Westminster, and the play was probably written about 1541, although not printed until 1566. It is divided into regular acts and scenes, and its plot is carefully carried out. The story concerns the adventures of Ralph, a conceited young fool, in London, and the way in which he is played upon by Matthew Merrygreek. Ralph's courtship of the widow, Dame Custance, who is already betrothed to a merchant at that time absent, is the jest of the play. The author seems to have taken the opportunity of teaching his boys a good lesson on the importance of punctuation. A letter which Ralph sends to the lady is made utterly absurd by the misplacement of the stops. Ralph wrote:

"Now by these presents I do you advertise
That I am minded to marry you. In no wise
For your goods and substance; I could be content
To take you as you are

When the widow received the letter, it read:

"Now by these presents I do you advertise
That I am minded to marry you in no wise.
For your goods and substance I could be content
To take you as you are

Another, and perhaps still more famous, piece is *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, which was acted at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1566. Its author is usually supposed to be **John Still**, who was a member of that college and later Vice-chancellor of the University. The piece is a farce, but arranged systematically as a comedy, its language being mainly dialect. It is written with spirit, but the language is unfortunately very coarse.

In the greatest contrast to this farce stands *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex* as it was later called, the first English tragedy, which was first acted in 1561 and may have been written in the same year. Its authors were **Thomas Sackville** and **Thomas Norton**. In style it is severely classical, written on the model of the Greek tragedy, so that owing to its lack of action in a time when action seemed everything to the people, it never became popular. Other tragedies on the same model followed, but the type quickly died out.

For the next twenty years or so, between 1560 and 1580, the drama was feeling its way slowly to the light. The plays written during this time are all in the nature of experiments. All kinds of plays were written: moralities, comedies, tragedies, and sometimes all rolled together into

one. Their language was as diverse. Fourteen-syllable verse, ten-syllable verse, prose, and again these were sometimes mixed together in the same play. These plays were acted chiefly at the universities, the court, and, after 1576, in the theatres. Following this time there came, between 1580 and 1588 (1) two distinct sets of dramatic writers, the "University wits" and the theatrical playwrights (2) a regular dramatic verse (3) the licensed theatre.

The Beginnings of the Theatre.

The first theatre was built in 1576. Before this time, plays had been performed on stages set up wherever the players found it convenient or possible. In a town, the most convenient place was the inn-yard, where in those busy days of the road, the players would be sure to find an audience. The inn-yard was usually rectangular in shape. Round it, on the first floor, was usually a gallery, from which the rooms on that floor all led. The stage was placed against one of the walls, so that there would be the gallery close overhead, part of which was also curtained off and used as an upper stage where one was needed in the play. On one side of this, in the gallery, was the music. Most of the audience stood below in the yard, and later, when the theatres were built, this part of the building was still called the "yard". Others of the audience were in the gallery, which thus became, in a way, the first "boxes", and others still would be in the rooms of the inn, which corresponded to the first "private boxes". Later on, after a long struggle, the Common Council of London forbade the acting of all plays within the city, and the players were forced to move outside. This led to the first building, "The Theatre" which was erected in 1576, in Shoreditch,

outside the town walls. Later came others, of which the "Globe", built in 1599, may stand as a typical example.

The Globe Theatre was a wooden building, hexagonal without, and circular within, "this wooden O" of Shakespeare. It was open to the weather except above the stage and the "rooms" or boxes. The play began usually at three o'clock, the richer or nobler part of the audience being in the boxes, or sitting or lying on the stage itself, and the remainder standing in the "yard" or pit. The stage itself, with the second stage behind and the usual balcony, was entirely plain, no scenery of any kind being used. The place of the action was shown by a simple word "London", "France" etc., chalked upon a board; a decorated chair for a throne denoted a palace, a table covered with cups and tankards, an inn, and so on. Scenery only came in with the Restoration in 1660, and until that time no woman was allowed to act; all female parts were acted by young boys. Before the play began the place was filled with a babel of sounds. Hawkers with the latest books, sellers of apples and nuts bawling their loudest, friend noisily seeking friend. At the sound of a trumpet other people would hurry in to find a place: at a second, the criers of nuts and ale would disappear, or at least become silent; at a third, the curtain rose and the play began. After the drama the clowns and singers appeared, and farce followed tragedy. Then, the whole show at an end, players and audience would have time to get to their homes before darkness fell.

From 1580—1596 appeared the plays which may be said to represent the second stage of the Drama. The chief writers of this time were those usually known as the "University Wits", and this period contains in addition the earliest works of Shakespeare. The plays were written in

prose, verse, and blank verse, until 1587, when the appearance of **Marlowe's** *Tamburlaine* made blank verse such a splendid new thing that it became in future the chief vehicle of drama.

The University Wits included Lyly, Peele, Greene, Lodge, Marlowe, Kyd and Nash. Of these **Lyly** was the earliest, and much of his work was done in a prose which was later Shakespeare's model in his earliest efforts in prose dialogue. Peele, Greene and Marlowe are the three important writers of the group. **Peele's** most important works were *The Arraignment of Paris* (1584) and *David and Bethsabe*. Each contains passages of delightful poetry. **Greene's** plays contain little true poetry, but he wrote several charming songs. The third, **Christopher Marlowe**, is by far the greatest of the group. He was born at Canterbury in 1564, educated at the King's School of his native town, whence he proceeded to Cambridge. He seems to have left the University in 1587, and gone straight to London, as his first play *Tamburlaine* was acted in that year, though it did not bear his name. In London he is reported to have led a very wild life, though much written on the subject can be regarded as no more than legend, and is supposed to have been killed in a drunken brawl in 1593.

His work consists in all of some beautiful lyrics, notably one entitled *The Passionate Shepherd*, part of an epic, *Hero and Leander*, some translations from the Latin, and seven plays — *Tamburlaine* (2), *Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward the Second*, *The Massacre at Paris*, and *Dido*. The two last are by far the weakest.

Each play illustrates one ruling passion. Thus *Tamburlaine* depicts the desire of universal power. The chief character is a tremendous personage which entirely overshadows

dows everything else in the play. There are, however, passages of very great beauty. "*Doctor Faustus*" shows the struggle for, and failure to possess, universal knowledge and power without the necessary labouring for it. The play is chaotic, but its chaos is in keeping with the wildness of its story. *The Jew of Malta* portrays the twin passions of greed and hatred. The story of the hatred and wickedness of Barabbas is as fantastic as the account of the conquests of Tamburlaine, but the character itself is far more distinct and much more of a human being than the conqueror. The play as a whole, however is unequal. In the first two acts Barabbas may be favourably compared with Shylock, but later falls sadly away. *Edward II*, which is of fairly regular construction, shows the misery of weakness, but it is not artistically carried out.

Marlowe's knowledge of human nature was not great. This is forgotten, however, in the splendour of his imagination, and the majestic swing of his verse. He had no humour, and his comedy scenes develop into what is no better than mere horseplay. He however, really created the language of the drama in English and perhaps even the tragic drama itself.

The third stage of the Drama includes the works of Shakespeare, Jonson and a few others. It represents the work of men who were not only men of genius, but also men who were intimately connected with the theatre; who understood what a play should be, and how it should be written in order to be correctly staged.

William Shakespeare is at once the greatest figure of the time and of all English Literature. He was born at Stratford-on-Avon, almost in the centre of England, in April 1564, as the son of a well-known and prosperous merchant of that town. He was educated at the Grammar School of the town, but left it at the early age of 14,

owing to the business misfortunes of his father. The history of the next four years of his life is a blank, though many surmises have been made regarding it. When eighteen years old he married Anne Hathaway, a daughter of a farmer in a neighbouring village, his wife being eight years older than he. About 1586—7 he went to London, the simple reason of his move being most probably the urging of ambition. There he went to the theatres, where he was for a time an actor, though he never seems to have been a great one, taking as evidence the parts which he played. He then began retouching old plays to suit the actors and audience, and at last, about either 1589 or 1590, began to write original plays. He now soon became famous, and fairly rich. We find him as the friend of the Earls of Southampton and Essex, and Lord Pembroke. His plays were favourites at the Court, and the best literary society of the day was open to him. Later, trouble came to him and his friends, and this trouble is reflected in his work. Essex was executed for his share in an unsuccessful revolt, Southampton was imprisoned in the Tower, and Pembroke banished from the court. The period 1601—8 contains the sternest, the most tragic portion of his work. After that time his mind and thoughts seem to have come again into a quiet haven. He probably left London about 1609 and retired to Stratford, having accomplished some time before the great wish of his life, the buying of a house in his native town. His work of this time breathes of the peaceful stillness of the country. His last work, performed in conjunction with another writer of the time, was probably written in 1612. Then for a little over three years he was silent, and died on April 23rd 1616, and was buried in the Parish Church of his native town, where, in deference to his own wish, inscribed on the tombstone, he

has remained, though the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey contains a memorial to him.

