

HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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THE AGE OF CHAUCER (1340-1400)

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in the reign of Edward III, lived through that of Richard II, and died the year after Henry IV ascended the throne. His life thus covers a period of glaring social contrasts and political change.

Edward's reign marks the highest development of Medieval civilization. The spirit of the court was that of romantic idealism. England went forth on foreign conquest. But there was another side to this picture. The King and his nobility led a gay life. Trade expanded. Wealth increased among the commercial classes. But the masses of people sunk in misery. Pestilence ravaged the land. Black Death swept away one third of the population. Famine followed plague. Thieves multiplied. The enormous cost of French wars had to be met by heavy taxation. There was widespread social unrest.

Political troubles grew under Richard's unwise and despotic rule. The constitutional conflicts between the King and his subjects resulted in endless discord and confusion.

Another evil of Chaucer's age was the corruption of the Church there was very little spiritual zeal and energy left in the country. The greater priests heaped up wealth. They lived in a Godless and worldly way. The ordinary clergy were ignorant and careless. The friars were notorious and greedy. It was at this point John Wycliff, the morning star of reformation started his work. He is an earnest man. He gave the best of his life for reviving spiritual Christianity. He wrote religious pamphlets. He sent his poor priests far and wide with the message of the gospel. He produced a complete version of 'The Bible'.

Social unrest and the beginnings of religious movement were two of the active forces in the England of the later fourteenth century. A third influence came from the new learning. The spirit of new learning had arisen in Italy chiefly from a renewed study of the Literature of classical antiquity. The leaders of the great revival were the two Italian writers Petrarch ((1304-74) and Boccaccio (1313-75). It was through their work, influence of humanism passed into England. Its effect was shown in the quickened sense of beauty, delight in life and the free secular spirit. They began to appear in our literature.

Chaucer's Life:

Geoffrey Chaucer is the greatest figure in the English literature of the 14th century. He has thrown all his contemporaries completely into shade. He was born about 1340 in London. His father was a flourishing merchant vintner. We know nothing about his childhood. At the age of 17, he received a court appointment. Then he became a valet in the King's Chamber. He was closely connected with the court. He toured the continent on diplomatic mission. He was thus brought into direct touch with the Italian culture. He may even have met Petrarch and Boccaccio. Then he fell on evil days. The grant of the royal pension placed him beyond want. He died in

1400 and was buried in that part of West Minster Abbey which came to be known as the Poet's corner.

Chaucer's Education:

Chaucer's education as a poet was two fold. Part of it came from literature and part of it came from life. He was a thorough student. He tells us how he would pore over his beloved volumes, till he was dazed. He was a man of world and affairs. He had travelled much. He had seen life. His relationship with people of all sorts brought him into intimate relation with people of all sorts. He had quick insight into character.

Chaucer's work in general:

Chaucer's literary career is divided into three periods; his French, his Italian and his English period.

His early work was done on French models. He translated 'Roman de la rose'. He wrote an allegory on the death of Blanche, John of Gaunt's wife called 'the *Boke of Duchesse*'.

As a result of his visits to Italy french influences disappeared. Italian influences took their place. He wrote "*The House of Fame*", and "*Troilus and Cryseyde*". He wrote an unfinished "Legend of Good Women".

Finally he became English. It means instead of being imitative, he becomes independent, relying upon himself. To this period, belong the minor poems and "*The Canterbury Tales*". It is Chaucer's most characteristic work.

The Canterbury Tales:

"*The Canterbury Tales*" is a collection of stories. Pilgrimages were very popular in the fourteenth century. The shrine of the murdered St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury is one of the favourite expeditions.

A number of pilgrims on the eve of their departure meet at the Tabard Inn in Southwark. Chaucer is also there on the same errand. The jolly host of the Tabard, Harry Bailey gives a hearty welcome to the pilgrims. He tells them that to beguile the tedium of the journey each member of the party shall tell two tales on the way to Canterbury and two on the way back. Those who tell best stories will be given free supper after their return to the Tabard Inn. The suggestion is applauded and 'The Canterbury Tales' is the result.

In the 'Prologue' Chaucer introduces his fellow pilgrims. The military profession is represented by a knight, a squire, and a yeoman; the ecclesiastical, by a prioress, a nun, a monk, a friar, a summoner, a pardoner, a poor parson, and a clerk of Oxford who is a student of Divinity. Then we have a lawyer, a physician and number of miscellaneous characters. The Prologue is masterpiece of insight, sureness of touch, fine discrimination, and subtle humour. All

the characters give unique value to Chaucer's picture of men and manners in the England of his time.

The Poet's plan was a large one. But he lived to complete a small portion only (i.e) merely a fragment of twenty four tales. The tales differ widely in character by whom they are told. The tales are not original in theme. Chaucer takes his raw material from many different sources. Chaucer has a quick eye for anything and everything.

The '*Knights Tale*' is also Chaucer's finest work.

General Characteristics of Chaucer's Poetry:

Chaucer was not a poet of the people. He was a court poet, who wrote for cultured readers and a refined society. The great vital issues of the day never inspired his verse. He made his appeal to a favoured few who wanted to be amused by comedy. They did not wish to be disturbed by the reminders of Plagues and famines.

Thus, though he holds a mirror up to the life of his time, the dark underside of it is nowhere reflected by him. He is called as 'the morning star of the Renaissance'. Chaucer mastered the difficult fourteenth century English and made it easier. Chaucer is called father of the English poetry.

THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE(1558-1625)

NON-DRAMATIC VERSE

The Age of Shakespeare:

It means the whole period from the accession of Elizabeth in 1558 to the death of James I in 1625. These 67 years were divided in three divisions-the first 21 years of the queen's reign called as the time of preparation or the Spenser's "*Shepherd's Calendar*" and her death called as the time of full fruition, or summer and the 22 years of the reign of James I called as the time of decline of autumn. The first two may be called as the Elizabethan and the third is Jacobean.

This period ranks as one of the greatest in the annals of the World's literature because of its wonderful fertility and of the variety and splendour of production. England felt the full effect of the revival of learning. Innumerable translations carried the treasures of the classics far and wide. While Renaissance aroused the intellect and the aesthetic faculties, the Reformation awakened the spiritual nature. The invention of printing press put the English Bible into the hands of the people. It spreads the interest in religion and moral earnestness. The discovery of new worlds beyond the seas and thrilling tales of daring explorers quickened popular curiosity and the zest for adventure. It kindled fresh ideas about many things. The general prosperity of the country was increasing. The country enjoyed the blessing of internal peace, i.e., England had thrown off

the foreign power, the Catholic, Protestant feuds were over, etc. An intense Patriotism became one of the outstanding feature of the Age.

In short, it was an age in which “men lived intensely, thought intensely, and wrote intensely”.

Elizabethan Poetry before Spencer:

Spencer’s “*Shepherd’s Calender*” in 1579 marks the opening of the ‘golden age’ of Elizabethan literature. In the first half of the queen’s reign, there was much poetic activity and only little verse. The best poetry of the period is to be found in the contributions of Thomas Sackville, and Lord Buckhurst in “*A Myrroure for Magistrates*”. This originated in a publisher’s Scheme for a continuation of Lydgate’s “*Falls of Princes*”, and was designed to include a long series of ‘tragical histories’ of famous Englishmen. A number of writers took part in it. But Sackville’s two poems—the “Induction” and the “Complaint of Buckingham” are superior to the rest of work. “Induction” is the finest single poem written in England between Chaucer and Spencer. The “*Steel Glas*” of George Gascoigne possesses some interest as the first regular verse satire in the English language.

EDMUND SPENCER

Spencer and his Poetry:

— Edmund Spencer the greatest non-dramatic poet was born in London in 1552. He was educated at the Merchant Taylor’s School and Cambridge, where he studied classics and Italian literature. He also came under the influence of strong protestant spirit which then pervaded in the University. He found a place in the household of the Earl Leicester. There he formed an intimate friendship with Sir Philip Sidney, the nephew of Earl of Leicester. In 1580, he went to Ireland as secretary to the the new Lord Deputy, Lord Grey de Wilton. The remainder of his life was passed in Ireland, in miserable exile among a lawless people whom he loathed. He was disappointed again and again to secure a position at the court. His only relief was writing “*Faery Queene*”. In October 1598, rebellion broke out in Tyrone, where he was then living. His castle was fired and plundered by an infuriated mob. He and his family barely escaped with their lives. In failing health and crushed in spirit, he reached London at the end of year. On 16th January, 1599, he died in an inn at Westminster.

Works of Spencer:

“*The Faery Queene*”, “*The Shepherds Calender*” (1579), “*Astrophel*” (1586), an elegy on the death of Sidney, “*Four Hymes*” in honour of love and beauty, “*Amoretti*”, a series of 88 sonnets, and “*Epithalamium*”, a minor poem the noblest Wedding hymn in the language.

The Shepheardes Calender (1579):

It is a pastoral poem of the artificial kind. In the European Literatures the revival of learning spreads of the taste for everything classic. Spencer follows the models set by Theocritus, Vergil and by French and Italian writers of the Renaissance. It is divided into twelve parts, one for each month of the year. In it under the guise of conventional pastral imagery the poet writes of his unfortunate love for certain mysterious Rosalind. It deals with certain sundry moral questions. It discusses the religious issues of the day from the stand point of strong Protestantism. Spencer dedicated this book to Sir Philip Sidney. He uses all varieties of form, moral, religious, rustic, courtly, lyric and elegiac. He shows himself as a master of an old convention as well as herald of a new spirit in poetry.

The Faery Queene:

Spencer's "*Faery Queene*" is one of the longest as well as one of the greatest English poems. His underlying scheme is explained in a letter to his friend Sir Walter Raleigh. The Faery Queene keeps her annual feast for twelve successive days. On each of these days, a Knight at her command undertook a particular adventure. Each such adventure furnishes the subject of one book. Prince Arthur is chosen as the central figure of this. He was the hero of the greatest British legend cycle of chivalry. Having dreamed of the Faery Queene he went forth in quest of her, failing in with the various Knights who were engaged on their adventures, by the way. This appearance of Arthur at a critical juncture in each of the stories was specially devised as a link between one part and another.

The Faery Queene is compounded of the traditional materials of Chivalry, giants, dragons, dwarfs, wizards, knights of super human prowess and courage and distressed damsels of marvellous beauty, provide its chief characters; enchantment, tournaments, love passages and endless fightings are the staple of its plot. Spencer's genius was fed by the Reformation as well as the love of mediaeval romance and the culture of the Renaissance.

His own great work is inspired by a high moral and religious aim. In other words, the Faery Queene is not simply a Romance, it is a didactic romance. The poet used his stories as vehicles of the lessons he wished to convey.

It is also an allegory. The Twelve Knights are types of twelve cardinal virtues of Aristotle's philosophy. The adventures of each knight is arranged to body forth symbolically the experience, conflicts, and temptations of each such virtue and its ultimate triumph with a aid of Arthur, the incarnation of divine power, over all its foes.

Another kind of Allegory enters into Spencer's plan. It is concerned with the political and religious problems of the age. The figures of his narrative are not merely personifications of mental and moral qualities but of individuals of institutions.

The defects of the Faery Queene are very obvious. It is extremely artificial,. Spencer has little dramatic power. But his merits are very many and very striking. He has a wonderful sense of beauty. He has splendid pictorial power. His work is filled with a noble moral spirit.

The language, he used was the actual English of his day. The stanza he used is also his own invention, nine-line stanza, rhyming ab abbc b cc, which is later called as Spenserian Stanza.

It is because of his greatness he was called as the “Poet’s Poet ”, by Lamb. He was also called as the “Prince of Poets’ of his time” and the “second father of English Poetry”.

Other Poet’s from 1579 to 1625:

The minor poets of the age of Shakespeare were very numerous. Some poems came under fanciful titles: “*The Paradyse of Daynty Devises* (1576), “*A Handefull of Pleasant Delites*”(1584), “*An Arbor of Amorous Devises*”(1597) and “*England’s Helicon*”(1600).

A special type of lyric called “*Sonnet*” entered in English poetry during this period. They are: Spencer’s “*Amoretti*”, Sidney’s “*Astrophel and Stella*”, Daniel’s “*Delia*”, Drayton’s “*Idea*”, and the “*Sonnets*” of Shakespeare. All these are love poems.

Another type of poetry inspired by national themes expresses the powerful patriotic feelings. They are Williams Warner’s “*Albion’s England*”, Samuel Daniel’s “*The Civil Wars between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York*”, Michael Drayton’s “*The Battle of Agincourt*”, “*England’s Heroical Epistles*”, “*The Barons’ Wars*” and “*Polyolbion*”.

John Donne (1573-1631) was a celebrated divine and preacher. He wrote songs, sonnets, marriage poems, elegies and satires. His poems are characterized by genuine poetic feeling, harsh metres and ‘conceits’. He initiated the ‘metaphysical’ school of poetry.

CHAPTER-VII

THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE

THE DRAMA

The Elizabethan Romantic Drama:

The Quarter century which followed the production of “*Gorboduc*” was a period of great confusion in the English drama. Certain scholars like Sir Philip Sidney believed that the only sure way to a really artistic drama lay through the imitation of ancient models i.e. the Senecan or “Classic”. But certain other writers and actors who wanted exciting plots and vigorous action rejected the Senecan conventions altogether. So there was a conflict between the humanists, who stood for classical tradition and the strong taste of the English Public who demanded a different sort of thing. In the end the national taste triumphed and the ‘romantic’ form of drama was established.

Principles of Classic Drama:

- 1) It adhered rigorously to unity of subject and tone. It kept tragedy and comedy entirely separate. A tragedy had to be a tragedy from first to last. No humorous episode was permitted in it. A comedy had to be a comedy from first to last and no tragic element was allowed to enter into its composition.
- 2) There was little or no dramatic action, the incidents composing the plot taking place off the stage and being reported to the audience in dialogue and set narrative.
- 3) At all events, the three unities of time, place and action controlled the construction. a) the entire story of a play had to be confined to a single day, b) to a single scene, and c) it was to be one single story without sub plots or minor episodes of any kind.