His work may be divided into four distinct periods, though it is obvious that these must depend on the order in which the works were written. Much thought has been spent on the subject of fixing the dates, but much still remains to be done in order to make them definite. Distinct allusions to current events fix them to a certain extent in some cases; in others the definite growing in strength of the work can be taken into account; others still are definitely mentioned as having been acted on a certain date, and so on, so that nearly all of his works have been now dated to within a year or so.

First Period.

The earliest of Shakespeare's work is most probably the beginning, or at least the first outlines, of the poem *Venus and Adonis*, some of which appears to have been written before he left Stratford. It was published in 1593 and made him famous. Before that time, though, he had undoubtedly done some work in the retouching of old plays, and the first of these was most probably *Titus Andronicus*. His first original work was the comedy *Love's Labour's Lost* (1589—90). Then followed *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, in which he first showed his mastery over tragedy, and the first cast of *All's Well That Ends Well*. At the same time came the poem *The Rape of Lucrece*, printed in 1594. Then began his great series of historical plays, beginning with *Richard II* and *Richard III*. The end of this first period came with the writing of *King John* in 1596, a play distinguished by the presence of his first really great humorous character, that of Falconbridge.

Second Period. 1596—1601.

With *Merchant of Venice* appears Shakespeare the master. Comedy and tragedy are most skilfully woven together, and the chief figure of the play, Shylock, is a masterpiece. Pure comedy followed in *The Taming of the Shrew*, wit and history in the second and third parts of *Henry IV*, with its great humorous figure of Falstaff. The story of the latter was continued in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, written, it is said, at the express wish of Queen Elizabeth, who wished to see the 'great' hero in love. The last historical play, *Henry V*, came in 1599. The figure of the King is practically the ideal Englishman, and the play is often (and justly) called "a national anthem in five acts". In the same year the Globe Theatre, of which the poet was part-proprietor, was built and he wrote several comedies for it. For their subject he turned again to love, without touching the deeper passion of it. Of this *Much Ado About Nothing* and *As You Like It* are typical examples. *Twelfth Night* came next, a comedy with no touch of sadness in it, while *All's Well That Ends Well* is a little sadder in tone. The "Sonnets" were finished soon after this, and the later ones strike a distinctly sad tone. These had been begun in or before 1598, and taken altogether form the most deep and varied representation of love in the English language. Much has been written concerning them, and the view that they are largely autobiographical is now generally accepted.

Then at this time came the great, saddening turn in the poet's life, and he turned from comedy to tell the story of the tragedy of mankind.

Third Period 1601—1608.

Of this tragic period the first play written was *Julius Caesar*. Next followed *Hamlet* and then the tragi-comedy

Measure for Measure. In quick succession then came *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, all written within five years. These plays contain tragedy and the seeds of tragedy in life studied in all their varied aspects; fate which falls on ambition, luxury, pride; torture of conscience, punishment of weakness; treachery, jealousy and madness, all are there, painted as it seems no one man could paint them out of his own experience or imagination. Hamlet — the tragedy of indecision; Othello — jealousy; Macbeth — ambition and the stings of conscience; Lear — ingratitude.

Fourth Period 1608—1613.

Then the close. The poet, leaving the struggle and noise of the great world behind him, back in the peaceful, wonderfully beautiful scenes of his childhood, finishes his great life's work, as one who has known the sadness of the world, but has found peace beyond it. *The Winter's Tale*, truly a real fairy tale, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, full of the same quiet spirit, and showing a delight in the beauties of nature. Then, probably in 1612, the finish of his work by the writing, with Fletcher, of *Henry VIII*.

So, in twenty-eight short years, Shakespeare made the drama represent nearly the whole of human life. Putting his work into bold figures it contains 37 plays, over a hundred beautiful sonnets, two long poems and a number of shorter ones, in addition to some charming songs scattered through the different plays.

The Decline of the Drama.

After Shakespeare the drama declined again rather rapidly. Indeed even during his lifetime the signs of the

decline were already there, or rather the signs of the way in which the decline would come. It showed itself in the work of the greatest of his contemporaries, although that work was at the same time brilliant. Shakespeare had written to portray the whole of human nature, and his writings would hold good for any period of human history. However, in the works of his nearest follower, **Ben Jonson**, the drama was the picture of a particular part of human nature, and especially of his own age. The title of his first play *Every Man in His Humour* (1596) shows clearly this idea, and his characters are men and women as they would become when under the influence of a certain sentiment or "humour". This first play was followed by *Every Man out of His Humour*, and *Cynthia's Revels*, written to satirise the courtiers of the time. This aroused great anger against him. His next work was a tragedy, *Sejanus*, which was not successful, but he then quickly wrote three splendid comedies. These were *Volpone the Fox* (1605) his finest work; the *Silent Woman* (1609) a good picture of the high society life of the time; and the *Alchemist*, which is full of rather obscure learning, but contains one really fine character. In 1619 he became Poet Laureate, but soon after became very poor and ill. His last work, a pastoral drama, *The Sad Shepherd*, shows the gentleness which characterised Shakespeare's last years also. He died in 1637, when about sixty-four years old.

Thomas Dekker, who is perhaps best known for his beautiful lyrics, wrote several good light comedies, which excellently portray the manners of the time. His best work, however, is found in the drama *The Witch of Edmonton*, in which as well as in other plays, the women characters are always graceful and tender.

George Chapman was a greater genius than Dekker, and his best work, with possibly the exception of his famous translation of Homer, was done in five tragedies taken from French history.

Beaumont and Fletcher, whose names are usually coupled together, wrote more than fifty plays, about a third of which really belong to the latter alone. Beaumont died in the same year as Shakespeare and Fletcher nine years later, 1625. The great number of their plays is a striking example of the productiveness of the time. Their plots are usually connected and well carried through. In tragedy and comedy they are about equal, while in Fletcher's works are to be found many beautiful lyrics. However the art of the drama here has changed for the worse. Often the situations are out of the way, and there is often a striving after the merely sensational.

John Webster also lowered the drama by this sensational touch, and the horrible situations he delighted to dwell upon. However he showed wonderful strength in the depicting of the most varied emotions in a few words. His two greatest plays, both really sensational tragedies, are the *Duchess of Malfi* (1616) and *The White Devil* (1612).

From this time the decay of the drama was more rapid. The sensationalism increased, the language grew worse, and the plots and situations still more fantastic. For a time, even with these defects, good work was done, notably by **Massinger**, whose best known play is *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, containing one brilliant character. His contemporary, **John Ford**, published in 1634 *Perkin Warbeck*, one of the best historical dramas after Shakespeare.

Soon after this, with the outbreak of Civil War in 1642, the theatres were closed, and consequently little or nothing was written. There were still "strolling players"

who went about the country, but even this was against law. In 1656 there came an entirely new style of drama with the opera *The Siege of Rhodes*, by *Sir William Davenant*, and then with the Restoration four years later and the licentiousness of the Court of Charles II, the drama sank deep into the depths.

Chapter 6.

THE LATER ELIZABETHAN AGE (1603—1660).

Although James I became king in 1603 the Elizabethan spirit lived in literature much later, and that of this period may still be called by the same name. As a whole the poetry declined but a new and stronger prose arose. The greatest example of this prose is the *Authorised Version of the Bible*. It may truly be called the foundation of all good English prose. Its style, when the subject gives it full play, is a high example of beauty and melody. There is no better English anywhere than the English of the Bible, and no doubt the fact that the literary excellences of the languages from which it was translated were allowed to remain and to show in its translation helps it considerably. The frequent attempts to revise it have all been unsuccessful, the most notable failure being the latest one, published only last year, in which alterations in the text seem to have been made for pure love of saying something different, and for no other purpose whatever.

Of the remaining prose of this time, the work of **Francis Bacon** takes the leading place. Bacon was born in 1561, as the son of the Lord Keeper under Elizabeth. At the age of 12 he went to Cambridge, where he spent three years. Later he studied law, and afterwards spent some

time in Paris. He entered Parliament in 1584 and quickly became prominent. During Elizabeth's reign he obtained very little reward for his services, but in 1607 he was knighted, and then in 1618 became Lord Chancellor, with the title of Baron Verulam. Three years afterwards he was accused of bribery, and practically pleading guilty to the charge, was removed from all his offices, fined a large sum of money, and for a time imprisoned, in addition to being prohibited to live in London. He was soon set free, however, and his fine remitted. In 1626, as a direct result of one of his experiments in natural science, he caught cold, and died at a friend's house near Highgate.

His writings consist of a number of thoughtful and well written essays, the first of which were published in 1597, and others about 1625; the scientific work *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), in which he points out the necessity of new methods in the search for the solution of problems in natural history; and in the last years of his life *The History of Henry VII* and *The New Atlantis*.

Perhaps the greatest importance of Bacon's work lies in the impulse it gave towards research, and the results were quickly seen, for science in England made rapid strides in the next few years.

The poetry of this time on the whole declined in quality, in spite of the fact that the finest work of some of the Elizabethan writers, notably Shakespeare, was done during the period. The reason of the decline may be found in the history of the time. The spirit which fired the true Elizabethans was love of the country, and the queen. With the death of Elizabeth this idea failed. Instead developed two quarrels in the state; in politics the beginning of the struggle between Divine Right and Freedom, and that of the Church against the Puritans. The poets came to rep-

resent parties, and not England as a whole. The influences of the Elizabethan time became less, and in poetry in particular its faults were glorified into virtues in some cases. For instance, the fantastic style of "Euphues" grew still more in favour, and was introduced into verse also. Then too, with the passing of the Elizabethan fervour, the spirit of invention and originality failed, with the natural result — imitation. The poets of the time either imitated closely, or were greatly influenced by the work of Spenser.

The struggle between King and Parliament seems to have produced also two classes of poets. Of these the first usually go by the name of "Caroline" or Cavalier Poets, and are either love poets or religious poets. The greatest of these was **Robert Herrick**, who was a clergyman holding a living in the West of England until he was forced to leave it owing to the triumph of the Parliament. His two books of verse, *Noble Numbers* and *Hesperides*, appeared together in 1648. His poems fall into three classes: epigrams, which do not do him justice; religious poems which are very frequently of great beauty, and a great number of poems which treat of love, descriptions of natural scenery, and many other things. In these poems almost anything served him for a subject, and usually the subject matters least, as the verse is always musical in the highest degree. Another great feature of his work is the unerring selection of the word which is exactly "right" in any special place in the verse.

However, all names pale here by the side of that of **John Milton**. Milton may well be called the last of the Elizabethans, for his work is essentially Elizabethan in character. He was born in London in 1608, close to the "Mermaid Tavern", the scene of what must have been many wonderful meetings between the great literary men of the

day. His literary life really began with his entrance into Cambridge in 1625, where he soon became prominent for his writings both in Latin and English. His first great work, the *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* was written in 1629. He left the University three years later, and proceeded to the house of his father at Horton, near Windsor, where he remained five years. These years produced *L'Allegro*, a poem urging the beauties of a happy life, and *Il Penseroso*, which prefers the thoughtful to the pleasurable life, and which indeed seems a little more natural in its tone; *Comus*, a masque (1634), came a year afterwards. It is, however, highly allegorical, and its allegory attacks the Court. In 1637 was written *Lycidas*, a poem written to lament the death of one of the poet's friends, drowned in the Irish Channel. This, however, really contains an attack on some of the priests. Milton was already almost definitely a Puritan. In 1638, after the death of his mother, he started on a continental tour, which was to have embraced Italy and Greece. He visited Florence, Rome and Naples, where he heard the news of the civil commotion in England, and instantly decided to return. With his return came a great change in his life. In a world of strife, his work moved from the realm of poetry into that of prose. For practically twenty years (1640—1660), the only poetry which he wrote was a number of beautiful sonnets. The rest of his work of this period consists wholly of political pamphlets. The chief of these were *Areopagitica* (1644), an attack on the censorship of the press, and *On Education*, both of which are remarkable for their fine prose. In 1651 his *Defence of the People of England*, written in Latin in answer to a book written by one of the greatest continental scholars of this time in defence of Charles I, made him famous throughout Europe. By the next year he had become totally blind,

but he continued in his post as Latin Secretary to Cromwell, to which he had been appointed in 1649, when the latter was made Lord Protector. In 1658 he had begun his greatest work *Paradise Lost*, but the death of Cromwell in that year forced him to return to politics and the writing of other pamphlets. At the Restoration in 1660 he was for a time imprisoned, but soon released. He then settled in Bunhill Fields, at that time just outside London, and here his greatest work was written. This was *Paradise Lost*, finished in 1665 and published in 1667. It is an epic poem written in the wonderfully musical blank verse of which Milton was such a master, its subject being the fall of Man and his expulsion from Paradise. At first the supreme figure of the poem is Satan, but later all interest centres on the characters of Adam and Eve, and the last lines leave them in search of a place where they may find peace anew.

The later works of Milton include *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* (the Wrestler). The former describes the temptation of Christ in the wilderness and His victory. The latter shows Samson in his blindness. *Samson* represents the Puritan cause, now a defeated captive, and the triumphant death of its hero shows the poet's belief in the final success of his beloved cause. Both were published in 1671. Three years later, in November 1674, blind and poor, Milton died.

The Puritanism of this time produced another great work. This was *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the author of which was **John Bunyan**. He was born at Elstow in Bedfordshire in 1628, was the son of a tinker, and for some time a tinker himself. He served in the Civil Wars, most probably on the Parliamentary side, though that is by no means sure. He married when quite young and, through the influence of

two religious books given him by his wife, got religion, and began to preach in the villages near his home. At the Restoration he was arrested for holding field-meetings, and imprisoned in Bedford Jail, where he remained about thirteen years. During this time most of his works are supposed to have been written. The first part of the *Pilgrim's Progress* was published in 1678. It is a beautifully simple allegorical story of the journey of one Christian "from this world to the world that is to come". Its language is the language of the Authorised Version, with which this generation were perfectly familiar. It shows clear and distinct types of character, vivid descriptions and a good dramatic dialogue. Bunyan's other works are *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680) a strange little story, the merit of which is often overlooked, and the allegory *The Holy War* (1682). These works, and particularly the *Pilgrim's Progress*, really belong to the work of the Elizabethan Age, although divided from it by such a great lapse of time. The Elizabethan spirit is there in its originality and naturalness.

Chapter 7.

THE "AGE OF REASON".

With the Restoration came a great change in the literature of England, both in its style, and choice of subject. This applied specially to the poetry of the time. It may be ascribed to a certain extent to French influence. All over Europe at this time there was a striving after the right way of doing things, which had effect in many directions. In poetry it was the cause of a new school of criticism, which demanded first of all finish and neatness of expres-

sion. This new criticism first took form in France, and in the end its influence spread to England, or perhaps it would be more correct to say its influence gave an added impulse to the same movement in England, for signs of it had already become noticeable. The earliest writers in this new way were **Edmund Waller**, whose works appeared as early as 1623, **Sir John Denham**, who followed his example in a poem written nineteen years later, and the later work of **Abraham Cowley** was formal and precise enough to satisfy even the strictest champions of this new style. The two great men of this age of "rule and reason" are, however, Dryden and Pope. Satiric poetry also came to the front during this time. Marvell's "*Satires*" show the Puritan's anger against the excesses which followed the Restoration, and directly the opposite view is portrayed in **Samuel Butler's** *Hudibras*, for it describes the reaction against Puritanism. It is witty and clever, and was almost universally popular at the time of its appearance in 1663. It fails in the end as satire, however, as it has not the slightest semblance of truth.

The first great writer of this new poetry, which was founded entirely on intellect rather than sentiment, was *John Dryden*.

John Dryden was born in 1631, and educated at Westminster and Cambridge. His first work, a poem written on the death of Cromwell, appeared in 1658, but only two years later he greeted the return of the Stuart Monarchy in another poem entitled *Astræa Redux*. During the years of the Plague and the Great Fire, he was absent from London, and the events of the year 1666 were celebrated by him in a poem, *Annus Mirabilis*, which appeared in the following year. In this he first showed his mastery over metre. For some years after this time he was writing

plays, but never succeeded in producing a masterpiece, although several enjoyed moderate success. These plays were usually written in rhymed couplets, however, and the effect of this constant practice in the writing of verse showed itself in his later works. In 1681 he published the first part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, the greatest of English satires. In this satire Lord Shaftesbury, the counsellor of the Duke of Monmouth, was fiercely attacked under the character of Achitophel, while a wonderful, if cruel, sketch of the Duke of Buckingham, one of Dryden's enemies, was given in that of Zimri. The poem was altogether the first great example of the new style of "party" poetry which was to grow so strong within the next few years. It was quickly followed by three other fierce and clever satires: *The Medal* (1682) a second attack on Shaftesbury; *MacFlecknoe* in the same year, an attack on a rival poet who had attached himself to Shaftesbury's party, and the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, the greater portion of which was, however, not the work of Dryden himself. A theological poem *Religio Laici* states the case of the Church of England. On the accession of James II, he changed his religion and became a Roman Catholic, poverty being perhaps the chief reason of this sudden face-about. In 1687 he wrote another poem, *The Hind and the Panther*, defending his new religion. In it the Hind represents the Church of Rome, while the Panther represents the Church of England. The Dissenters are shown in the shapes of the lower animals, and receive very rough handling. The verse on the whole shows the usual great musical quality of the poet's work.