General characteristics of the humanists or romantic or Shakespearean drama:

- 1) It makes free use of variety in the theme and tone often blending tragic and comic characters in the same place.
- 2) It is a drama of action. Everything that happens is represented on the stage.
- 3) It repudiates the three unities i.e a) It allows the story to extend over months and even years, b) It changes the scene as often as necessary sometimes from one town or country to another; and c) it employs subplots and minor episodes in connection with its central subject.

Shakespeare’s predecessors:

The playwrights who have come just before Shakespeare prepared a way for him by introducing flexible form of drama. They constitute a group and are commonly known as ‘the university wits’.

They were all men of academic training. They give their talents to the public stage. They are: John Lyly, Thomas Kyd, George Peele, Thomas Lodge, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nash.

LYLY is most widely known as the author of a prose romance entitled "*Eupheus*". Some of his best comedies are "*Campaspe*", "*Endymion*" and "*Gallathea*". These were all written for the performance at the court. The interest in them depends on language i.e. on the wit, point, ingenuity, and grace of the dialogue. Lyly helped to give comedy an intellectual tone. In comedy he was undeniably Shakespeare's first master.

MARLOWE was a man of fiery imagination and immense powers. He lived a wild Bohemian life. He was killed in a drunken brawl even in his young age. He was for more of a lyric poet than a dramatist. Some of his writing are: "*Tamburlaine the great*", "*Dr. Faustus*", "*The Jew of Malta*", and "*Edward II*". Shakespeare was greatly influenced by Marlowe in the first. His narrative poem "*Venus and Adonis*" is inspired by Marlowe's "*Hero and Leander*". Richard III and Richard II are based on Edward II.

SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE:

William Shakespeare was born on or about the 23rd April, 1564, at Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire. He was a son of a prosperous tradesman. He went to the local Grammar School, where he was taught Latin and arithmetic. His few years at school gave him sound education. In his 19th year he married Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years his senior, the daughter of a well-to-do yeoman of the neighbouring village of Shottery. This marriage was hasty and ill-advised, and appears to have been unhappy. Three children were born to him: Susannah, and the twins, Judith and Hamlet. A few years after his marriage, about 1587, he left his native town to seek his fortunes in London. At the time, drama was gaining rapidly in popularity through the work of the University Wits.

Shakespeare soon turned to the stage, and became an actor first and then a playwright. He remained in London producing an average a couple of plays a year, growing steadily in fame and wealth. He became a shareholder of the two leading theatres of the time, the Globe and the Blackfriars. But years which brought prosperity also brought domestic sorrows. Then between 1610 and 1612 he retired to Stratford, where he had bought a house known as New Place. He died on 23rd April, 1616.

Shakespeare was a practical man of affairs. He reached London poor and friendless but left it rich and respected. His fortunes were the work of his own hand. His writings revealed his great powers of creative imagination. Shakespeare was pre-eminently endowed with the happy faculty of turning everything that came to the best possible account.

Shakespeare's Works:

Shakespeare's non-dramatic poetry consist of two narrative poems, "*Venus and Adonis*" and "*Lucrece*" and a sequence of 154 sonnets, the first 126 addressed to a man and remainder addressed or referring to a woman.

Shakespeare's dramatic work comprises of 37 plays. His activity as a writer for the stage extended over some 24 years .Critics have subdivided these 24 years into four periods.

i) **1588-93: Period of early and experimental work:**

Shakespeare's apprenticeship begins with the revision of old plays , such as the three parts if Henry VI and Titus Andronicus. To this period belong his comedies – "*Love's Labour's Lost*", "*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*", "*The Comedy of Errors*", "*A Midsummer Nights Dream*". His first effort in chronicle drama is "*Richard III*", and a single very youthful tragedy "*Romeo and Juliet*". The work of this period is slight in texture. The treatment of life in it is superficial. There is little depth of thought or characterization and the art is immature.

ii) **1594-1600: Period of great comedies and chronicle plays:**

"*Richard II*", "*King John*", "*The Merchant of Venice*", "*Henry IV*", "*The Taming of the Shrew*", "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*", "*Much Ado About Nothing*", "*As You Like It*" and "*Twelfth Night*". His works are independent. They reveal his immense development in power and technique. It is far more massive in quality. The characterization and humour are deep and penetrative. There is a great growth in the weight of thought.

iii) **1601-08: Period of the great tragedies and of the sombre or bitter comedies:**

In this period all Shakespeare's powers in his dramatic power, his intellectual power and his power of expression are at their highest. This is the time of Supreme masterpieces. The plays of this period are : "*Julius Caesar*" "*Hamlet*", "*All's Well That Ends well*", "*Measure for Measure*", "*Troilus and Cressida*", "*Othello*", "*King Lear*", "*Macbeth*", "*Antony and Cleopatra*", "*Coriolanus*" and "*Timon of Athens*".

iv) **1608-12: Period of later comedies or Dramatic Romances:**

During this period we can find a sudden and singular change in the temper of Shakespeare's work. In the last plays, the ground work is furnished by tragic passion. The evil is no longer permitted to have its way but it is controlled and conquered by the good. They fully show the decline of Shakespeare's dramatic powers. There are careless in construction and unsatisfactory in characterization. Three plays entirely Shakespeare's belong to this period- "*Cymbeline*", "*The Tempest*", "*The winter's Tale*". Two plays are partly his – "*Pericles*" and "*Henry III*". The latter was completed by his friend Fletcher.

Characteristics of Shakespeare's works:

The salient feature of his work is their astonishing variety. No one has ever rivalled him in the range and versatility of his powers. He was at home in tragedy and comedy. He was supreme not only as a dramatist but also as a poet. He is the most often quoted of all our writers. He is unparalleled in his characterization.

The greatness of Shakespeare's works is apt to blind critics to his limitations and defects. He wrote hurriedly, and signs of hasty, and ill considered production are often apparent. He designed his plays expressly for the stage and anxious to secure their success. So he is willing at times to sacrifice consistency of character. He reflects the low taste of the 'groundlings', At places his style is vivacious, his wit forced and poor and his tragic language bombastic. But they are small things after all in comparison with those paramount qualities which have given him the first place among the world's dramatists.

BEN JONSON:

Shakespeare's age is marked by tremendous dramatic activity. The list of his contemporaries is a long one. The most important of these is his friend Ben Johnson. He was the greatest of them in power and volume of his genius. The aims and principles of his work were different from Shakespeare's.

He was born in London in 1573 and was educated at the Westminster Grammar School, where he laid the foundation of his classical scholarship. He became an actor at about 1592. In 1598, he opened his career as a dramatist with the satiric comedy "*Every Man in his Humour*". For many years he wrote plays both for the court and for the public stage. Later his fortunes declined. He suffered from neglect, poverty and ill health. He died in 1637, having outlived Shakespeare by twenty-one years.

Besides drama, Johnson did a good deal of work outside drama, including many translations and miscellaneous poems. His plays fall into three groups. They are: his court masques, his historical tragedies Eg. "*Sejanus*" and "*Catiline*", and his numerous comedies Eg. "*The Alchemist*", "*Volpone or the Fox*" and "*Epicoene or the Silent woman*".

In studying these comedies we can realize the distinctive features of his genius and art. He was a realist i.e. the world of his comedy is not the world of romance but of contemporary London life, with its manners, foibles, weakness and affectations. His aim is not only to depict, and by depicting to amuse. He takes his art seriously. He wants to hold teach the moral seriously, i.e., to correct and teach. His realism is defined as didactic realism.

Jonson's characterization is based on the idea that each man is possessed or governed by some particular quality of master passion. It may be regarded as the back bone or central feature of his personality.

In Jonson's comedies intellect predominates. They are products of learning, skill and effort. Jonson was the real founder of the '*Comedy of Manners*'. His influence on succeeding dramatists was very great.

Other Dramatists of Shakespear's Age:

John Webster was a dramatist of great power. His morbid love of the violent and horrible led him to sheer sensationalism. His "*White Devil*" and "*Duchess of Malfi*" contains scenes of tragic passion unrivalled outside Shakespeare.

In John Ford, there is a tendency towards repulsive subjects and unnatural emotions is apparent. His pathos gives the distinction of his best work, "*The Broken Heart*".

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher did much work in collaboration. The moral tone is relaxing and their characterization is poor. But they have many redeeming features in plays such as "*Philaster*" and "*The Maid's Tragedy*".

Philip Massinger a ready writer in various styles, reached a high level in his comedy, "*A New way to Pay Old Debts*".

James Shirley is called as "the last of a great race" by Charles Lamb. In the end of this period we find that all the old creative power has gone and the stage has yielded completely to the fast-spreading immortality of the age.

The Playhouse of Shakespear's Time:

In the early years of the regular drama plays had been performed in inn yards and other open spaces. In 1576, two permanent playhouses were built in the open fields of Shoreditch. They were the Theatre and Curtain. These were the only London Play houses when Shakespeare reached the city but by the end of Elizabeth's reign eleven were in existence. Shakespeare was very closely connected with the Playhouse, the Globe and the Blackfriars. The playhouse were very small. They were round or hexagonal and were mainly of wood. The stage and the boxes or 'rooms' were round or hexagonal and were mainly of wood. The stage and the boxes or 'rooms' were roofed in with thatch but the rest of the building was open to sky. The boxes were frequented by the wealthy people and aristocrats. No seat was provided for the 'groundling' in the 'yard' or pit. Placards were shown. Performances generally began about three in the afternoon and last some years ago. There were no actresses on the Shakespearean stage. Women's parts are taken by boys and young men specially trained for the purpose. Only after Restoration, women began to appear on the English boards.

CHAPTER-VIII

THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE

PROSE

Lyly and other writers of Prose Fiction :

While the Age of Shakespeare found its chief imaginative outlet in the drama, it was also active in the field of prose fiction.

The most important prose romance of the period is the work of John Lyly, whose comedies are “*Euphues*”, the *Anatomy of Wit*” and its sequel “*Euphues and his England*”. The first part tells of a young Athenian named Euphues, wealthy, handsome and clever, who sets out on his travels. He reaches Naples and becomes an intimate friend of Philautus. He holds many long conversations on Philosophical and ethical subjects with him. In the end, he returns to Athens leaving behind and ethical subjects with him. Its purpose is to dissuade him from women’s society and the tender passion. It is a sort of love-story but without action.

In the second part *Euphues* visits England and gives a long ‘description of the country, the court, and the manners of the island’. The popularity of *Euphues* was extraordinary, in the little more than half a century it went through ten editions a great record at that time. The ladies of the court used it as a moral handbook, a guide to polite behaviour, and a model of elegance in speech and writing. It owes its continued fame mainly to its style. Lyly’s style is called as ‘*Euphuism*’. The outstanding feature of Euphuism is the excessive use of balanced antithesis combined with alliteration. Lyly also indulges freely in similes, word play and punning. Another peculiar characteristic of Lyly is his fondness for myth and fable.

The second of Elizabethan romance may be assigned to Sir Philip Sidney’s “*Arcadia*”, completed about 1581. This work carries on the traditions of the older romances of chivalry. It is full of incidents. Its principal interest provided by the adventures of the two friends, Pyrocles and Musidorus, while seeking to win the two Arcadian princesses, Philoclea and Pamela. A large number of other characters are all introduced.

Two pre-shakespearean dramatists-- Lodge and Greene--are also important writers of romance. Lodge’s *Rosalynde*”, “*Euphues Golden Legacy*”, furnished the raw materials of “*As you like it*”. Greene’s “*pandosto*”, “*The Triumph of time*”, those of “*The winter’s Tale*’.

The third of ‘university Wits’ is Thomas Nash. He gave a distinct lead in the direction of realism of a coarse description. His “*Unfortunate Traveller*’ or the life of Jack Wilton is an example of picaresque novel, or the novel of rascality—a type of fiction which was already popular in Spain and was later to be cultivated with great success by Defoe.

Bacon and his Essays:

Francis Bacon was the second son of a famous lawyer. He was born on 22nd January, 1561. His wit and precocity attracted the attention of the queen. So the queen used to call him “Young lord keeper” because at that time his father was the keeper of the great Seal and England. He was educated at Trinity college, Cambridge. His father died in 1579. He chose the law as his profession, was called to the bar in 1582 and Queen’s Counsel in 1589.

After the accession of James I he rose rapidly in favour and fortune. He was knighted in 1603; became Attorney General in 1613; privy Councillor in 1616; lord keeper in 1617; Lord Chancellor and Baron Verulam in 1618; Viscount St. Albans in 1621. Then came a sudden crash. He was impeached before the house of lords on various charges of official malpractice. He was sentenced to a fine of 40,000 and imprisonment. But he received a royal pardon.

Bacon believed that he was ‘born for the service of mankind’. He sincerely devoted his wonderful powers to the advancement of knowledge of the glory of the creator and the relief of man’s estate. He wrote voluminously on many subjects. His greatest works are “*Advancement of Learning*”, “*Novum Organum*” collection of “*Essays or counsels Civil and Moral*”. The writing of his “Essays” are suggested by the ‘Essais’ of the great French thinker Montaigne. But the matter and manner are Bacon’s own. Extra-ordinary insight and sagacity are their salient qualities.

Bacon had an almost unrivalled power of packing his thoughts into the smallest possible space. Therefore we can describe these Essays (with a phrase from Marlowe’s “*Jew of Malta*”) “infinite riches in a little room”.

Other Poets of the Period:

The varied interests of the time are well represented in its prose literature. History is cultivated by many writers: Raleigh’s “*History of the world*”(1614), Bacon’s “*History of the Reign of Henry VII*(1622), Foxe’s or *Book of Martyrs*”(1563) Raphael Holinshed’s “*Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*”.