At the Revolution in 1688, Dryden this time remained true to his king, and was in consequence deprived of all his offices. He turned again to the drama, but with little success. He then devoted his attention to his translation

of Virgil, which was published in 1697. He showed his skill in narrative poetry in *Fables, Ancient and Modern*, which he finished in 1699. The work of the later years of his life also includes two beautiful lyrics, the *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687) and *Alexander's Feast* (1697). For many years now he had reigned over the world of English letters, and was throned like a king in the circle of writers at Will's Coffeehouse, which was their habitual gathering place, just as "The Mermaid" had been in the time of Shakespeare. Here he remained supreme till his death in 1700.

Prose Literature.

Dryden was fully as supreme in the prose literature of his time as in that of verse. Most of his work was criticism, the essays being as a rule prefixed to his dramas. The chief of them were *On the Historical Poem*, *On Heroic Plays*, some scattered criticism on dramatic rhyme and the classical writers, and finally, perhaps his best work in this direction, the *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*. He is at once the leader of modern literary criticism and of modern prose, with an easy and unaffected style.

The prose of the period includes writing on many different subjects. Science, theology, politics and philosophy are all represented. Science in particular had made a rapid advance. The Royal Society had been established in 1662, and many new subjects were studied, and their literature begun. The most important writer here was **Sir Isaac Newton**, whose *Theory of Light* was presented to the Society in 1671, while sixteen years later his *Principia*, with its proof of the theory of gravitation, made practically a revolution in the scientific world.

The advance was greater in theological and political knowledge. There arose two parties in each case: in Religion Authority against Reason; in Politics Authority against Individual Freedom. This was an age of great preachers.

Political Literature.

The resistance to authority on the question of individual freedom naturally rested on the opposition to the theory of Divine Right. This theory had of course received a heavy blow during the Civil War. The question of it was never raised, however, during the time of the Commonwealth¹, except by the writings of one man, **John Hobbes**. His *Leviathan*, published in 1651, declared that the origin of all power was in the people and that the aim of all power was the common good. This theory obviously destroyed the idea of Divine Right. Hobbes' style may be compared with that of Dryden, as it is well adapted to the subject on which he wrote, as well as being easy and unaffected.

The political pamphlet was also begun at this time by various writers.

John Locke, after the Revolution, was a follower of Hobbes. He was born in Somerset in 1632, and educated at Westminster and Oxford. He studied there medicine and philosophy, but, being a friend of Lord Shaftesbury, he elected to follow that nobleman into exile after the failure of the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685. At the Revolution he was enabled to return to England, where he

¹ The Commonwealth was the period (1649—60) from the execution of Charles I to the Restoration, during which time Cromwell was Lord Protector.

received several offices. He lived there quietly and died in 1704.

His first published work was the *Letters on Toleration*, written before 1688, in which he clearly set forth the grounds for freedom of thought in religion. His *Civil Government* (1690) followed the teaching of Hobbes, with some differences. He gave to the people the right of taking away power from their ruler when once they had bestowed that power. This right Hobbes had denied.

What is usually regarded as his greatest work, *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*, appeared in the same year as the *Civil Government*. In it he discussed all the limits of the understanding, and traced all ideas and all knowledge to experience. In his clear statement of the working of Understanding he did very much towards finding the true method of thinking.

His most important work, *Thoughts on Education*, was published in 1693. It is very practical, and its influence was direct and good. Indeed some little part of this influence may be said to be still felt at the present day.

Literature from 1702—1745.

Towards the end of the reign of William III arose a literature which was partly new and partly a continuation of the old. It was a time when feeling ran very high. With the coming of a new monarchy there had arisen two parties; those who acknowledged that monarchy, and those who refused to do so. In addition there was the struggle between the Dissenters and the Church, and later two bitterly antagonistic political parties which were now called Whig and Tory. These conflicts produced a great number of political pamphlets, songs and satirical ballads sung in

the streets, satirical poems and letters. All discussions became personal and practical, and the literature of the time, with but few exceptions, developed into a Party Literature. The political leaders almost regularly hired the poets and prose-writers of the time to hurl abuse at their opponents, and heap praise upon themselves under names which were but weakly disguised, if disguised at all. Thus the style and honour of literature was in every way disgracefully lowered. At the same time some good came out of this evil. With a party literature of this kind it was necessary to study minutely the weaknesses of the opposing side, and all the varieties of social life were very vividly painted. Then, also, criticism was so active that form was of necessity eagerly studied. With this study, English prose became delightfully simple and clear, while with regard to poetry, verse reached a very high point in neatness of expression. It was, however, quite artificial, and was almost devoid of any study of nature or use of imagination.

Alexander Pope represents to the full this class of literature. He was born in 1688 in London. His parents were Roman Catholics, and he received his early education, which was by no means a good one, from priests. When his father retired from business, the family removed to a place near Windsor Forest, and from this time on he seems to have educated himself. He is reported to have written quite good verse at the early age of 12. His first published work, *The Pastorals*, appeared in 1709, and two years later came the *Essay on Criticism*, which established him as a critical poet. In the next year appeared the *Rape of the Lock*, a brilliant piece of work. It is a mock epic, which relates the progress of a quarrel which occurred between two noble families when a London "beau" snipped a lock of hair from the head of a young Court beauty. It is the

most finished poem of its kind in the language. About this time he became acquainted with some of the most famous literary men of the day, and joined a club which they had founded. Soon after this he became famous on account of his translation of the *Iliad* (1715—20) and *Odyssey* (1723—5) which brought him so much money as to make him independent. He then removed to Twickenham, where he lived for the remainder of his life. It was from this home that he published the *Dunciad* (the "Iliad" of the Dunces), in 1728. This was a fierce satire levelled against the innumerable petty poets of the day, many of whom had personally annoyed him by their writings. It was severe, but in the majority of cases his judgment has been confirmed by posterity. His next works were the *Essay on Man* (1732—5) and *Moral Essays* (1732—4). The first of these is very little else in its subject matter than a string of every day platitudes, but the lines in which Pope expressed these platitudes have passed in many cases into everyday use. It is certainly true that many English people quote Pope without knowing it. The *Moral Essays*, written almost in the form of letters to various men and women, praised his friends, and satirised those people who belonged to the other party.

The excellence of much of his work lies in the finished types of character which he introduced into it. His two great translations show very little of the Greek spirit, although at the same time they were done with great literary skill. Most of his work was done in the "heroic couplet", the ten syllable iambic line rhymed in pairs, and in his hands it received the greatest polish and correctness which it has ever had. However, its very perfection at length wearies the ear. Above all, at a time when art was degraded by its use in politics to so great a degree, Pope loved it for

its own sake, and remained faithful to the end. By 1740 most of the members of his own literary circle were dead, and four years later he died.

The Prose Literature of this period centres round four great names: Swift, Defoe, Addison and Steele. **Jonathan Swift** was born in Ireland of English parents in 1667, and was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he does not seem to have been either very happy or successful. Later he became secretary to a distant relation, Sir William Temple. Some time after he went to Ireland once more, and entered the Church, receiving a small living, but after two years he returned once more to England. It was at this time he met "Stella", then quite a little girl. She became his playmate, later his life-long friend, and probably in the end his wife. His first work, *The Battle of the Books*, written in 1697, was in reality a satire on a literary argument which was proceeding at that time. This and the *Tale of a Tub*, a satire on the Dissenters and in general upon the whole Church, were published in 1704. For some time after this his work consisted of a series of brilliant political pamphlets written in support of the Whigs. In 1710, however, he joined the Tory party, and his articles brought him court favour, while his literary fame became greater with the publication of many witty letters and poems. On the accession of George I in 1714 he was appointed Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin, a reward which he rightly regarded as a poor one for the brilliant services he had rendered the Tory party. In 1726 came the highest effort of his genius, the famous satires, *Gulliver's Travels*. The voyage to Lilliput and Brobdingnag satirised the politics, manners and religion of England and the rest of Europe as a whole; that to Laputa made sport of the philosophers, while that to the country of the Houy-

hnhnms attacked the whole body of mankind. Swift's style here is delightfully clear and easy to understand, as is evidenced by the delight which children find in the stories of the voyage to Lilliput and its companion country. Disregarding the satire, the stories are as delightful as fairy tales, and illustrate fully the power which Swift had of seizing an idea and bringing it down from the realm of fancy into what seems to be the world of hard fact. This is the general point of most of his work.

The last years of his life were unhappy. A disappointed lonely man, living in a country which for some reason he had always hated, the end of his life was clouded by the madness which he had always feared was descending upon him, and he died in 1745, hopelessly insane.

The second of the prose writers of this time, **Daniel Defoe**, was born in London in 1659. He was well educated, and in his early life fairly successful in trade. Later, he was some years abroad, probably as a result of some connection with the Monmouth Rebellion¹. On his return he became one of the political pamphleteers. In 1702 he wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* for which he was arrested, fined, and condemned to stand in the pillory. The work was very ironical in tone, and was undoubtedly effective. At all events, his stay in the pillory was made almost an occasion of triumph.

¹ *Monmouth Rebellion*. The Duke of Monmouth, natural son of Charles II had claimed the throne, to the exclusion of Charles' brother James, Duke of York. When Charles died in 1685 James at once succeeded him. Upon this Monmouth landed in the west of England in June 1685 and endeavoured to raise the country against the king. The poorer people joined him in fairly great force but the nobility and gentry held aloof. His small army was defeated at Sedgemoor in July 1685, this being the last battle fought on English soil. Monmouth was later captured and executed.

He then turned to journalism, and his "Review", carried on from 1704 to 1713, was written entirely by himself, while at the same time he founded, and wrote for, a great number of other papers, his contributions covering a wide range of subjects. His best work was done, however, towards the end of his life, and consisted of fiction. The book on which his fame principally rests is *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). It is a masterpiece of invention, in which it is superior to *Gulliver's Travels*, and with its simple style shows a charm which has been felt by people of all ages and of many nations. This and the remainder of his works of fiction cannot be called novels, as they have no plot which is worked out to a definite end. They represent, however, a distinct advance on the romances of Elizabethan times. Towards the end of his life Defoe suffered some strange reverse of fortune, and he died, poor and unhappy, in 1731.

The other two names, Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele, are connected with a different class of writing. In their hands, and especially Addison's, the essay became gay, light, and graceful. It differed from the essays of Bacon, in being a clear, clever description of a certain subject, rather than a deep analysis of it.

Addison was born in 1672, his father later being Dean of Lichfield. He was educated at Charterhouse, where he met Steele, and a friendship ensued which lasted his lifetime. He then proceeded to Oxford, and later, on receiving a travelling scholarship¹, passed four years on the Continent. In 1704 appeared a poem *The Campaign*, written

¹ i. e. a sum of money granted by the university authorities to enable him to continue his studies abroad.

to celebrate the Battle of Blenheim¹ and its victor. This poem contained one fine passage, and gained high reputation at this time. After this he obtained many official appointments, and in the end became Secretary of State in 1717, held office for a short time and resigned it for a large pension. He died, however, in London two years later at the early age of forty-seven.

Steele was born in the same year as Addison, and they grew up almost together. From the Charterhouse, Steele also went to Oxford, but he left without taking a degree, afterwards entering the army. He was also engaged in politics on the Whig side, at first with ill - success, but when at last fortune turned to the side of his party he was knighted. It was after this time that he, together with Addison, almost recreated the essay. Steele began in 1709 a small periodical called the *Tatler*, in which Addison joined him. It was at first published three times a week, and then daily, the contributions being anonymous. It treated of everything in the society and everyday life of the time in London. The *Tatler* was superseded in 1711 by the *Spectator*, and it is in the articles published in this periodical that Addison's work shows at its best. His characters, of which perhaps the best known is Sir Roger de Coverley, are all cleverly drawn. His style also is perfectly suited to the subject, and is usually sweet and melodious. There is no doubt that by his work in the *Spectator* Addison considerably raised the tone of society. His critical essays on literature, which usually appeared in the Friday numbers, undoubtedly helped his public to understand and appreciate

¹ Blenheim (1704) was the first great battle of what is known in English history as the War of the Spanish Succession (1702—13) and its victor was the famous Duke of Marlborough.

those authors and poets about whom he wrote. His ridicule of extravagant fashions, reproof of bad morals, and the work of other contributors on these and other subjects, all had very great effect on the manners and morals of the time, and this influence naturally spread beyond London also.

The Drama 1660—1780.

As we have before seen, the Drama decayed rapidly after the death of Shakespeare and Jonson. During the Commonwealth, the theatres were closed, and then, when at the Restoration in 1660 they were reopened, they broke away entirely from the spirit of Puritanism, and sank into the depths of immorality. In the beginning the influence of the French drama was greatly felt. Many plots were borrowed from French romances and plays, and later the plays of Racine and Molière were translated and borrowed from also. The full theory of the "unities"¹ was adopted in its entirety, and at the same time plays came to be written in rhyme rather than blank verse.

The theatre itself underwent some changes. For the first time actresses appeared on the stage, the ballet was introduced, and scenery began to be used. **Dryden** here became for a time supreme in drama, as he had been in verse and prose. He began writing comedies which were not very successful, but, later, two tragedies, *The Indian Queen* and *The Indian Emperor*, showed an advance, and indeed established the heroic couplet as the vehicle of drama for

¹ *The Unities*. Classical tradition said that the drama should be governed by the Unity of Time, the Unity of Place, and the Unity of Action. According to this, a drama must represent a single action proceeding to one end in one and the same place, without any breaks in the time. [In addition it was also against mixing prose and verse, or comedy and tragedy in the same play.]

fourteen years. Three other tragedies which followed induced the **Duke of Buckingham** to write a burlesque *The Rehearsal*, which ably showed the faults of this style of tragedy and for which Dryden revenged himself by the character of Zimri in the poem "Absalom". In 1678 Dryden abandoned the use of rhyme in a fine tragedy, *All for Love*, and then produced a fair example of low comedy in the *Spanish Friar*. The dramatists of the time, however, excelled in comedy. The light comedy of manners rose during this period and the chief names to be noted are those of **Sir George Etherege**, whose comedy *She Would if She Could* really initiated this new style; **Wycherley**, **William Congreve**, **Sir John Vanbrugh** and **George Farquhar**, all of whom wrote with quick invention and gaiety. The tone of the whole is, however, so immoral as to preclude the appearance of many of them on the present day stage, though it must be admitted that some of Wycherley's plays, notably *The Country Wife*, have been lately produced with fair success in London.

This immorality caused in 1698 the appearance of a book, the author of which was Jeremy Taylor, which fiercely attacked the stage and the plays produced on it. This and the steady growth of a higher tone in society had some good effect. At this time Steele's plays were written. This first play the *Lying Lover* introduced a new style, the Sentimental Comedy, and all of his plays were didactic in a high degree. The tragedy at this time declined greatly; a decline from which it has never thoroughly recovered. Comedy, however, continued to flourish. A notable work of the time was **Gay's Beggar's Opera** (1728) which was so recently revived in London with such wonderful success.

The style of the Drama after the Restoration was continued for some time. Over a century later **Goldsmith**

and **Sheridan** produced comedies possessing the same style of humour and wit, but fortunately without the coarseness of the former plays. The best and most popular of their plays are **Goldsmith's** *Good Natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, and **Sheridan's** *The Rivals*, *The School for Scandal* and *The Critic*. With regard to Sheridan, his place in literature now depends far more on his dramatic work than on his oratory, so that some details of his life must be given here. With Goldsmith it is otherwise.

Richard Sheridan was born in Dublin in 1751. He was educated at Harrow, and early began on literary work. In 1775 he produced his famous comedy *The Rivals* at Covent Garden, and the piece made him at once famous. Later he became manager and owner of Drury Lane Theatre. In 1780 he entered Parliament, attaching himself to the Whigs. He became rather prominent there on account of some effective speeches. Towards the end of his life he seems to have lived in poverty, and he died in 1816.

The sentimental comedy was also carried on into the next age by a number of different writers, but really the history of the drama at this point ends with Sheridan.

Chapter 8.

PROSE LITERATURE 1745—1832.

During the eighteenth century there was a remarkable growth in Literature in England, especially beginning from about the middle of the century. There were several well-defined reasons for this. First of all, by this time a good prose style had actually developed, so that it was really

possible for more good work to be done. Next, England was at this time far quite a long period free from any war, and had in consequence grown wealthy. Conditions of the time led to the need for quicker communication between the towns, and this naturally led also to the literature being spread more quickly than would have been possible before. The new books and criticism came into village life also, and undoubtedly caused some to write who might otherwise have been silent. The third important point is the rise of the newspapers. They quickly rose until the names of the best known literary men of the day appeared among those of their contributors. Their real power began here, for it was after a struggle from 1764 to 1771 that they obtained the right to publish and make comments on the parliamentary debates, and also to criticise the conduct of ministers at any time.

Lastly, communication with the continent had increased and improved during this time of peace and also in the later wars. This led in the end to the coming of two new influences on English Literature. In the first place the works of all the French liberal thinkers in the middle of the century reached England and had great influence on all the social and political literature of the time. The second influence was the rise of the new German movement, which told greatly upon the work of the poetical school which arose in England at the time of the French Revolution.