At a time the spirit of adventure was strong and the literature of travel flourished. One specially famous work: Richard Hakluyt’s “*Principal Navigation, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*”. In the field of theology: Richard Hooker’s “*Ecclesiastical polity*” (1594-97). There is also great significance in the development of literature of criticism. The best known of these early treatises is Sidney’s “*Apologie for Poetrie*”. Other similar works of some importance are, William Webbe’s “*Discourse of English Poetry* “ (1586) and George Puttenham’s “*Arte of English Poesie*”(1589).

THE AGE OF MILTON (1625-1660)

MILTON

The Age of Milton:

The spirit of Puritanism spread steadily among the English middle classes during the reign of James I. A combination of causes led to its practical success. The fast growing flippancy and profligacy of the upper classes greatly increased its moral and social influence. Then came the monstrous encroachments of Charles upon the rights of the commons and the constitutional privileges of the English people. Their keen sense of the supremacy of the God as the ruler of rulers and of the prerogatives of the individual conscience, made the puritans intolerant of earthly tyranny in any form. Thus Puritanism became a moral and religious force. After a storm period of Civil war, it triumphed with the triumph of Oliver Cromwell and during the few years of the commonwealth it was supreme.

The influence of Puritanism upon the tone and temper of English life and thoughts was profound. The spirit which it introduced was fine and noble but it was hard and stern. We admire at the Puritan's integrity and uprightness. He was an intense and God-fearing, but illiberal and unreasonable man. Puritanism destroyed human culture and sought to confine literature within the circumscribed field of its own particular interests. It was only here and there a writer arose who was able to absorb all its strength while transcending its limitations. This was emphatically the case with Milton, the greatest product of Puritanism in our literature, in whose genius and work, the moral and religious influences of Puritanism are combined with the generous culture of the Renaissance.

Milton's Life:

John Milton was born in Bread Street, Cheapside, London, on 9th December, 1608. He was educated at St. Paul's school and at Christ's college, Cambridge, where he remained for seven years and took his B.A in 1629 and M.A in 1632. He realised that he could not conscientiously enter the church, for which he had been intended, he decided to give himself to self culture and poetry.

While a boy at school, his books had kept him out of bed till midnight. At the university, he had shown the same untiring devotion to learning. After leaving Cambridge, he spent six years in the country house of the family at Horton and enriched his knowledge. Thus, he became a very great scholar.

At 30, he resolved to complete his studies by travel. He went to Italy by the way of Paris. But he returned soon, by the news of the critical stage of things at home. On his return he entered politics as an ardent supporter of the Puritan cause against the Royalists. He wrote many

Pamphlets and the establishment of the commonwealth he was appointed as the Latin Secretary to the committee for foreign affairs.

In 1643, he married Mary Powell, but it proved to be unhappy. Early in 1653, a terrible calamity overtook him, he became totally blind. Then after three years, he married Catherine Woodcock. She died within 15 months. He was poor, lonely as well as blind. He married again, Elizabeth Minshull. She brought comfort to him. He died on 8th November 1674.

Milton's Work:

Milton's works fall naturally into four periods:

- I. Milton's Earlier Poetry
 - a) The college period
 - b) The Horton period
- II. Milton's prose writings
- III. The late period or the period of his greatest achievement.

I. Milton's Earlier Poetry:

a) The College Period:

Milton's College poems, in Latin and English are simply a young man's experimental work. In this period, he wrote the "Ode, On the Morning of Christ's Nativity".

b) The Horton Period:

To the Horton period, belong the four minor poems of beauty and power. They are: "*L'Allegro*", "*IL Penseroso*" (1633), "*Comus*" (1634) and "*Lycidas*" (1637).

In Milton's work the moral and religious influences of Puritanism were blended with the generous culture of the Renaissance. It gave a distinctive quality to his greatest poetry. He began to write chiefly under the inspiration of learning and art of the Renaissance. The Puritan element was at first quite subordinate but gradually it gained in strength and depth and became a dominant element.

In "*L'Allegro*" and "*IL Penseroso*" the charming contrasted pictures of man, nature and art can be seen and a little Puritan thought can also be seen.

In "*Comus*" we can find a distinct stage in the development of Milton's mind. The Puritan spirit is felt in his moral teaching.

In "*Lycidas*" Puritanism is political, ecclesiastical, spiritual and ethical. It is in the style of the classic pastoral elegy.

Thus through these poems we can find the steady growth of the religious element in Milton's mind.

II) Milton's Prose Writings:

In his 31st year, he threw himself into the fierce controversies of the hour. For the next twenty years, he continued active as a writer of prose. His prose works are not very interesting today. His style is heavy and cumbrous. He wrote a number of treatises. One of these is the great and noble "*Areopagitica*"

III) Milton's Later Poetry:

After the Restoration of the monarchy, he was driven into private life and obscurity. Milton found leisure to accomplish the immense task, which he had kept in his mind for many years. He produced our greatest English poem "Paradise Lost". The inspiration and subject matter of his poem alike come from his Puritanism. It undertakes "to assert Eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to men". As a thinker and moralist, Milton belonged completely to Puritanism, as an artist, he belonged to Renaissance and in its form and style, models, the great epics of classical antiquity.

In "*Paradise Lost*", Milton sets forth the revolt of Satan against God, the war in the heaven, the fall of the rebel angels, the creation of the world and man, the temptation of Eve and Adam and their expulsion from Eden. Yet, while its central purpose was to show how 'man's disobedience' brought sin and death in its train, it is characteristic of him that he does not close on the note of evil triumphant, but prophetically introduces the divine work of redemption, he was afterwards led to add a sequel of four books entitled "Paradise Regained". The substance of this book is provided by the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. It is a very slight thing beside its gigantic predecessor.

The 'dramatic poem', "Samson Agonistes" crowns the labours of these closing years. In this, Milton applies the forms of the classic art to the treatment of a biblical subject.

Characteristics of Milton's Poetry:

After Shakespeare, Milton is the greatest English poet. He is regarded as one of the three or four supreme poets of the world. In him we can see a wonderful union of intellectual power and creative power, both at their highest. He is the most sublime of English poets. In his majesty of thought and diction, he is unrivalled. His descriptive power is astonishing. In the use of blank verse i.e., 'English heroic verse without rhyme', he remains our greatest master.

THE AGE OF MILTON

The Caroline Poets:

The term Caroline Poets is derived from the Latin word 'carolus' which means Charles. It includes a number of verse writers whose work is assigned to the reign of Charles I. Some of them are secular, and some are religious poets. The most important of them is Robert Herrick,

(1591-1674). He wrote both secular and religious poetry. His religious poetry was published under the general title of "Noble Numbers", his secular, in the same volume (1648) under that of "*Hesperides*". It is in the later Herrick's powers are shown at their best. They are miscellaneous in character, comprising addresses to friends, fairy poems, occasional poems on all sorts of subjects and many love poems. But they are all delightful in their naturalness and spontaneity. Historically, their singular feature is their complete detachment from the political interests of hour.

In the 'Cavalier' group of Caroline poets belong the writers Thomas Carew (1598-1639), his friend Sir John Suckling (1609-42), and Richard Lovelace (1618-58). These are all poets in the lighter vein. They do not treat their art seriously but their works are extremely well. Certain examples are Carew's "He that loves a Rosy cheek", Suckling's "Why so pale and wan, fond lover?" and Lovelace's "*To Althea from prison*". Another writer is Andrew Marvell (1621-78). He wrote fierce satire in rugged style on Charles II and his supporters.

The Caroline poets who found their interest in religion are George Herbert (1593-1633), his collection of lyric is "*The Temple*", Richard Crashaw (1613-49), Henry Vaughan (1622-95) and Francis Quarles (1592-1644) whose work is "*The Religious Emblems*".

Cowley and the 'metaphysical poets':

Abraham Cowley is regarded as a chief representative of the metaphysical school. The name 'metaphysical' was first applied to this school by Johnson. Johnson's explanation of his term is excellent: "The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavour. They neither copied nature nor life. Their thoughts are often new but seldom natural. They are not obvious and just ..."

Salient features of the metaphysical group:

Their work is packed with affectations and efforts. They indulge in strained metaphors, far fetched similies, and the most extravagant hyperbole they cultivate ingenuity at any cost, substitute philosophical subtleties and logical hair splitting for the natural expression of feeling. They employed the vast out of the way learning without the slightest regard to propriety. As a result, they are in general violent, harsh, cold and obscure.

A slightly younger writer – Thomas Traherne (1634-1704) is regarded as one of the greatest religious and metaphysical poets of 17th century. His volume of "Poem" was published in 1903 his prose work is "centuries of meditations" (1908).

The Caroline prose writers:

Some of the important prose writers and their writings are: Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Holy Dying", Richard Baxter's "The Saints everlasting Rest", Thomas Fuller's "Worthies of

England”, Thomas Browne’s “*Religio Medici*” and, Izaak Walton’s “*The Compleat Angler of the Contemplative Man’s Recreations*”.

Some of the important historical prose writings are “Edward Hyde’s” “*History of the Great Rebellion*” and Thomas Hobbe’s “*Leviathan*”.

THE AGE OF DRYDEN

The age of Dryden:

The Stuart Restoration was followed by an immense change in general temper of the English people. A sweeping reaction against Puritanism and everything was set in. Infidelity and profligacy became fashionable. The moral ideals of Puritanism were turned into jest. The spirit of corruption spread far and wide. The general lowering of the moral tone was everywhere apparent. Literature is a social product, and it reflects the life of the era. The literature of the age of Dryden was openly and defiantly corrupt. Though it had admirable qualities, it was wanting in moral strength and spiritual fervor. Real earnestness of purpose and great creative energy had passed away. The thoughts of men no longer scaled the heights.

Thus we enter upon a period in which literature is intellectual rather than imaginative or emotional. Though often brilliant it is a bit hard and unsympathetic. This true even of poetry which became prosaic. Also, the literature of this period was powerfully influenced by French taste and French ideas of art.

The Forerunners of Dryden:

The two writers, who were considered as the pioneers of the so-called ‘Classic’ school of poetry were Edmund Waller, and Sir John Denham. They were the reformers of English versification.

Dryden’s life:

John Dryden was born at Aldwinkle All saints, Northamptonshire in 1631. He was educated at Westminster at Trinity College, Cambridge and settled in London about 1657. Soon after this he wrote his first poems, the “Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell” and “*Astraea Redux*” in celebration of the ‘happy restoration of Charles II. In 1670 he was made the poet laureate.

The first of his great satires in verse is “*Absalom and Achitophel*”. The other two theological poems are “*Religio Laici*”, (1682) a defence of the church of England and “*The Hind and the Panther*” (1687) an elaborate argument in favor of Roman Catholicism. He produced five more plays, translations of Juvenal, Persius and Vergil and a volume of fables. They were published in November, 1699. Six months later in May 1700, he died.

Dryden's poetry:

As a poet he ripened very slowly. His first poem, an elegy on the death of young Lord Hastings, written at eighteen is incredibly bad. His "*Heroic Stanzas*", written at twenty are crude and bombastic. He was greatly influenced by Cowley, who was afterwards described as "the darling of my youth", and as a result, all the characteristic absurdities of the metaphysical school abound in these early works. They survive even in "*Annus mirabilis*" (1667), where the two events, the war with Holland and the fire of London, were mentioned. In the last twenty years of his life, he came out from the false taste of metaphysical writers. His style was no longer turbid but chocked with all sorts of rubbish flows clear and strong. This work, which marks the definite establishment of the classical school of poetry in England, may be dealt with under three heads.

The Political satires:

"*Absalom and Achitophel*" was written amid the excitement following the alleged popish plot, to defend the King's policy against the Earl of Shaftesbury. It was specially famous for its powerful character studies as of Shaftesbury himself under the name of Achitophel and of the Duke of Buckingham under that of Zimri. It is a master piece of brilliant characterization.

"*The Medal*", a further invective against Shaftesbury. It is a brilliant piece of satirical work. "Mac Flecknoe", a scathing personal attack on a former friend. Thomas Shadwell, who had replied to 'The Medal' in a poem filled with scurrilous abuse.

2)TheDoctrinalPoems:

The two great Doctrinal poems are '*Religio Laici*' and '*The Hind and the Panther*'. They are not strictly religious. There is nothing devotional or spiritual about them. They are theological and controversial.

3) The Fables:

These fine tales are written amid the anxieties of Dryden's last years and under the increasing burden of age and ill-health. "*The Palamon and Arcite*" based upon the '*Kinghtes Tale*' of Chaucer provides an opportunity for a most instructive comparison between the method and art of the 14th century and those of the 17th century poet.

Dryden's poetry thoroughly representative of the age. It has little imaginative power, little depth of feeling, and little spiritual glow or fervor. The two remarkable odes of Dryden are "To Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew" and "Alexander's Feast". It rarely touches high lyrical note. On the other hand it is characterised by splendid intellectuality and a manly vigour of style.

It was Dryden's influence and example which lifted the classic couplet into the serious English poetry.

Butler:

Another important writer of this period is Samuel Butler (1612-80), the author of the famous "*Hudibras*". It is a satire on the puritans. It hits the taste of the time. The machinery of the poem is upon Don Quixote. It tells of the misadventures of a Kinght and his squire and the Kinght's illfortunes in love.

To modern taste, *Hudibras* is far too long. Some of its best passages suffer from prolixity. The subject matter is also a disadvantage to the eyes of the reader to-day. Yet it is full of wit and vivacity.

CHAPTER-XII

THE AGE OF DRYDEN

PROSE AND THE DRAMA

The Restoration marks the real moment of birth of our modern English prose. The establishment of this modern prose is the greatest single fact in the literary annals of the Age of the Dryden.

The older prose was too intricate involved and cumbrous for general use. The sentences were long: parentheses were numerous, construction adopted was often Latin. But in new prose all this is changed. The sentences are much shorter and simpler. The large straggling masses are broken up. The parentheses and classical inversions are cleared away. These changes made reading and writing easier, direct and lucid.

Many causes combined in the introduction and establishment of this new prose. One thing is the spread of the spirit of common sense and of the critical temper of mind which was so injurious to the higher interests of poetry. The second thing is the extending influence of science which favoured clearness of thought and plainness of expression. Another cause is that new kind of public was growing up which was far more miscellaneous and varied in characters. In France, a kind of prose was evolved which was clear flexible and has good taste. This prose provided a model for the English writers. The establishment of the new prose was not a sudden and also it was not the work of one man. Dryden is considered as the first of our really great prose writers in the modern style.

Dryden's Prose work:

Dryden's prose writings consist mainly of essays and prefaces dealing with a large range of questions connected with poetry and the drama. As the Restoration saw the rise of new prose, so also it saw the real beginnings of modern criticism. Dryden is not only our first great modern prose writer but also our first great modern critic. In the course of his criticism he takes up and discusses nearly all the topics which were of interest of the literary world of his time – the forms and methods of the drama, for example ; the elements of heroic and epic poetry, the relations of art and nature, the qualities of the great writers of Greece and Rome and so on. His work is thus of capital importance as a commentary upon the tastes and the ideals of the rising school of literature. His best criticism can be found in his "Essay of Dramatic Poesy". In that book, he considers the respective principles and merits of of the three chief types of drama – the classical drama of the Greeks and Romans, the neo-classical drama of the French, and the romantic drama of the English. Dryden often writes hastily and is habitually careless in detail. His sagacity and penetration are remarkable.

BUNYAN:

The only great name in the prose literature of Dryden's age is that of John Bunyan, son of a tinker. He was born at Elstow, Bedfordshire. He married early and began to preach on village greens, he was in Bedford Jail for twelve years. His autobiographical "*Grace Abounding*" was the work of his captivity. The first part of "*The Pilgrim's Progress*" belong to a second imprisonment of six months in 1675. He had obtained a licence to preach and had become the regular minister of the Baptist congregation. In his later years he was also famous as a preacher in London. It was on a visit to London he died and was buried in the old Dissenters' Burial Ground at Bunhill Fields. Bunyan wrote much, but his four great works are "*Grace Abounding*" (1660) "*The Pilgrims Progress*" (1678-84), "*The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*" (1680) and "*The Holy War*" (1682).

He was important figure in the literary history. He is the only man in our literature who has ever succeeded in writing a long prose allegory. His writings are vivid and plain. Bunyan was not an educated man. He knew nothing of the classics, or theories of literature or even about English Literature. But he had the authorized version of the English Bible by heart and he was endowed by nature with a genius for style. "*The Pilgrims Progress*" is considered as the greatest product of Puritanism in English Literature. The controlling didactic purpose and the allegorical form prevent us from putting the Pilgrims Progress into the class of regular modern novels.

Other Prose Writers to the Period:

Sir William Temple (1629-99), he wrote essays in a plain but polished style. John Tillotson, abandoned the order tradition of the pulpit, introduced a similar style into a religious oratory. Both have a certain importance in the establishment of new prose. The great value of the prose in philosophic exposition and discussion was distinctly shown by John Locke (1632-1704) in his "*Essays on the Human Understanding*", "*Treatise on Government*" and "*Thoughts on Education*".

The most interesting minor prose writing of the time for the general reader is to be found in the work of the two diarists John Evelyn (1620-1706) Samuel Pepys (1633-1703). Evelyn's "*Diary*" is read mainly as a record of contemporary events as seen from the point of view of a loyal, thoughtful and high-minded royalist. It is written in a grave, simple style. Pepy's "*Diary*" is one of the most entertaining of books, and the most extraordinary thing of its kind in any literature. It covers a period interest nearly ten-years—from 1st January, 1660 to 31st may, 1669. Its principal interest lies in the vivid descriptions which it gives of the men and manners of the day and the habits, fashions, the coffee houses, the play houses etc., Pepys did not write for the public eye but for himself alone. He used a shorthand. It was not deciphered till the early 19th century. In short this "*Diary*" is unique.

The Drama of The Age of Dryden:

The theatre everywhere reflected the taste of its patrons. In the comedy of the time – the comedy of the Restoration – the chief names are those of William Wycherley (1604-1716) , William Congreve (1670-1729), the most brilliant writer of this group and one of our masters of artificial comedy, Sir John Vanbrugh and George Farauhar. The work of these men is clever. Its wit is abundant and unflagging, rev. Jeremy Collier’s (1650-1726) “Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage” (1698) caused an immense sensation. Tragedy is also artificial. Certain tragedies of Dryden are “*Tyrannic Love*” or “*The Royal Charter*.”

Congreve’s tragedy is “*The Mourning Bride*”. Nathaniel Lee first wrote in rime and then in blank verse. Thomas Otways, “*Orphan*” and “*Venice Preserved*” long kept their popularity with actors and playgoers alike, are the only other tragic poets of the period

The Age of Johnson

Samuel Johnson was born at Lichfield in 1709. From his father he inherited his huge, unwieldy, unhealthy frame, and that Vile melancholy of disposition which was to throw a gloom over so much of his life. The elder Johnson died on the verge of bankruptcy. He tried his luck in so many ways, including his marriage with a widow twenty years his senior. At last he tried his luck in London. He reached the metropolis in 1737, accompanied by David Garrick. He published the poem London in 1738 and formed a connection with Cove’s Magazine, to which he contributed the parliamentary reports. During the next few years he produced Vanity of Human Wishes(1748) and a tragedy, Irene(1749) on the neoclassical mode. In March 1750, he started a periodical The Rambler which appeared on Tuesdays and Thursdays till March 1752. This was followed by two other series, The Adventurer and the Idler, Meanwhile he was occupied for eighty years (1747-55) by an immense task, A Dictionary of the English Language. Johnson in his dictionary not only defined but also illustrated his definitions by quotations taken from the whole range of English Literature. Though weak in etymology and philosophy, this work laid the foundation of English lexicography. The Dictionary made him independent his struggles and anxieties were over, when somewhat later he received a pension of 300 pounds a year. He now became the acknowledged dictator or ‘the Great Cham’ of literature, as Smollett called him. He founded the famous club in 1764. In the club he sat surrounded by men such as Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds the great painter, Burke, Gibbon, Sir William Jones the orientalist, Garrick and Boswell. He had ample opportunity for the exercise of his unmatched conversational and controversial powers in the child. He published his didactic tale, Rasselas in 1759; an edition of Shakespeare in 1765; an account of his tour to the Hebrides with Boswell under the title of Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland in 1775, and his largest and also his greatest work, ‘The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets’ with critical observations on their works in 1779-81. He died in 1784 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The case of Johnson is peculiar in one particular. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works, but the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. With one or two exceptions his writings are today commonly neglected. No other English author is so intimately known to us as Johnson. This is because he lives in the pages of his biography by his hero-worshipping friend James Boswell (1740-95). Every detail of his orderly compounded but powerful personality is there portrayed for us; his countless eccentricities of behavior and his fits of moroseness.

Brutality, his tenderness and warmth of heart, his wonderful shrewdness and wisdom; his fine mental honesty and hatred for all forms of cant; his bigotry, intolerance, and childish prejudice; his prodigious memory; his quickness of grasp and repartee; his extraordinary genius for talk. Yet, Johnson owes his present fame mainly to Boswell. It is a mistake to ignore Johnson's own books, for he was a very great writer. Though he had well-marked limitations, he was great both as a critic of literature and as a critic of life. As a critic of literature he was almost always penetrating and stimulating, though he sometimes allowed his strong prejudices to interfere with his judgement. In all his tastes and standards he was a thorough-going-conservative. He held fast to the principles of the Augustan school of poetry. He stoutly resisted every movement of revolt against what he regarded as the orthodox literary creed.

As a moralist he is characterized by remarkable sanity and massive common sense. Broadly speaking, he is a pessimist. He declared, 'Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyments to enjoyment; we are stirred into activity by a feeling of its Vacuity'; we spend our energies for the most part in the pursuit of chimerical pleasure; and when our desires are gratified, the usual result is satiety. He develops these views in many of his miscellaneous writings and most notably in two of his finest works, the *Vanity of Human Wishes* and *Rasselas*. The *Vanity of Human Wishes* is an impressive sermon on the text which is stated in the title. It is supported by a number of typical illustrations taken from history. The *Rasselas* is historically significant as a reply to the flimsy optimism of Shaftesbury and Pope. It also tells us that happiness sought by all is nowhere to be found. The tone of Johnson's philosophy is thus profoundly sad but there is nothing debilitating about it. Throughout his life he made a most heroic fight against the besetting melancholy. The steady courage of his own manhood pervades his work. The essence of his teaching is that we should face the facts of existence honestly. We should bear the evil uncomplainingly and make the most of the good. The conclusions of the *Vanity of Human Wishes* and *Rasselas* show that he was saved from utter hopelessness by his strong religious faith.

As a prose writer Johnson did not follow the lead of the Augustan masters. He gives us a style which is highly latinised in vocabulary. His sentence structure is marked by elaborate balance and antithesis. His way of writing is pompous and heavy. But it is never obscure, and at its best has great strength nobility and dignity.

GOLDSMITH (1728-74)

Oliver Goldsmith stands nearest to Johnson both in personal and historical interest. He was in most eccentric of an eccentric family. He was born in 1728 at Pallas, Ireland. His father was a clergyman. In early life, he gained an unenviable reputation for wilderness and stupidity. He managed to get his degree at Dublin. He spent some years in idleness before he went to Edinburgh to study medicine. In Edinburgh, his Bohemianism developed unchecked. He went to London under the pretext of pursuing medical studies. But actually he earned a little money by teaching and lost it all at the gaming tables. In 1755 he set to make the Grand Tour of Europe with one clean shirt, a guinea in his pocket, and his favourite German flute as his equipment. How he managed to pay his way is still mystery. For information regarding this question, as well as for details of his experience, it is probable that we are safe in turning to his poem, The Travellers, and to the account of George Primrose's continental wanderings in The Vicar of Wakefield. In 1756, he reached London penniless and friendless. After doing many odd jobs, he entered literature at thirty. His career was mainly that of a hackwriter. A large portion of his output belongs to the class of what are popularly known as pot-boilers. Even these have much of the charm of his personality and style. His more substantial work consists of two poems – The Traveller(1764) and the Deserted Village(1770) one novel The Vicar of Wakefield(1766) and two comedies – The Good Natured Man(1768) and She Stoops to Conquer(1773). To these should be added a number of essays, including a series entitled The Citizen of the World(1760-62). His friendship with Johnson starts. The warm relations between the two men, so entirely different in mind and temper, throws an interesting light on both. Though Johnson bullied Goldsmith often, he would allow no one else to do so slow in conversation and with a perfect genius for blundering, Goldsmith was the laughing stock of the wits of London's literary world. He was loved by men such as Garrick and Reynolds. Garrick said of Goldsmith in a mock-epitaph, "He wrote like an angel but talked like poor Poll" His struggles and vicissitudes continued to the end of his life. When he died in 1774, he was still deeply in debt. Poor Goldsmith was capricious, vain and improvident. But he was so large-hearted, sympathetic, and humane that we forget his faults and think of him always with the tenderest affection. In Johnson's words he was a gentle master who left scarcely any kind of writing untouched, and touched nothing that he did not adorn.

Goldsmith's work is very miscellaneous in character. His two admirable comedies are historically interesting because they mark a reaction against the dull and uninteresting moralising of sentimental comedy and a return to real humour and life. A striking feature of Goldsmith's original writings is the strong personal element in all of them. Their peculiar charm is therefore fundamentally the charm of the man himself. He projected into what he wrote not only his temperament but also his experiences. A large portion of his imaginative work is really reminiscence. Thus it is easy to discover the originals of most of his best known characters in his relatives or himself. Dr. Primrose, for example is certainly his father, the good priest in The Deserted Village, his brother Harry, Moses in the Vicar of Wakefield, young Honeywood in

The Good-Natured Man and Tony Lumpkin in She Stoops to Conquer, humorous studies of himself. Though he keeps so near to actual life, he is in no sense a realist. His temperament was so essentially poetical that everything he takes out of experience undergoes idealization in his hands. As a critic and theorist he was even more consistently conservative than Johnson, and stoutly maintained the supremacy of Pope. His admiration of the Augustan age was shown even in his prose style. He wrote in an easy, informal way of his own. It may none the less be said to carry on the traditions of Addison and Steele.

Goldsmith's one excursion into the field of fiction is the Vicar of Wakefield. Goldsmith had learned little of the art of novel from the precepts and practice of Fielding. Goldsmith's plot is ill-concocted, full of glaring improbabilities, and huddled up in the most ludicrous manner at the close. We are ready to make allowances for the technical defects of his work, because it is instina with his peculiar charm and tenderness and its materials are handled with that transfiguring power which touches the simplest detail with idyllic beauty. Its humour is perennially delightful. Much of its characterization is purely conventional. No praise would be excessive for the subtlety with which the good Dr. Primrose and his family are portrayed. Its spirit is that of quiet, mainly piety, without the slightest suggestion of the 'goody-goody'. The large sympathy which is conspicuous in many of its descriptions shows that in human feeling and real social insight alike. Goldsmith was ahead of most of the professional preachers and teachers of his time.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689-1761)

Richardson, a prosperous printer drifted by mere accident into the production of an epoch-making book, after having reached the age of fifty. Two friends, who were publishers asked him to prepare for them 'a little volume of letters in a common style' as models for 'country readers who were unable to indite for themselves'. Moral considerations were always uppermost in his mind. So at his suggestion guidance in conduct was to be combined with instruction in the art of composition. He had hardly embarked upon his task when a true story he had heard many years before came to his mind. He conceived the idea of using this as a thread upon which to string his letters. Then the thought occurred to him that such a story 'if written in an easy and natural manner, suitable to the simplicity of it, might possibly introduce a new species of writing, turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance writing, and tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue'. So the proposed ready letter writer was for the moment set aside, and Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded (1740) came into being.