This period of Literature 1745—1832 falls almost automatically into two halves, — the time before the French Revolution and the time after it. The work of the earlier half centres round the life and literary work of one man and his friends. This man was **Samuel Johnson**, who may be called the last of the literary "kings". He was born at

Lichfield in 1709, and as his father was a bookseller, he had early opportunity of becoming well acquainted with books. He was educated at a private school and then proceeded to Oxford, being, however, in 1731 forced to leave the University on account of the death of his father. He was then for a time a schoolmaster, although really very badly equipped for such work by reason of some natural defects. In 1735 he married a widow about twenty years older than himself, and with some money which she brought him he set up a private school, which failed completely. In 1737 he went to London, being accompanied by one of his pupils, David Garrick, who was later to become the most famous actor of his day. For some years then little of his life is known, except that it is certain that it was a period of the greatest poverty and misery. His first published work, a poem, *London*, issued in 1738, satirised the society and manners of the town. This work he greatly surpassed in a second poem, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, which was published eleven years later. A little later he published a periodical after the manner of the *Spectator*, but the lightness and grace of Addison and Steele's work were entirely lacking from it. This periodical was called the *Rambler* (1750—2) and was succeeded by the *Idler*. At the same time he was busily engaged on his famous *Dictionary of the English Language*, finished in 1755 after eight years work. With regard to the publication of this he again singled himself out as an original. He refused an offer of help from a nobleman, and thus really became the first of modern literary men who stand or fall by the work of their pen, unaided by the powerful backing of a patron.

With his next work *Rasselas* (1759) he brought the didactic novel into English. He was still poor at this time,

and this work was performed in order to enable him to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral. Three years later, however, he was raised to comparative wealth by the conferring on him of a pension of £ 300 a year. The remainder of his life was much more happy, but during this period he wrote little. The most important work of these closing years is *The Lives of the Poets*, which appeared as prefaces to his editions of their works, and were issued between 1779 and 1781. By his work here he gave biography a considerably higher place in literature. His health gradually failed after this time and he died in 1784, being buried in Westminster Abbey.

Strangely enough, Johnson's real importance in English Literature rests, not upon his written works, but on his position as the leader of the literary club which he had founded. When he talked, he spoke the most direct and forcible English, but it seems that when his thoughts had to be transferred to paper they underwent some strange process of translation into a style loaded down with Latinisms, the style sometimes now referred to as "Johnsonese". The brilliance of his talk during these gatherings of his club members, the most brilliant men of the day, has been admirably, portrayed for us in the Biography which Johnson's devoted follower, **James Boswell**, published in 1791. This biography remains to the present day the best in the English language.

Side by side with Johnson stands **Oliver Goldsmith**, in some ways a curious parallel to his elder colleague. Goldsmith was born at Pallasmore, Ireland, in 1728, his father being a clergyman. Later the family removed to Lissoy, where the poet's boyhood was spent. He was educated at various private schools, and at Trinity College, Dublin, where he was by no means successful. Later he went,

through the kindness of some friends, to study medicine at Edinburgh, but after two years his restlessness drove him abroad, where he seems to have wandered through several different countries. He returned to England absolutely penniless and is said to have begged his way from Dover to London. He was then for a time "Jack of all trades", being in turn an usher in a school, a printer's reader, reviewer, and occasionally doing some practice as a doctor.

His first important work, *The Traveller* (1764) gave him a very high reputation. Then quickly followed the best of his works. Two years after the *Traveller* came *The Vicar of Wakefield* a beautifully tender story, written in graceful and pure English. Another two years showed him accomplished in a third form of writing, for then his comedy *The Good Natured Man* was produced. The same period of time elapsed before *The Deserted Village* appeared and ratified his poetical position, while three years later the splendid comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* placed him at the head of the dramatists of the period, with the only possible exception of Sheridan. He died in 1774 of fever, heavily in debt. His income must have been considerable towards the end of his life, but owing to his great kindness of heart, the money left him more easily than it came, and he was always in straitened circumstances.

The importance of Goldsmith's work rests almost entirely on his charming style. A little of this style appears in practically all his prose work, even in the worst of it, but he really used it to the best effect in scattered essays which he wrote after the *Spectator* model for various periodicals, although it is of course also found in the *Vicar of Wakefield*. Goldsmith may be regarded as the greatest of the miscellaneous writers on the lighter side, as Johnson was the greatest on the more serious. Added to this he

is one of the age's best tale tellers; there is only one contemporary dramatist who can challenge him for supremacy, and he is also among the greater poets of the time. Altogether he fully deserves Johnson's own opinion of his literary ability: "he is a great man".

The Novel.

The exact history of the English Novel is rather obscure. It is however obvious that after the Restoration there was a determined effort towards completed prose fiction. The use of the general novel form by Swift and Defoe, actually men so different in character, shows that the completed form of the novel was near in the early eighteenth century. The work did not for a time go much further forward until it had a huge stride with the work of three men, who may be called the first novelists.

Samuel Richardson is the oldest of these three, though his publications did not precede those of the other two by any great length of time. He was born in Derbyshire in 1689, his father being a joiner. He was educated at the Charterhouse and in 1706 apprenticed to a printer, whose daughter he later married. He himself became afterwards a printer, and was fairly prosperous. When he was more than fifty years of age he began his first great work. He had received from a London publishing firm either a commission or a suggestion for a model letter-writer, and this led to the composition of the novel *Pamela*, which is written in the form of letters. The first part of this work was published in 1740 and became very popular. It was followed in 1748 by *Clarissa*, which is usually regarded as his masterpiece, and five years later by *Sir Charles Grandison*. Except one paper in a periodical of the time he published

nothing else. He was appointed King's Printer in 1761, but died in the next year.

Richardson's purpose in his works was undoubtedly the desire to enforce lessons of morality. He has been recognised, however, as a greater artist than a moralist, and it is significant that his popularity was as great abroad as in England. He may be said to have founded the novel of feeling rather than the plain tale of adventure, and his adaption of the letter form influenced later writers greatly. He for the first time produced the true novel i.e. a story written round the passion of love and brought by the actions of the characters to a definite conclusion, either tragic or joyful. With all this, though, it must be admitted that Richardson did not reach the highest form of the novel. It is strange that this highest form came actually from the use in the first place of deliberate parody of his work. The writer of this parody was **Henry Fielding**. He was born in the South of England in 1707, and came of a good and ancient family. His father was a general in the army, and had served under Marlborough. His family, was, however, a younger branch, and he himself seems to have been almost poor. He was educated at Eton and Leyden (Holland), and then after a time settled in London. During a period of ten years he produced several plays none of which were very successful. The work which he published first was *The Adventures of Joseph Andrews* (1742) and started as a deliberate burlesque of Richardson's *Pamela*. But his genius was too great to allow him to keep long to parody, and the story quickly becomes distinct in itself. It is notable from the first for its wonderfully life-like characters, and the use of a delicate irony.

As he had followed *Pamela* with *Joseph Andrews* so he now, in 1749, followed *Clarissa* with *Tom Jones*, and

with it produced at the same time his masterpiece and the model of the English novel. This work is as carefully constructed as the most perfect drama, and practically every character and each small incident bears its part in the march of the story towards its conclusion. The characters, too, are wonderfully life-like and consistent.

After this time Fielding undertook the important office of Justice of the Peace for Westminster, and carried out his duties admirably. He also published his last novel *Amelia* in 1751 and edited the *Covent Garden Journal* for the greater part of 1752. His health then failed and he set out on a journey to Lisbon, the story of his journey forming the subject of a book published after his death. He reached Portugal but died there in October 1754.

In the opinion of their contemporaries, Richardson was considered a greater writer than Fielding. Johnson also held this view, but later opinion has almost unanimously reversed it. Fielding put a fictitious story into such a well-balanced form as had before his time only been produced by the dramatist and the poet.

The third of these three early novelists is **Tobias Smollett** whose works, however, showed a return to a novel form which was older than that of Richardson. This was the adventure novel.

Smollett was born in the West of Scotland in 1721, and came of a good family. He was well educated, but had to make his own way in the world. He was apprenticed to a surgeon in Glasgow, but when eighteen went to London to endeavour to win success in the literary world. His first venture was a rather bad tragedy *The Regicide*. He then became surgeon's mate on a man-of-war and remained some years in the West Indies. A short time after his return he published his first novel *Roderick Random*, to some

extent a narrative of his own adventures, and it enjoyed a well-deserved success. After this time he published several works. In 1751 appeared *Peregrine Pickle*, the story of the adventures of a young scapegrace who was the heir to great wealth. Twenty years later he published what is usually regarded as his best work. This was a novel entitled *Humphrey Clinker*. It was written in the letter form, and the descriptions of scenes and adventures in many parts of England and Scotland are in many cases beautifully picturesque. In its farcical humour the book almost stands alone, and some of its characters are among the best-known in English fiction.

In addition to his novel-writing, Smollett for some time edited *The Critical Review*, and also wrote a *History of England* which was in his own time very popular and profitable. He also wrote on account of his travels in France and Italy, of which he made a fairly interesting book.