The story is about a young girl, a lady's maid. She is for a long time persecuted by the addresses of the libertine son of her mistress now dead. She successfully resists all his arts and intrigues. And at length, his heart being softened towards her, he makes her his wife. In spite of its simplicity of subject, it was so fresh in character and interest that it scored an instant and sensational success. Richardson laid the chief emphasis on its moral teaching. But today, it

seems to us a sort of sordid and mercenary. From the historical point of view, it is interesting as a piece of art, because it presents in a rather crude form the peculiar methods which were afterwards used with a much surer hand and with much finer effect in its two successors, Clarissa (1747-48) and Sit Qffite QmidsQn (1753). Clarissa, or the Adventures of a Young Lady – generally known as Clarissa Harlowe is Richardson's masterpiece. It gave him a European reputation. In its own way, it is still regarded as one of the greatest of eighteenth century novels. It is also noteworthy for Richardson's character – study Lovelace, whose name has become proverbial. Doing justice to Richardson has become difficult, because of the following reasons: profound changes in thought and the immense development of the art of prose fiction, since his time. Richardson's books are extremely long. They are incumbered with endless repetitions and masses of unimportant detail. His stories drag and their machinery is very clumsy. They are all written in the form of letters which pass among the characters. This epistolary method has its advantages in bringing the readers into intimate touch with the letter-writers themselves. It tends to the scattering of interest. The initial postulate of everlasting correspondence in and out of season leaves us with a disturbing sense of the extreme artificiality of the whole fabrication. But for patient, microscopic analysis of motive and passion, Richardson still holds a pre-eminent place. This is some justification of his remorseless prolixity. In many of its fundamental characteristics his genius was rather feminine than masculine. Even from boyhood, he had sought by preference the society of women. Therefore, in general he succeeded best in the delineation of female characters. He carried on the ethical traditions of Addison and Steele. He did good work, in his own pragmatic fashion, in the purification of society and manners. But his moralizing is apt to sink into wearisome twaddle. His sentiment is often overstrained and mawkish. In general, the atmosphere of his books is too much like that of a hot-house to be entirely pleasant or wholesome.

HENRY FIELDING (1707-1754)

Henry Fielding was a man very different from Richardson's knowledge of life was narrow, whereas Fielding's knowledge of life was wide. Fielding was virile, vigorous, and somewhat coarse in nature. There is thus a strength and a breadth in his work which is lacking in that of Richardson. Richardson's judgement of Fielding – that his writings were 'Sretchedly low and dirty' – clearly suggests the fundamental contrast between the two men. Moreover, for some ten years before he took up the novel, Fielding had been busy writing plays. This long training in the drama had taught him many valuable lessons in the art of construction. Unlike Richardson, Fielding started with a good preliminary preparation in technique.

Fielding's own first experiment in the novel was direct offshoot from the first experiment of Richardson. In 1740 all England was in raptures over Pamela. Fielding did not share the general enthusiasm. The underlying absurdities of the story appealed to his quick sense of humour. He was struck by the downright artfulness of the little heroine, whose virtues were paraded with so much satisfaction. The author's overwrought sentimentalism disgusted him.

Therefore, it occurred to him to take advantage of the popularity of the book and to turn it into burlesque by raising an honest laugh against it. This was the origin of The adventures of Joseph Andrews(1742). Fielding began by reversing the initial situation in Pamela. As Richardson's heroine had been tempted by her master, so his hero, who is supposed to be Pamela's brother, is tempted by his mistress. He keeps up this parody till the tenth chapter. After this, he discards his first design. Being carried away by his own invention, the story becomes an 'epic of the highway', full of adventures, horseplay, and not too decent fun. This was experimental only, but it helped Fielding to find his proper way.

The greatest novel of the eighteenth century, The History of Tom Jones was written in 1749. Here Fielding takes an enormous canvas and crowds it with figures. His hero is a foundling. He is brought up in the west of England by a squire named Allworthy. He quarrels with the squire and teamps up to London in quest of fortune. Country men and manners fill the first part, metropolitan men and manners, the second part of the book. The book as a whole gives us the fullest and richest picture of English life about the middle of the eighteenth century.

Fielding's third great novel, Amelia, appeared in 1751. In this the interest centres in the character of a woman. Thus Fielding, probably of set purpose, met the author of Clarissa on his own ground. The story tells of the courage and patience of a devoted wife and of the ill-doings of her weak-willed husband. It is far sadder, far less vigorous, and far less humorous, than its predecessors. Despite the excellence of some of its character-drawing, it exhibits unmistakable signs of foiling power.

Fielding was much concerned about the structural principles of prose fiction. To him the novel was quite as much a form of art as the epic or the drama. His preface to Joseph Andrews and the introductory chapters to the successive books of Tom Jones are a skilled craftsman's essays on various questions connected with his craft. But his own success in construction was not indeed nearly so great as is commonly supposed. The praise which Coleridge and Thackeray lavished upon the plot of Tom Jones must be dismissed as wildly extravagant. But he still deserves the fullest credit for what he did by both theory and practice to carry over into the novel those ideas of unity and balance which are essential to any work of art.

Though he is known for his grossness and animality, he is a moralist in his own way. He only repudiated root and branch Richardson's pinched ideas of conduct, and the spirit of responsibility which pervades his work. As a social, satirist and teacher, he sought to expose some of the most glaring evils, as well public as private, which at present infect the country'. There are weak points in Fielding's ethics. He touches certain matters with laxity which we may deplore. But, on the whole, he was a much greater artist than Richardson. His treatment of life and the tone of his writings are both truer and healthier than Richardson's.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT (1721-1771)

Though Smollett is usually associated with Richardson and Fielding in the history of the eighteenth century novel, his work is on a much lower level than theirs. In early life Smollett spent some years as surgeon on a man-of-war. He, thus, gained first-hand knowledge of the sea sailors, and the appalling conditions of the naval service. Afterwards he turned this knowledge to good account. He settled in London to practice his profession. But medicine failing, like Goldsmith he turned to literature. Again like Goldsmith, he was a bookseller's hack and produced a large amount of miscellaneous work, including a History of England. Thus success of Richardson and Fielding naturally prompted him to try his hand in fiction. He wrote half a dozen novels. The most important of them are – The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748), The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle (1751), and The Expedition, of Humphry Clinker (1771).

Smollett conceived the novel as 'a large diffused picture' of life. Unlike Fielding, he made an attempt to organise his materials into an artistic whole. His stories are simply strings of adventures. The unity they possess, as such, is given to them only by the personality of the hero. His one object is to keep the reader's interest alive by a perpetual succession of incidents. His fertility of invention and animation are undoubtedly remarkable. Smollett's characters are generally very crudely drawn. He reverts to the picaresque type of fiction in the looseness of composition, in his dependence upon action, and in the nature of his subjects. The enjoyment of his novels requires stronger nerves than most of us today possess. The world he depicts is a dirty and dingy place, whose inhabitants for the most part are very sorry and disagreeable fellows. He loves to dwell upon the most foul and nauseating phases of life. He gives us little that is really cheerful to relieve the prevailing gloom.

His Humphry Clinker is far finer in tone and richer in genuine comedy and character interest than its predecessors. But in regard to these it can only be said that, while they often carry us along by the zest of their narrative, they have in them much to disgust even the least fastidious reader. But, it has to be remembered that Smollett wrote expressly as a satirist and reformer. His purpose was to paint the monstrous evils of life in their true proportions and colours that he might thus drive them home upon the attention of the public, it must certainly be set down to his credit that the sickening realism of the ship scenes in Roderick Random led directly to drastic changes for the better in the conditions of the naval service. He did something to enlarge the scope of fiction. He was the real creator of the English novel to the sea and of the sailors. He was the first of our novelists to exploit systematically and successfully the national peculiarities of Irish, Scotch and Welsh.

GRAY (1716-71)

Thomas Gray was a man of poor physique, a great scholar, and a recluse. He produced but little poetry. What he wrote is not only exquisite in quality and finish, but also curiously interesting as a kind of epitome of the changes of the changes which were coming over the

literature of his time. Among his first poetic efforts was a poem on “The Alliance of Education and Government,” belonging to the Augustan school. It was written in closed couplet. Gray never succeeded in finishing it. His first publication was the ode “On a Distant Prospect of Eton college” written in 1742 and published anonymously by Dodsley in 1747. Next year, in the first three volume of Dodley’s collection, appeared his “Eton Ode,” the “Ode to Spring,” and the poem “On the death of a Favourite Cat”. These are conventional in thought and diction and contain little to suggest the new spirit. The “Elegy written in a country Churchyard” was published by Dodley in 175, when it quickly went through fifteen editions and was often pirated.

With this a great change appears. Many features make it historically very important. There is, first, the use of nature. Nature, though employed only as background, is still handled with fidelity and sympathy. Next, there is the churchyard scene, the twilight atmosphere, and the brooding melancholy of the poem. These connect the “Elegy” with one side of the romantic movement the development of the distinctive romantic mood. The contrast drawn between the country and the town – the peasants simple life and ‘the madding crowd’s ignoble strife’ – is a third particular which will be noted. Finally, we see poetry under the influence of the spreading democratic spirit, in the tender feeling shown for the rude forefathers of the hamlet’ and the sense of the human value of the Untill things that are written in ‘the short and simple annals of the poor’. Therefore, poetry reached out to elude humble aspects of life hitherto ignored. Thus, inspite of the poet’s continued use of Augustan trick of personification and capital letters, the ‘Elegy’ marks a stage in the evolution of Gray’s genius.

Yet it was only a stage, for as he grew older he became increasingly romantic. The two great odes,” The Progress of Poesy” and “The Bard”, are filled with the new conception of the poet as an inspired singer rather than an accomplished artist. The short poems on northern and Celtic themes like “The Fatal Sisters” and “The Descent of Odin’, take their place in the history of the revival of the romantic past. Gray’s development as a poet began with versified pamphlets in Pope’s manner, passed on through conventional lyrics to the “Elegy”, and ended with experiments which are funda mentally romantic in character. Though Gray was a man of very pure poetic feeling, he was singularly unprolific.

BURNS (1759-96)

Robert Burns was endowed with a marvellously spontaneous power of genius and an almost unrivalled gift of song. The ultimate basis of his strength was his absolute sincerity to himself and his surroundings Being a Scottish peasant, he wrote frankly as a peasant. He became the poetic interpreter of the thoughts and feelings, the racy humour, the homespun philosophy, the joys, sorrows, passions, superstitions, and even sometimes the lawlessness and debaucheries of the class from which he sprang. Of all these things he sang with an entire freedom from everything suggestive of mere literary mannerism and affectation. It is indeed quite a mistake to regard him as an unlettered plowman. He read widely and critically. Though it may be noted as a

detail that his most ambitious poem “The Cotter’s Saturday Night” is in the Spenserian stanza , standard English literature affected him but little his poetic ancestry was in fact Scottish, and the chief literary influences being his own work, vernacular poetry as represented by the songs and ballads of the Scottish peasant folk. He helped to bring natural passion back into English verse. Another important point about his writings is their strong democratic quality he was keenly responsive to the revolutionary spirit of his age. This spirit is felt when, in “The Cotter’s Saturday Night” he contrasts the homely life and the simple piety of the peasant and his family with the wealth and vulgar ostentation, the luxury and the artificial refinements of the fashionable world. He prophesies of the coming time when all over the world men will be brothers. He also reminds that it is tairis unhumanity to man ‘which brakes countless thousands mourn’. Thus, he constitutes himself the mouthpiece of the growing faith of his time in Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

COWPER (1731-1800)

The delicate, sensitive morbid William Cowper began to write poetry late in his life. He wrote poetry in order to keep his mind from preying upon itself and from brooding over those torturing religious anxieties which more than once turned his melancholy into positive madness. He was not a student of poetry. He gave little or no attention to poetry as an art. He wrote just to express his own ideas in his own way.

In his satires he follows the conventional mode of Pope. But in his principal poem, “The Task”, he abandons tradition entirely and pursues an independent course. This long blank verse poem is in one sense as much the poetic masterpiece of later eighteenth century evangelicalism as Paradise Lost is the masterpiece of the militant Puritanism of the seventeenth century. Though it contains much of the narrow religious teaching of Cowper’s sect, it also contains a great deal which transcends all mere sectarian limitations. It is extremely discursive and rambling and is wholly wanting in any structural backbone. Though it exhibits no organic unity, it possesses a unity of motive and meaning. Its real text is praise of retirement and of country life as favourable of religion and virtue. The philosophy of life expounded in it is expressly hostile to all the evils attendant upon the march of civilization. The oft-quoted line – “God made the country and man made the town” – shows how far Cowper was unconsciously at one with the revolutionists who were preaching the gospel of “back to nature” and the simplification of life. In the sympathetic treatment of nature and landscape he comes nearest to Wordsworth. He comes nearest to him in the unaffected directness of his language, despite occasional lapses into “poetic diction”. “The Task” also overflows with the spirit of humanitarianism. Despite the poet’s personal fastidiousness, his hermit like existence, and the selfish character of his religion, it is also strongly impregnated with ideas of liberty. Its denunciation of such abuses as militarism and the slave-trade is noteworthy and even more so, the powerful passage in which the Bastille is attacked as the symbol of tyranny and irresponsible authority. It is an interesting point to remember that this passage was published in 1785, and that only four years later the Bastille fell.

Some critics have seen in Cowper a premonition of Wordsworth and others, of Byron. In a sense he foreshadowed both. He resembles Wordsworth in his love of nature, his emotional response to it, and his sympathetic handling of humble rural life. His poetry points forward to Byron as it is filled with indications of social unrest. Being the most important figure in English poetry between Pope and Wordsworth, his life serves to bridge the age of Pope with that of Wordsworth.

The Age of Wordsworth

Coleridge's contribution to English literature.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 – 1843) is one of the greatest Romantic poets in English. He was a close friend of Wordsworth and together they published the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) which heralded a new era in literature. Coleridge was a poet, philosopher and critic and he was a genius; but because he was an addict to opium, most of his work was left incomplete.

Poetry:

What is best in Coleridge's poetry is very small in amount, but that little is of rare excellence. **The Ancient Mariner** is one of the best –known poems of Coleridge. This has a gripping story and the supernatural element is beautifully handled. **Christabel** is built around the medieval atmosphere with its castles, Knights and religious practices and superstition. The supernatural in these poems is not horrible or violent, but only suggestive. Coleridge is noted for the suggestive beauty. In *Christabel* the poet says: A sight to dream of not to tell.

Coleridge saved supernaturalism from the coarse sensationalism then in vogue; he linked it with psychological truth. *Kubla Khan* is a dream which he had the previous night; but as there was some interruption, the poem was left incomplete. Coleridge describes a beautiful and magnificent palace built by Kubla Khan. The poem is rich in language and imagery. On *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan* Legouis and Cazamian remark:

The very centre of Coleridge's art lies in his faculty of evoking the mystery of things, and making it actual, widespread and obsessing. To descend to the depth of our consciousness is to discover the immanent being; in this way we are able to penetrate beyond the plane of appearance and sense.

Dejection: An Ode is another important poem of Coleridge. In this poem the tragedy of his mind is pictured. He is a genius, but he is not able to produce poetic work. This poem is pathetic and autobiographical because it reflects the tragedy of ineffectiveness which made up so much of his life.

Philosophy:

As a philosopher Coleridge has been a sower of germinal ideas. He was mastered and also borrowed from the great German philosophers Kant, Schelling and others. Coleridge has established the distinction between understanding and reason, fancy and imagination. He has also discussed intuition, idealism etc.,

Criticism:

Coleridge is a critic, too. His *Biographia Literaria* is his major critical work. Here he discusses the nature of poetry. He says that poem unities ; the concrete and the abstract; the general and the particular; reason and imagination; sameness and difference. A poem must have **organic unity**. That is, the various parts of the poem should mutually support and strengthen one another. The poem must be uniformly good and attractive. This idea of organic unity is important for poetry and Coleridge has given it to us. In *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge also discusses the theory of poetic diction as stipulated by Wordsworth. Wordsworth has stated that “the language of men in real life” must be used for poetry. Now Coleridge questions Wordsworth’s statement. The language spoken by man in life differs from locality to locality and from one-special class to another. The definition of “language” as given by Wordsworth is too vague; the language of poetry must be philosophical, imaginative, symbolic and it cannot be the language of the rustics. Coleridge’s lectures on Shakespeare and Milton are also valid critical contributions to English literature.

Conclusion:

Thus Coleridge has made considerable contribution to literature in various fields. Though his work is small in quantity, it is significant in quality.

The major of characteristics of the poetry of Keats.

Introduction:

John Keats (1795-1821) is one of the greatest English Romantic poets of the 19th c, the other Romantic poets being Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron and Shelley. Keats was the youngest and most short-lived of them all. Romantic poetry means love of nature, appreciation of beauty, imaginative spirit, spontaneous expression of feelings and emotions, love of the past and respect for man as an individual. The poetry of Keats reveals all these aspects of Romantic literature. The greatest works of Keats are *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, *Lamia*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *Isabella*, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and the Odes (Ode to a Nightingale, To Autumn, On a Grecian Urn, On Melancholy, To Psyche etc.,)

Love of Nature and sense of beauty:

Endymion starts with the line “A thing of beauty is a joy for ever”. This line explains the principle on which the entire poetry of Keats is based. He is the greatest lover of beauty in all its aspects. “Beauty is Truth” is a line from his *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. He kept himself detached from all political, religious and social movements and enjoyed nature in all its aspects. According to Keats, poetry should not be the vehicle of philosophy religious teaching or social and political theories, but the incarnation of beauty. He has written in one of his letters; “I have loved the principle of beauty in all things”.

Sensuousness:

“Sensuousness” means enjoyment through senses. Keats had very sharp senses and he derived utmost pleasure from them—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. His odes bear evidence to this. “*Ode to the Nightingale*” is a very poem in sensuousness. Here Keats enjoys the music of the nightingale (sense of hearing) and the smell of the flowers in the garden, the various colours and brightness of the flowers (sense of sight) and he imagines a bottle of French wine and its taste along with dance and enjoyment of rhythmic movement.

Love of the golden past:

One important aspect of Romantic literature is glorifying the past. Keats had abundant love of the past. Through reading and the thirst for knowledge, he became familiar with Great art. Paganism and the customs and superstitions of the Middle Ages. Endymion, Hyperion and The Eve of St. Agnes take us to past times and reveal to us the beauties and glories of the past.

Escapism:

Keats listens to the song of the nightingale and longs intensely to leave this world of “weariness, fever and the fret” and enter the world of the bird. The tendency is called “escapism”. Art is a kind of escape from the harsh realities of this worldly life, *Ode on a Grecian Urn* is a good example of the escapist attitude and vanishes, flowers and trees are die and dry away. But pictured in the Urn; the lovers are always young and beautiful and their love is always fresh and strong. The trees are green because the spring season will never fade. Thus looking at the Urn, the poet forgets his personal and domestic problems and unhappiness and seeks escape into art.

The Language of Keats:

The language of Keats is remarkable for its richness of compound adjectives, imagery and other beauties. Here are a few examples “singest of summer in full-throated ease”. ‘Sylvan historian’, “Beauty is Truth and Truth Beauty”. “A thing of Beauty is a joy for ever”. _Was it a vision or a waking dream? Fled is that music, do I wake or sleep? (Nightingale)

The Great Odes:

Keats is best remembered for his odes. An Ode is an address to a person or thing, in which the poet expresses his own desires; disappointments, joys, sorrows, hope, hopelessness and other strong emotions. The odes of Keats are some of the best in the English language. Ode to a Nightingale glorifies the song of the nightingale in a garden full of flowers in moonlight. The bird is not born for death, but it will give pleasure to all humanity (Kings and clowns) generation after generation. Ode on a Grecian Urn sings the glories of art and its permanence. Autumn is a dull and uninteresting season; but in his Ode to Autumn, he brings out the beauties of the "Season of mellow fruitfulness". There are other odes of Keats *To Psyche, On Melancholy, On Indolence*.

Conclusion:

Thus Keats is one of the greatest English Poets. As he died at the age of 26, his works show signs of immaturity. But it is amazing that one could write so much and so beautifully within such a short life. His own consumption (disease), his brother's death, failure in love- these and other sorrows weighed him down. But, in spite of all these Keats has produced marvellous poetry and he is one of our immortal poets.

The Age of Tennyson

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

Alfred Lord Tennyson was born on 6th of August at Lincolnshire He was cradled in the heart of the country. The split of the landscape invaded some of his happiest scenic description.

In 1829, he won the chancellor's medal for his poem 'Timbuctoo' and he became Poet-Laureate in 1850. He was raised to the peerage as Lord Tennyson in 1884. He had published his two volumes of verse in 1842. He was in Wordsworth's language, 'decidedly the greatest of our living poets'. The news of his friend's death came to him in September 1833. Tennyson seemed stunned. As an outlet for his grief he began writing 'In Memoriam' a philosophic elegy, dealing with universal life, death and the life hereafter.

The first characteristic that struck Tennyson was his scientific perception rather than poetic imagination. Tennyson wrote like a scientist with a marked aptitude for poetry. The seriousness of Keats, the atmosphere of pensive beauty that hung over his scenic pictures – these matters appealed to young Tennyson.

The merits of Tennyson's first volume 'poems chiefly Lyrical' lie in their grace and melody. Many of them were revised by the poet later." The Recollection of the Arabian Nights" and 'Mariana in the Moated Range" remained to testify the delicate artistry of the new writer.

The volumes of 1833, strike at once a stronger and more varied note.' Fatima' has a fire about & We have The Lady of Shatott', a lovely piece of medieval magic, after the revision.

Above all there is the 'Lotus Eaters', a picture of exceeding charm. It is one of Tennyson's most enchanting poems. The popular note of sentiment is struck successfully in "The Miller's" and "The Merry Queen".

In 1850 Tennyson wrote his great Ode on the death of Duke Wellington'. As a writer of patriotic verse, he is among the most distinguished of English poets. This poem is among the best of its kind.

In 1855, came 'Maud', the neurotic hero is so morbid and hysterical from the outset that to final lapse into madness fails to affect the reader with the dramatic intensity.

Following 'Maud came, the Idylls of the King'(1859) Tennyson's interest in the old medieval cycle dated from the thirties, The lady of Shalott' testifies to that while in the 'Passing of Arthur' be struck a stronger and more vibrant note.

Technically the Idylls are a great achievement. His blank verse is final in quality than an attempted by the poets of the Romantic revival. He made many essays into blank verse with results eg 'Ulysses' and Lucretius'.

Tennyson's dramatic power is revealed in the poem "Northern Farmer" and "Northern Cobbler" "Tennyson turned during the seventies to the domain of conventional poetic drama Some of his plays are "Queen Mary" (1875) Ilarold (1876) and "Becker (1884). None of them show the instinct for presenting character in action that lies at the root of drama. There is good literary won in his plays .Passage of fine beauty and situations of genuine power are displayed , But onto whole , the dramatic fort proved alien to his genius.

His later writings include the remarkable philosophical poems. The Ancient Sage', "Vastneft" and Akbar's Dream 'and the superb lyric 'Crossing the Bar'.

No other poet has ever been more sensitive to the varied loveliness of nature, to the screw glory of things, accurate observation and delicate poetic feelings are blended everywhere.

Tennyson's attitude to men and women is that of a quiet, deliberate, steady nature. He was keenly alive to the slight fluctuations of mood. Tennyson deals with types rather than with individuals, with characteristics of humanity rather than with the idiosyncrasies of particular personalities.

His political sympathies had a tinge of revolutionary enthusiasm when he was guilt under the influence of romantic poets. But his 'Poland' is one solitary' poem on liberty while his political faith is well expressed in 'Britain'. He was an aristocrat in feeling.

In reviewing the whole body of Tennyson's work, we cannot but feel that he is at his best. As a word painter of typical scenery, as the exponent of the simple emotions of everyday life, he holds a treasured and honorable place. The crystalline charm, his dignified and melodious utterance will always endear him to the readers.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

Born at Camberwell on the 7th of May 1812. Robert Browning was the son of clerk in that bank of England, highly gifted intellectual man of fine character.

Designated for the medical profession, he entered Guy's hospital. But this was not his vocation. At one time he had a passion for the stage and wanted to be an actor. Finally he decided by following his long cherished idea of becoming a poet.

He began under Shelley's influence. His early work won no favour. He soon turned to the mode of dramatic monologues. Pauline published anonymously in 1883 is an autobiographical blank verse.

'Paracelus' (1835), is an inquiry into the nature of poetry in dramatic form but not really dramatic in style and shows Shelley's influence. 'Sordello' published in 1840 shows Browning discussing the nature and Junction of poetry.

His blank verse tragedy 'Strafford' (1837) suffers from the Shadow of Shakespeare. It is oddly exclamatory in style, and the emotion is not adequately realised in the words.

'Pippa Passes' (1841) is the first work which shows something of the real Browning. It is with "Dramatic Lyric" (1842) "Dramatic Romances" (1842), 'Men and women' (1855) and 'Dramatis personae' (1864) that Browning fully develops his characteristic powers.

Browning's interest in painting and music provided some of the most effective subjects for his dramatic monologue. 'Pietro Tietor Ignotus', 'Fra Lippo Lippi', 'Andrea Del Sarto' - all dealing with painters are among his best poems

The flamboyant optimism of 'Rabbi Ben Ezra' cannot be directly connected with the known views of Abraham Ezra. But sometime Browning makes a real effort of the imagination to capture the essence of a period in a particular character.

A poem like "A Grammarian's Funeral" expresses through a projection of a character, one of those heroic Renaissance scholars whose unwary pursuit of classical learning helped to lay the foundation of modern classical scholarship. It also expresses Browning's own view of the nature of heroism.

It is the gay or impertinent Browning rather than the profound Browning who had survived. The Irving informality and the sheer high spirits of the 'Tied Piper of Hamelin' are read while the bag philosophical poems of his old age are not.

The dramatic lyrics covering a period often years (1836-46) exhibit every side of Browning's genius – tenderness in 'Evelyn Hope', passion in 'In a Gondola', intellectual brilliance in "My Last Duchess", general extravagance in "The Pied Piper".

Browning has a lot of plays to his credit. "Strafford", 'Pippa Passes', 'King Victor and King Charles'(1842) 'The Return of the Druses'(1845), 'Colombe's Birthday (1844) and 'In a Balcony" (1853). The extraordinary insight into character, is so marked in Browning that it is surprising that he has not fared better as a dramatist.