Although in much of his work, and especially the humorous part of it, Smollett went beyond the full truth into caricature, he made two important additions to the English novel. In the first place he took away from the description of national types the exaggeration which had been the custom up to that time, especially on the stage. Secondly, he introduced what may be called "professional interest" i. e. the faithful descriptions of types of persons belonging to various professions. With these he was naturally most successful with sailors, and indeed described the life and ways of the British sailor with a truth which had never been approached before his time.

Of the remaining fiction writers of this first period only a little need be said. **Laurence Sterne** (1713—1768) a clergyman of the Church of England, published the first part of *Tristram Shandy* in 1759, and the book was contin-

ued at intervals during the rest of his life. It can, however, hardly be called a novel, for it has no definite plot, and the story wanders back and forth in totally unexpected directions. It is, however, saved by the consistency of some of its characters. Indeed, the chief one, that of "Uncle Toby" may be regarded as one of the best-known in English literature. When it appeared it was immensely popular, and its author became the "lion" of the day.

Sterne's other work consisted of some volumes of Sermons, and another book *The Sentimental Journey*, which was a description of his travels in various countries.

A little later than this, in 1766, appeared Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, already mentioned, which was the first representative of the "idyllic" class of novels; the description in clear and beautiful English of the lives of simple country people.

Two other classes of novel which arose at this time may be noticed. The first is the "horror" novel, and the second the novel of society. The chief points of the former were a description of seemingly supernatural happenings, ghosts, dim heavy Gothic buildings, underground passages, and the like, with horror piled on horror. The chief writers in this style were: **Horace Walpole** (1717—97) who introduced it with his *Castle of Otranto*; **William Beckford** (1759—1844) (*Vathek*); **Mrs. Radcliffe** (1764—1822), who produced several novels of this type, of which the *Mysteries of Udolpho* is the best known; and **Matthew Lewis** (1775—1818), whose work *The Monk* was so well-known in his time that he received the title of it as a nickname.

This style of novel produced little of literary value, but it probably had some worth in the quickening of the fancy of later writers.

The first true novels of society were written by **Miss Burney** (1752—1840) who published *Evelina* in 1778, and *Cecilia* in 1781. Other writers had attempted the style, but she reproduced the manners of ordinary society in a way which most novelists have followed since.

History.

In English the development of historical writing in a definitely literary way was rather late. Even at the end of the seventeenth century it was practically unrepresented and the earlier years of the eighteenth brought little change. Towards the middle of the century, however, a great change came. Again the change was to a very great extent the work of three men, all contemporaries of Johnson, and all influenced by the French school of writers, and especially by Voltaire, with his keen, elegant style, without sympathetic feeling.

David Hume was born at Edinburgh in 1711, and was educated at the university of his native town. He tried two or three professions, but, liking none of them, fell back on private study, which he was just rich enough to be able to do. His first literary work was in the direction of Philosophy, which may be spoken of later. In 1761 he published his well-known *History of England*. The work had originally only been intended as a survey of the reigns of the first two Stuarts, but when this proved successful it was extended so as to form a complete historical record from the beginnings to the Revolution. The work took him in all eight years to complete. It is the first English literary history in its clearness of narrative and good style, but it is not exact, and shows no sympathy either with mankind as a whole or the writer's own country in particular.

The end of Hume's life was fairly prosperous. In 1763 he became Secretary of the Legation in Paris and three years later Under-Secretary for the Home Department. He died in his native town in 1776.

William Robertson, the friend and fellow-countryman of Hume, was born in a small Scottish town in 1721. His father was a minister, and he himself became one after being educated at Edinburgh. In 1758 he published his *History of Scotland* with great success. His style was again the cold, serious style of Voltaire, but he was much more exact than Hume. In 1761 he became Chaplain to the King and three years later Principal of the University. His second great work, published 1768, was the *History of the Reign of Charles V* and brought him a large sum of money. This, the *History of America* (1777) and a *Disquisition of the Knowledge the Ancients Had of India* (1791) show how historical interest began to occupy itself with other countries than England alone. Two years after this he died.

On the whole his style was good, besides being a little more sympathetic than Hume's, and his idea of history philosophical and clever, while he understood how to make his histories definite and completed works of art.

The "Histories" of Goldsmith and Smollett have already been mentioned, but, while the beautiful style of the former, and the picturesque narrative of the latter make it impossible to ignore them as literature, as literary history they cannot be taken into account. Their only merit in that direction is that they probably helped on the "fashion" of historical writing, if it may be so called.

Towards the end of the century appeared the greatest historical work of this age, or, in the opinion of many well-qualified critics, of any age. It was entitled *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and its author was

Edward Gibbon. Gibbon was born in London in 1737, of a rich family. He was educated at Westminster and Oxford, and at neither place seems to have been happy. While at Cambridge he was converted to Catholicism and his father sent him to Italy, where he stayed in the house of a Protestant clergyman so that he might be re-converted. This succeeded to a certain extent, though for the rest of his life he seems to have been more a sceptic than anything else as concerned religious matters. He remained at Lausanne for five years and returned to England in 1758. Then for some time he served in the militia, and afterwards again went to Italy, where, while sitting amid the ruins of the Capitol at Rome, as he himself says, he conceived the definite idea of his great work in October 1764. Twelve years however passed before the publication of the first volume in 1776, these years being spent partly in England and partly in Switzerland. In another twelve years the work was completed, and he signalled the exact moment of its completion in as fine words as he had announced its conception. Six years afterwards he died in London. His only other literary work of note besides the "Decline" is his Autobiography, published after his death.

"The Decline and Fall" satisfies to a great extent every requirement of the model history. It shows quite definitely that all accessible documents on the subject in question have been thoroughly studied, and, what is more, thoroughly comprehended. It has been formed as a regular historical structure, governed all through by a philosophical idea, and it is a complete story with a distinct and good style. His style is indeed what may be called "gorgeous", but it is in a great manner suited to the nature of his subject.

Philosophical and Political Literature.

To David Hume must be given the name of philosopher as well as that of a writer of history. In Philosophy he followed in the steps of Locke, and came almost to the same conclusion: that the beginning of all knowledge is experience. His chief philosophical works were the *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) and *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). Earlier in his life, however, he had published in 1741—2 *Essays Moral and Political* and in 1752 *Political Discourses* which may almost be regarded as the very earliest attempt towards political economy. It was left however to **Adam Smith** to take up that subject, and in reality to raise it to a science. His great book on the subject, the *Wealth of Nations*, the fame of which is world-wide, was published in 1776, when he was fifty-three years old. By this book he virtually created the Science of Political Economy, and caused all questions of labour and capital to be regulated in a scientific way. As regards the book itself, it was written in the clear, passionless style which is a characteristic of the age.

Earlier in the century the Methodist movement, begun in 1738, awoke interest in the poor, an interest which caused in the end the first attempts at popular education, and, later, Social Reform became also a literary subject. The same principles of reform and, later, Revolutionary ideas, with the sudden flaming of those ideas into practice at the French Revolution, brought into the light the genius of a great political writer and orator. This was **Edmund Burke**, who may be compared with Gibbon, in that these two men wrote in almost the same "gorgeous" style, and seem to have been the two who had the best conception of history as a whole. Burke was born in Dublin in 1729 and edu-

cated at Trinity College. He then went to London, and by 1765 was in Parliament, where he became a conspicuous figure. His speeches there did not attract much notice when delivered, but were very successful when printed, as they were in most cases accompanied by well-written pamphlets of great literary quality. The first of these of great note was *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* (1770). The outbreak of the French Revolution gave him his true subject and his greatest work followed. It consists of *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790) which spread a horror of revolutionary principles through the whole country; *A Letter to a Noble Lord* in the same year; and *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (1796—7) which were successful in rousing the country to the necessity of continuing the war with France.

Prose from 1789—1832.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century London had ceased to be the only literary centre in the United Kingdom. Books were now produced in all parts of the country, and, in particular, a new school of literature had arisen in Scotland. Then, again, the theories of the French Revolution were violently debated all over the country, and these debates were the cause of changes also in the literary work of the country. During this period practically all the greatest of the modern newspapers were begun, notable examples being the *Times* and the *Morning Post*, and with the contributions of well-known literary men to them, a definite literature of journalism commenced. The great periodicals mainly devoted to criticism also saw the light of day about the same time. The *Edinburgh Review* was begun in 1802 and its great rival the *Quarterly Review* seven years later. Interest in the older poets and writers was

also reestablished, and led to books of criticism being written concerning them. The names of the chief of these prose writers include the names of the greatest of the poets of this period, so that they may be spoken of more fully later. **Coleridge's** work *Biographia Litteraria*, written concerning the true nature of poetry, and **Wordsworth's** numerous essays concerning his own art, should however be noticed, as they are written in admirable prose. From the rest, the name of **Charles Lamb** stands out prominently, and as his prose is decidedly of more importance than his verse, he may be spoken of in detail here. He was born in London in 1775, and was educated at Christ's Hospital, where he was contemporary with Coleridge. He later received a clerkship in the East India House, a post he occupied for many years. He was afflicted with great domestic trouble when his elder sister Mary became insane, and for the rest of her life he devoted himself to her. His first work was some short poems of no great merit, but he then wrote, in collaboration with his sister, the well-known *Tales from Shakespeare*, which are delicately and faithfully done. His fame rests however on work which was produced almost, as it were, by accident. After his retirement from the India House he began to write for the *London Magazine*, then newly established, the series of essays which are usually known as the *Essays of Elia*. These, and the style in which they are written, are very difficult to describe. They are written upon almost every imaginable subject, but the fancies and quaint humour which the writer introduced into those same subjects can be found nowhere else. In his style he borrowed much from earlier writers, notably of the seventeenth century, but there is more which is entirely his own, which no one else has ever approached, or even succeeded in imitating.