JOHN RUSKIN (1819 – 1900)

Ruskin, who ranks next to Carlye in the general prose of his time, was born in 1819. Though the place of his birth was London, he came of a Scottish stock. His father was a rich wine merchant, and as a boy and youth he enjoyed all the advantages which wealth can afford, Yet his early training was as rigidly puritan as Carlye's had been. Everything in his home surrounding helped to deepen the ingrained earnestness of his nature. At Oxford he won the Newdigate prize with a poem entitled 'Salsette and Elephanta (1839). Four years later, he published the first volume of 'Modern Painters', The Primary purpose of this book was to vindicate the genius of Turner, and to expound the true principles of landscape – painting in general. Successive volumes appeared at intervals – the fifth and the last in 1860. In the meantime he became as much occupied with architecture as with painting and produced the companion volumes. 'The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849) and 'The Stones of Venice (1851 – 53). We learn particularly from 'The Stones of Venice and 'The Two Paths (1859) that his study of the history of art had led out into the study of social conditions. His interest was thus aroused in the practical problems of his own day. He proclaimed Carlye as his master in this respect. The inspiration of Carlye completed the transformation of the art critic into the philanthropist and reformer. In later life he continued his work in the history and theory of art. But most of his time and energy was now devoted to social propaganda. Even his academic utterances were deeply colored by his new enthusiasms. With splendid unselfishness he now gave his genius, his strength, and his wealth to the great social cause which he had taken to heart to heart. While he directed his efforts to all sorts of practical ends, he continued to expound his social and economic theories in lectures, essays, and books. 'Unto this Last(1861), 'Munera Pulveris (1862). 'Time and Tith Wear and Ly (1867), and the series of letters to the working men of England. 'Entitled 'Fors Clavigera (1871 – 84) set forth his political economy,' and his educational and institutional ideals. His more general ethical teachings may be found in 'Sesame and Lilies (1865) and the 'Crown of Wild olive (1866).

Ruskin's work, which is very great in bulk and miscellaneous in character, falls roughly into two divisions: his writings on art and his writings on social, economic, and ethical questions. His later practical teachings were the logical outcome and development of his teaching on art. His aesthetics rested ultimately on moral foundations. He insisted that true art can be produced only by a nation which is inspired by noble national aims, and lives a pure, righteous, and happy

lift. Therefore, he deemed that it was useless to preach art to nineteenth century England sunk in sordid materialism and in poverty and misery. A complete purification of the entire social system was forced to the conclusion that even as a lover of art his best work could for the moment be done in the field of social service. Apart from the significance of its basic moral principle, Ruskin's aesthetic doctrine has special importance for its emphasis upon the need of a constant direct, first-hand study of nature. Here, he was following in art the lead of Wordsworth in poetry. Like Wordsworth, he helped to break down the tyranny of convention and tradition, and to put men once more into living touch with living reality. He insisted that the artist must abandon altogether the stereotyped formalism of the Schools. Instead of trying to like some famous master, he must go straight to nature for him-self, and strive to reproduce faithfully what he finds there,' rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and coming nothing'. It was this part of Ruskin's philosophy which specially inspired the Pre-Raphaelites. He was also an eloquent advocate of the claims of Gothic (or Christian) as, against classic (or pagan) art. He exercised immense influence in developing in his generation a love for the painting and architecture of the middle ages. While the strongly accentuated Puritanism of his character allied him to such men as Knot and Carlyle, his equally strong romantic bias connected him with Scott, of whom he was all his long an ardent admirer.

His social and economic teaching must be interpreted as an attempt to apply the principles of Christianity directly to the practical business of life, national as well as individual .Hence his violent attack upon the accepted political economy of the time. In his denunciations of the sordid spirit of modern commercial England and its idolatrous worship of wealth and material success, he followed up the teachings of Carlyle.

Many faults may be found with Ruskin as a writer. He is whimsical and capricious; his discursiveness is irritating; his temper dogmatic; his manner often so petulant and aggressive as to stir the reader to revolt; in thought and phrase he is often fantastic; and his inconsistencies are so numerous and glaring as to shake our faith in the substantial value of his doctrine. But his spirit was always pure, noble, and chivalrous. As a preacher of righteousness, his influence holds immensely for good. His style calls for the highest praise. Be it his rich ornate early prose, or the easy colloquial of his later writing, he is in the front rank of our greatest masters. A special feature of his style is his marvellous power of wari-painting.

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795 – 1881)

Carlyle was incomparably the greatest figure in the general prose literature of his age. he was one of the greatest moral forces of the modern world. He was born in 1795 at Ecclefechan, Dumfriesshire. His father was a stone – mason. he sprang straight from the rugged Scottish peasantry. The stern doctrines of the old Calvinism in which he was bred left a lasting impression upon his mind. he received the rudiments of his education from the Academy at

Annan. he matriculated in 1809 at the Edirburgh University. He left Edinburgh without taking a degree. His parents wanted him to enter the Scottish Church, but radical changes in his religious views made this impossible. He strove vainly to recover his lost belief in God, in life, and in himself. But there came a moment of mystical moment of illumination which restored him not to his former religious convictions, but to the mood of courage and faith. This experience is written with immense power in the second book. Unfortunately, though mental relief was now obtained, he was already the victim of the acute dyspepsis which made his life miserable and coloured much of his thought. Private teaching and back – writing provided him with a scanty and precarious livelihood. In 1825, he published his first important piece of independent work, his admirable Life of Schiller. In 1826 he married Jane Welsh, a woman of brilliant intellectual parts. For some years, he contributed much to the magazines on subjects connected with German Literature. In German literature, he found a new heaven and a new earth. On her father's death, Mrs. Carlyle inherited small farmhouse amid the dreary moorlands of Craigenputtoch, in Dumfresshire. It was while living there, he produced his most characteristic book, Sartor Resartus. It is also one of the most remarkable and books in modern English literature. In the Summer of 1824 he moved to London. His French revolution appeared in 1837; his lectured on Heroes and hero-worship in 1841; past and present in 1843; the Letters and Speches of Oliver Camp well in 1845; the Life of John Sterling in 1851; the History of Frederick the Great. His last important work, in installments of two volumes a time, in 1858, 1862, and 1865. The death of his wife in 1866 was a blow from which he never recovered. His remaining years were filled with sorrow and bitterness of soul. He died in 1881, and was buried at Ecclefechan.

Carlyle's style is unique in our prose literature, with its enormous wealth of vocabulary, its strangely constructed sentences, its breaks, abrupt turns, apostrophes, and exclamations. If at times it may seem uncouth and even chaotic, we must still regard even its most conspicuous mannerisms as the expression of the writer's peculiar personality. He spoke contemptuously of art as art. He had no patience with the merely brookish side of literature. Yet, he was in his own way one of our greatest literary artists. He is unrivalled in his mastery of vivid and telling phraseology. In The French Revolution, his descriptive power and power of characterization were remarkable. He employed sarcasm, irony and invective with tremendous effect. While his intense spiritually and fine imagination gave him a place among the prophets and poets rich and abundant humour was a salient feature of his genius. In all the essentials of his philosophy, he was fundamentally a puritan of the puritans. The strenuous and uncompromisingethicl spirit of seventeenth century Puritanism found its last great exponent in him. Unyielding in temper and fiercely in earnest, he was intolerant of moral weakness and wrong doing. He held that apathy and indifference were among the most deadly evils of the time. The keynote of his teaching was sincerity. He hated conventions and... un realities with a consuming hatred. The burden of his message was that there is no salvation in shams, even in the shams that have grown sacred through age. he also held that in society, politica, and religion, we must seek reality at all costs. History for him was 'the larger Bible' – the revelation of God's righteous dealing with men. The lesson which he read in the past he carried over and applied to the present. His position in the

modern world may perhaps be sufficiently defined in the statement that he was in absolute antagonism to all its most characteristic ideals and tendencies. He had no faith in democracy and was never weary of insisting that the great masses of the people need the guidance and leadership of the Tiro or 'able man'. he poured the vials of his wrath upon the easy going optimism which had been bred by rapidly developing commercial property. With all the impassioned zeal of a Hebrew prophet, proclaimed a spiritual standard of life to a generation which had fallen into idolatrous worship of the 'mud-gods of modern civilization. He denounced scientific materialism an utilitarianism which went along with it. He preached God and spiritual freedom as the only life giving truths. Carlyle could not indeed turn back the currents of his age, but he did have influence upon it.

ARNOLD (1822 – 88)

In the order of precedence among the many poets of Victorian Age, The third place may be assigned to Matthew Arnold, after Tennyson and Browning. He was a through classicist by sym – pathy and training. His admiration of the Greeks was so strong that it sometimes led him astray. Arnold believed that all really great poetry is impersonal or objective poetry, in which the poet escapes from himself from the conditions of his own world, while subjective poetry, or poetry of self – expression belongs to a lower artistic plane. It was in accordance with this theory that his most ambitious poems – Sohrab and rustum. Tristram and Iseult. balder dead, and Empedocles on gtna – were written. But these carefully wrought productions impress us as rather academic, imitative, and unreal. All critical priniciples not withstanding, the bias of his genius was towards the poetry of self expression. His best work was done when he gave his mind free play ignoring theory. Most of his personal poetry is steeped in the melancholy spirit of and era of transition. Its keytone is struck in the Stanzas from Grande Chartreuse

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born;

and it carries with it a heavy burder of doubt Yet Arnold's ethical temper was so noble, and his IIII hold upon the great ideals of conduct and duty so steady, that his sadness, though at times III depressing, is never enervating. In style he was cold and dear, his ear was imperfect. There is Ix little verbal felicity or natural magic in his verse. But its fine restraint and sculpturesque purity 111 are worthy of high prais. Arnold has never been a popular poet, but he has always has his audience 'fit, though few'.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800-1859)

Macaulay was born in 1800. After a brilliant academic record at Cambridge, opened a career of extraordinary and varied success with an essay on Milton in the Edinburgh Review for August 1825. He went to the bar, entered the House of Commons, and made a reputation as an orator and statesman. But all the time he was writing steadily for the Edinburgh. He was in India a legal adviser to the Supreme Council from 1834 to 1838. On his return o England re-etered

public life. After many years of strenuous political activity, he was raised to the peerage a Baron Macaulay of Rothley. His chief literary work was now his History of England from the Accession of James II. The first two volumes of the above work were published in 1848, instantly scoring a success such as no purely historical production had ever before enjoyed. Despite collapse in health, he persevered with his great undertaking. His third and fourth volume appeared in 1855. The fifth volume was issued after his sudden death in 1859.

Macaulay's amazing vogue with the great public may be explained by reference to combination of qualities in his genius. It is rightly said that even his purely literary essays have been widely read by persons who as a rule never think of reading criticism of which some must be reckoned as excellences of the highest order, while others have rather to be set down on the adverse side of the account. He had a marvellous faculty for making everything he touched interesting. Whatever might be the subject of his discourse, his animation was unbounded and he rarely wrote a dull page. As a mere story-teller he could risk comparison with his greater contemporaries in fiction. He was as clear as he was energetic, vivacious and picturesque. But for his exceptional endowment of genius, he was an almost typical Englishman of his generation. By expressing so eloquently the average man's point of view about things, he delighted the average man. He was practical and positive in temper. Untroubled by doubts and wholly indifferent to 'the burden of the mystery' of life, he was the very embodiment of sturdy commonsense. He hated the vague and the mystical and had a firm faith in the Trappy materialism' a man after their own hearts his shallowness, too, made it all the easier for them to understand him. His brilliant style gave a wonderful charm to everything he said. Macaulay was not great thinker. He was not a great literary critic. As a biographer and historian, he was often led into inaccuracy by his love of sweeping statements and striking contrasts. But his achievements were still remarkable. More than any other writer he may be said by his essays to have popularised a taste for literature. His History remains the most generally attractive piece of historical narrative in the language.

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Resenting the animosity stirred by Tess and Jude. Hardy abandoned novel-writing in1896. At the age of sixty, he resumed the practice of verse , interrupted thirty years before. Vessex Poem (1898) included a few pieces dated earlier than 1870. Among these, It is a

compressed preliminary statement of Hardy's unchanging idea of the ordering of the universe. That idea reached in final expression in *The Dynasts*, an epic - drama of the Napoleonic wars. Hardy held that there is no active intelligence, no just and loving God, behind human destiny. But that creation is swayed by an unconscious mechanical force, sightless, dumb, mindless and equally indifferent to either the sufferings or the joys of mankind. Not until the last page of *The Dynasts* is any hope offered possible release from the fierce clutch of circumstance. Only a faint suggestion that, at some future moment, consciousness may begin to stir in the behind and senseless 'Immanent and inspire it to fashion all things fair'.

The Dynasts completed in 1908, is Hardy's most extensive work it is one of the greatest creation in literature. For this vast epic-drama two traditional forms were adapted and combined. From their union Hardy produced a new and original form. The epic is foreign to the modern team. What would have been extended passages of narrative verse in a traditional epic are here abbreviated into stage directions 'to fill the spaces between the scenes of the spoken drama'. *The Dynasts* is a masterly example of Hardy's genius in the organization and control of literary material. It was an astonishing feat to secure balance, order, proportion and perspective in handling hundreds of characters, a time-period of fifteen years, and a scene range covering practically the whole of Europe. All the historical personages as well as the common people who bore the chief part of the suffering caused by the clash of dynasts are introduced in Hardy's pity for all suffering creatures was terribly acute. He himself agonized in the agony of others. He was never able to cultivate that protective skin of semi-apologetic calmness by which the majority insulates against a torturing participation in the world's sum of misery.

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870)

Charles Dickens became famous with the *Pickwick Papers*. (1837) He found himself the most popular of English novelists at twenty-five. He holds that position, even today. Technically considered, his work falls into two chronological divisions. He began as a follower of the traditions of Smollett. In spite of the immeasurable difference between them in spirit and tone, Smollett may be regarded as his master. His early novels – *Pickwick Papers* and *Nicholas Nickleby* – are, like Smollett's bundles of adventures, connected only by the characters who figure in them. In *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843), *Dombe and Son* (1846-48), and *David Copperfield* (1849 – 50),

Some effort is made towards greater unification. But, even these books belong substantially to the loose, chronicle type. *Bleak House* (1852-53) may be said to open his second period. For the first time we find a systematic attempt to gather up all the diverse threads of the story into a coherent plot. It cannot be said that Dickens was very successful with his plot-building. Even in his latest books there is still a great deal of merely episodically material. But it was in accordance with this changed structural method that the novels after *Bleak House* were

planned They were: *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), *A Tale of Two cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1861), *QujMuml Friend* (1864 -65), and the unfinished *Edwin prood*.