The remainder of his work consisted in the arrangement of two volumes of selections from the Elizabethan drama, with short but beautiful critical notes, which show great sympathy with the subject. His closing years were peaceful and he died in 1834 in his beloved London, where he had lived most of his life.

Among other names of this time are those of **Thomas de Quincey** and **Walter Landor**. The former passed a very wild youth, during which he contracted the habit of opium-eating, and his account of this is to be found in his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, a rather strange work which appeared in the *London Magazine* during 1821. This was his first published work, and the rest of his life was passed in writing, so that his miscellaneous work is almost the largest and most varied in English. He is another of the writers of the "gorgeous" style, and his own particular efforts in this direction have hardly ever been surpassed. Among his other works may be noted his Autobiography and the essays, *The English Mail Coach*, *Murder as one of the Fine Arts* and *Joan of Arc*.

The latter, **Landor**, is best known in prose for a long series of *Imaginary Conversations*, the first collection of which was published in 1831. He had a great gift of style and though much may be said against these "Conversations" they have a certain charm.

The Novel.

Of all the forms of prose developed during this time, the greatest development of all occurred in connection with the novel. There were many writers, only the chief of whom we can notice here. **Maria Edgeworth** was born in Ireland in 1767, her father being a rather clever man who interfered in some of her work with no very good results.

She wrote several good stories for and of children, and a number of novels. The chief of these are *Castle Rackrent* (1801), a study of Irish manners; *The Absentee* and *Ormond* which two are the best of her novels dealing entirely with Ireland. She continued writing till 1834 and died in 1849. With these Irish stories she may be said to have introduced the novel of national character, and indeed she has the honour of being acknowledged by Scott as his model. She is best in her short stories, for in the longer ones she is at times very unequal, there being surprising differences in the worth of both dialogue and character at different places in the same work. **Jane Austen** was the daughter of a clergyman, and was born in the South of England in 1775. She was well educated and lived all of her rather short life in the country, dying at Winchester when only 42.

Her first published work was *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) although an earlier work, *Northanger Abbey*, had been bought by a publisher as early as 1797. The best known of her other works are *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Emma* (1816). All the books have simple plots, the characters being on the whole supplied by the middle-class gentry among whom she passed her whole life. These plots are, however, worked out with such easy directness, and the characters and dialogue are of such quality that the stories could almost succeed without any plot at all. She "truly renders commonplace things and characters interesting from truth of description and sentiment", and the level she attained in these novels of everyday society still stands unsurpassed.

The greatest figure in the whole history of the Novel comes next. It is that of **Sir Walter Scott**, who was born at Edinburgh in 1771. He was educated at the High School and University of his native town, and was later trained for the law. He married in 1799 and later received the office

of Sheriff of Selkirkshire, which made him fairly well off and caused him to live in his beloved border-land. His earlier work consisted of verse, his first published work being some translations from the German, followed in 1802 by *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, only part of which was original. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), a beautiful metrical romance, attracted much attention, and when he followed it with *Marmion* (1808) and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), he became famous and fairly prosperous. Later, with the rise in the field of narrative poetry of Lord Byron, whom Scott freely admitted to be far his superior, he turned to prose. In 1814 he by accident came across a manuscript which he had left unfinished, and at once set to work to complete it. It was the manuscript of *Waverley*, which was produced anonymously in the same year, and created a tremendous sensation. In quick succession from that time forward he produced a series of novels, nearly every one of which was a masterpiece. The next two were *Guy Mannering* (1815) and *The Antiquary* (1816), and many critics regard this trio as representing his best work. The next two *The Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality* (1816) were not so good, but in *Rob Roy* (1817) he returned to his former high level, and achieved for the first time a really attractive heroine. All of these novels were anonymous.

Following the publication of these novels Scott had been getting steadily richer. He had bought a house called Abbotsford and by successive additions had made it a fair-sized mansion, showing all the while the most open and free-handed hospitality. In 1820 he was rewarded for his literary work with a baronetcy.

After *Rob Roy* appeared *The Heart of Midlothian*, the second of the series which he had named "Tales of my Landlord", and after this *The Bride of Lammermoor* and

A Legend of Montrose in 1819. Up to this time Scott had taken all his subjects from his native country, but the next novel *Ivanhoe* (1819) took the scene to England in the Middle Ages. The next two: *The Monastery* and *The Abbot* (1820), again took Scotland for a background, while in the next year *Kenilworth* gave a brilliant picture of Elizabethan England. Other works include *Pevekil of the Peak* (1823), *Quentin Durward* (1823), a tale of foreign adventure with the scene laid at the court of Louis XI of France; *Redgauntlet* (1823) of great interest as being partly autobiographical, and containing one wonderful short story "Wandering Willie's Tale"; and in 1825 two tales of the Crusaders: *The Talisman* and *The Betrothed*, the first being a fair example of his best work. Early in the next year (January 1826) disaster came upon him. A firm of publishers, Ballantyne and Co., to which he belonged, failed for a huge sum, and he found himself liable to a debt of about £ 100,000. He refused either to be adjudged bankrupt or to accept any offers of help, but set to work to clear off the whole of the debt himself. He had however no longer the opportunity to compose much fiction. He was working on a Life of Napoleon, and also preparing an annotated edition of his own works, and added to all this his health was failing rapidly. However in *Woodstock* (1827) a novel with its scene laid in England at the time of the Commonwealth, and in *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828) are passages which are very little inferior to the best of his earlier work. This last was, however, his last long work of any great importance. A work finished in 1831 shows great deterioration. In the autumn of that year he set out for Italy in an endeavour to regain his health, but in May 1832 he returned, longing for the sight of his well-loved native land, where he died late in the same year.

Scott created the historical novel, following the failure of many previous attempts by earlier writers. He showed how national character, dialect and characteristics could be used so as to form the main element in a story. He added to what might be termed the "national imaginary portrait gallery" more figures than any other writer except Shakespeare himself. It is above all this vivid portraiture and clear description of nature which form his chief charm. Apart from his own actual work in the historical novel, he showed by what may be called "asides" the directions in which it would be possible to create other forms of the novel.

It might be noticed here that the prose literature of the time was also enriched by several good biographies. The account of Scott's own life, written with great tenderness and sympathy by his son-in-law **Lockhart**, is a fine example of the biography. Others are the poet **Southey's** *Life of Nelson*, and **Moore's** *Life of Byron*.

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- 23) Max Nordau: **Die Brille des Zwerges.**
24 lhk. Hind 25 marka.
- 24) **Beauty and the Beast. Tattercoats.** Adapted for
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32 lhk. Hind 35 marka.
- 25) K. F. Meyer: **Das Amulett.** 47 lhk. Hind 45 marka.
- 26) **Till Eulenspiegels Streiche.**
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- 27) Grimm: **Sechse kommen durch die ganze Welt.**
16 lhk. Hind 20 marka.
- 28) E. v. Wildenbruch: **Archambauld.**
24 lhk. Hind 30 marka.
- 29) R. Kipling: **The Elephant's Child.** 18 lhk. Hind 25 mk.
- 30) Alcott: **Little Women.**
- 31) A. Theuriet: **La Pipe.** 24 lhk. Hind 35 mk.

E. Sell

Treffneri gümnaasiumi saksa keele õpetaja

Saksa kirjanduse ajalugu

Keskkooli 3., 4. ja 5. klassile

I. jagu. 120 lhk. Hind 130 mk.

II. jagu. 154 lhk. Hind 185 mk. köites.

El. Sell'i „Lühike Saksa kirjanduslugu“ kujutab elavais värves mitte ainult poetilist, vaid kogu saksa vaimuelu. Raamatu paremusteks on ülevaatlik kujutusviis kui ka üldise silmaspidamine, ilma et sealjuures õpilase mälu koormataks lõpmatute nimede ja vähem olulisega. Iga peatükk toob esiti üldise pildi kogu ajajärgust; üksikasju esitellakse ainult niipalju, kui tingimata näis vajaline. Autor on püüdnud õpilasile anda raamat, mis annab kogu kirjandusest tervikulise pildi ja nõuab kõige vähem „tuupimist“.

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