Dicken's qualities are obvious to alla who read, his overflowing irresistible humour, his unsur-passed descriptive power , and astonishing vitality of his characterisation .The range of his success, with regard to his characterization is very lirnited. It was in the field of the odd and the grotesque that his great achievements lay. It must be admitted that with him character was generally heightened in caricature. Dicken's principal fault was the over – wrought quality of much of his emotion .It is here that he has suffered most from changes of taste. In his craving after effect be continually had recourse to heavily loaded emphasis. As a result, his work became crude. He

Loved melodrama, and his melodrama was too frequently theatrical. In his many passages of studied sentiment and pathos he was often extravagant and hawkish.

His novels belong entirely to the humanitarian movement of the Victorian era. He was from first to last a novelist with a purpose. In nearly all his books, he set out to attack some specific abuse or abuses in the existing system of things. And throughout he constituted himself the champion of the weak, the out cast, and the oppressed. Humanitarianism was the keynote of his work. As his enormous popularity carried his influence far and wide, he may justly ne reckoned one of the greatest social reformers of his age. At the same time, he shared to the full is sanguine spirit. Despite its many evils, the world was still for Dickens a very good world to live in. A man of buoyant temper and unflagging energy, he put his unwavering optimism into everything he wrote. His contagious high spirits were undoubtedly a factor in his success.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863)

While Dicken's world was that of the lower and Lower middle classes, the world of his great rival, Thackeray was that of society – of the clubs the drawing rooms, and the well - to - do. He called this world, in his first really successful and most thoroughly characteristic book, *Vanity Fair* (1847-48). His use of this phrase out of *The Pilgrim's Progress* indicates both the nature of his subject – matter and his own attitude towards it. The sub-title of the same work, *A Novel without a Hero*, still further points to the spirit of his writing and the foundation principles of his art. Thackeray was essentially a social satirist and a realist. He knew nothing of Dicken's humanitarianism and tremendous zeal for reform. But his persistent and telling attacks upon snobbery, affectation, and humbug may after all be regarded as the parallel of Crlyle's terrific denunciations of quackery, shams, and insincerity. His Conscious rapture with romanticism in fiction was inspired by moral rather than purely artistic considerations. He believed that the romantic novel, with its high-flown sentimental and distorted views of motive and character, gave a totally false impression of life, and thus did immense harm. Like Fielding, he opined at 'truth is best, from whatever pulpi'. Therefore, he made it a business to portray the world as he

himself had found it. In fact, in his reaction against the long popular romantic tradition he practically changed the centre of gravity of interest in fiction – making vice rather than virtue the pith and substance of his stories. We must indeed recognize the increasing geniality of his books. He began by dealing almost exclusively with the sordid and ugly aspects of life, as in *Barry Lyndon*. The more comprehensive picture in *Vanity Fair* allowed a much larger place for purity and unselfishness. In *Pendennis*, *Esmond*, *The Newcomes*, *The Virginians*, and *Philip* the good element gained in prominence and importance. Though the satire became less ferocious and sweeping and the tone more tender and sympathetic, the evil of life still bulked large in Thackeray's thought to the end. He was not a cynic, as often has been alleged; he felt the pity and pathos of human things as well as their absurdities which a cynic does not. But his general view of existence was profoundly melancholy. The text of his many moralisings may be stated in his favourite phrase – *Vanitas vanitatum*.

Thackeray's interest was always centred in character. He paid little or no attention to construction. His novels belong to the sprawling, inorganic kind. However, his characterization redeems all faults of technique. For, it is marvelously penetrative and truthful. As a writer of colloquial prose, he holds a place well to the fore in our literature. Merely as a writer, he is always charming, though not always correct. His *Henry Esmond* (1852) is a wonderful recreation of the life and atmosphere, and even of the tone and style of the early eighteenth century. It is one of the very historical novels in the language.

GEORGE ELIOT (1819 – 1880)

The novel was humanitarian in the hands of Dickens, satiric in the hands of Thackeray, in the hands of Mary Ann Evans alias George Eliot it became moral and philosophical. Her world was for most part that of the old-fashioned provincial life with which she had been familiar in her girlhood. In one novel, *Ron Tola* – a tale of the Renaissance in Florence – she made an excursion into the past. But she was always at her best when, as in *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill and the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861) and *Middlemarch* (1871) – she kept close to the scenes and the type of character she had early known and loved. Superficially considered her work somewhat resembles that of Jane Austen. Due note must be taken of its representation of men and manners in mill and village and country town. While Jane Austen had written only of the externals of the social comedy, George Eliot was concerned with great struggles beneath the surface of existence. She had the power to write tragedy as poignant and deeply moral as anything to be found in Aeschylus or Shakespeare, out of home – spun materials. She is thus an exponent of the democratic movement in our modern literature. Humour of a rich and delicate kind and pathos which was never forced are among her principal gifts. Though the foundation of her art was avowedly uncompromising truth to life, her realism was everywhere tempered with the widest and tenderest sympathy. But the distinctive features of her work are to be sought in the philosophic element which fills so large a place in it.

George Eliot was a great thinker. Beginning her career as a novelist late in life, she brought to it scholarship such as no other English Writer of fiction has ever possessed. She was in intimate touch with all contemporary discoveries and speculations. Though she early abandoned the evangelical Christianity in which she had been bred her earnest religious nature gave her a wonderful insight into all phases of spiritual experience. Her work thus its place with the most serious literature of the century. Her novels are great essays on life. Their teachings are embodied in the concrete forms of art. Her central theme was habitually the conflict between the higher and lower life – duty and inclination. This theme was almost always worked out by her tragically. The movement of the story was commonly from weakness to sin and from sin to nemwsis. Her books are profoundly sad. But with all really great tragedy, her sis a purifying sadness. However, she had faults of her qualities. These faults have proved extremely detrimental to her posthumous fame. Her tendency from the first was towards the excessive use of analysis and commentary. This tendency grew upon her as her creative faculty waned. Her later writing is most choked by science and psychology.

The Age of Hardy

THOMAS HARDY (1840 – 1928)

Hardy's Early training as an architect gave him an intimate knowledge of local churches, which he utilize to advantage in his writings. His personal experience was bound up with the people and customs, the monuments and institutions of Dorset and the contiguous counties of south-western England. He placed this area permanently on the literary map by the ancient name Wesser. As a writer Hardy was a living paradox. A natural poet, much of his poetry is in prose. He had the poet's largeness, minuteness, and intensity of vision – a threefold faculty displayed throughout this novels. Yet among his hundreds of typical lyrical poems hardly a score are free from grating harshness and pinchbeck angularity. The explanation of the paradox is that Hardy's genius was entirely sculptresque. Give a grantie block of stubborn prose, he could chisel as a master. He could carve not only tremendously impressive figure groups but also vast sculptured landscapes with all the varied detail of nature. But lyrics cannot be induced from grantie chips. if it happened to hardy twice or thrice, it was only by some miracle, and that was when he produced tess of the Dubervilies. Weathers, and In time of the Breaking of Nations'. His emphasis upon the human tragedy it held in right proportion and perspective in most of his novels. Scarcely more than twice did Hardy's skill in the novelist's craft desert him. The last chapter of tess of the D'urbervilles outages the religious conscience of 1891. Today it offends the aesthetic conscience by its violation of our critical sense of order and imaginative sufficiency. There is a failure in artistry when an artist says more than exactly enough. Hardy had said enough in Tess before the beginning of the last chapter. And it stands, the novel is a masterpiece. But it is scarred by an unhappy final strike. Jude the Obscure the best novel is more fatally injured by rythlessness. At no time are Sue and Jude permit – ted to escape the shadowing hand of malignant destiny. They are defeated and broken. Their lack of Spiritual resilience, their crippling inability to down what many of Hardy's people do magnificently prevent Jude the

Obscure from being the greatest of Hardy's novels, its power is overwhelming. Yet the power is so misdirected and dissipated that potential tragedy is distorted into dark madness.

Many of his characters are created with the fullness, vigour, and assurance of a Shakespeare or Dickens. His power to suggest immensity of place was unique. Whether it is the vastness of Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native*, the luscious ripeness of Blackmoor Vale in *Judas*, or the tree-girt solitude of *The Woodlanders*. Hardy's places are as memorable as his people. On Egdon the men and women are pigmies – the Heath is itself the daemon, moulding and conditioning the lives of those who dwell upon it and who are part of its own life. In the use of tragedy Hardy bears comparison with the great figures in world literature. He falls short of their stature chiefly because he inclined to pursue his afflicted characters past the limits at which both art and nature are customarily satisfied to halt. In the use of pathos, however, he is unsurpassed. For example, the description of Tess's christening of her child by candlelight in bedroom, Marty South's lament over Giles at the close of *Woodlanders*, and the tragedy of the dog whose well-meaning zeal drives Gabriel Oak's flock to destruction in *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

Hardy's novels and poems are the work of a man painfully dissatisfied with the age in which he lived. He was homesick for the past. The past of England, when there was strong root of English manhood and womanhood. To Hardy, this root had been overlaid by a thin soil of finicking niceness miscalled education and culture. He distrusted modern civilization because he suspected that its effect was frequently to decivilize and weaken those to whom Nature and old custom had given stout hearts, clear heads, and an enduring spirit. Ancient and modern are constantly at war in his boob. None is happy where one has felt the alienating touch of school-bred refinement. Hardy thought gratefully of the simple paganism lingering on in Wessex beneath the Christian veneer. Wessex was still the old England its woods, its heaths, its barrows, its barns and byres – all these stood in memory of a noble antiquity making mute protest against invading aggressive modernity. What Wessex meant to Hardy, and its significance as a symbol in relation to his whole work, is indicated at the opening of *The Return of the Native*.

Resenting the animosity stirred by *Tess* and *Jude*. Hardy abandoned novel-writing in 1896. At the age of sixty, he resumed the practice of verse, interrupted thirty years before. *Wessex Poem* (1898) included a few pieces dated earlier than 1870. Among these, *It is* is a compressed preliminary statement of Hardy's unchanging idea of the ordering of the universe. That idea reached its final expression in *The Dynasts*, an epic-drama of the Napoleonic wars. Hardy held that there is no active intelligence, no just and loving God, behind human destiny. But that creation is swayed by an unconscious mechanical force, sightless, dumb, mindless and equally indifferent to either the sufferings or the joys of mankind. Not until the last page of *The Dynasts* is any hope offered possible release from the fierce clutch of circumstance. Only a faint suggestion that, at some future moment, consciousness may begin to stir in the behind and senseless 'Immanent and inspire it to fashion all things fair'.

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WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

William Butler Yeats was an Irish poet. He published a number of works such as 'Fair and Folk Tales', 'The Wanderings of Oisín', 'The Celtic Twilight', 'The Secret Rose \ The Wind among the Reeds' and 'The Shadowing Waters'. They show this attachment to the myths and the legends of the romantic Ireland of the past. He was interested in the doctrines of Eastern Mysticism and he became a Buddhist 'almost'. He was also influenced by the French symbolists and their English counterparts Pater and Blake. His poetry reveals the metaphysical elements in Blake and the symbolism of the English poet Pater. The romantic pensiveness, a gentle melancholy, the homely nature imagery, of dreams, the simple ballads and the old stories, constituted the spirit of Yeats's verse. The romantic heroic poetry lost its appeal to him at a particular stage. In his responsibilities there appeared poems that were crucial in his development. 'September 1913', the last but one poem in the 'The Tower' 'A Cat'. Slowly Yeats shed the embroidered coat of verse. He was influenced by Hopkins and Eliot the originators of the modernist school. Yeats's verse became more difficult compact and in the later poems. He disliked the introduction of contemporary affairs into poetry as a young man. As an older poet it was impossible for him to remain as a poet detached from the events of the 1916 Easter Rebellion and after. Once he was tortured by the inability of his body to keep pace with his mind's desires. "Sailing to Byzantium 'and The Tower' touch upon this theme, In the poem 'Politics' 'he makes his comments on the influence of politics. 'The Lake of Isle of Innisfree' is the masterpiece of the younger Yeats and Byzantium is that later anti-romantic Yeats. It is characteristic of the period in which he lived and which received him as a herald of the new gospel of poetry.

Yeats became the undisputed leader of the Irish Literary Revival. Yeats helped English poetry break with the once popular Victorian ideals and became modern in outlook. Yeats's 'intellectualism, Directivity, aestheticism, faith in the mystical and the occult, interest in the

celtic myth and folk-bit, knowledge of the oriental philosophy , the inborn romanticism , love for symbols and just for experimentation made his poetry complex in style and temper. Yeats placed art above morality .He declared the values of art to be eternal unlike the moral values which instincts and emotions had a vital part to play and in the final stage he adopted a bare colloquial style and the simple stanza form of the ballad and the folk song. His poems illustrate his different stages of development. In 1923 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature .His poems and plays are a richly varied expression and far reaching exploration of a sensitive and creative mind. Yeats may be called one of the best modern poets.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMA IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

The history of English drama takes us back to the century succeeding the coming of the Normans. By the time of the Norman conquest, a form of religious drama had already established itself in France. It soon found its way into England. Its purpose was directly didactic. It was the work of ecclesiastical authors. In the beginning the performances were given in the church itself. The priests were the actors. Later when larger crowds thronged about the church, it was taken to the village green or the city street. Laymen began to take part in the performances. English was substituted for the original Latin. These miracle plays were arranged to exhibit the whole history of the fall of man and his redemption. They were called collective mysteries. Four of these cycles have come down to us complete. Each of these begins with creation of the world and the fall of the man and often dealing with such prophetic theme as the flood, the Sacrifice of Isaac, the Exodus of Egypt, the crucifixion, Resurrection and ascension closes with the Last Judgement.

In Literary quality they are crude. These religious performances lasted well on into the 16th century. There is good reason to think that Shakespeare must have witnessed those once atleast during his boyhood.

Morality Plays:

A later stage in the evolution of the drama is marked by the morality play. This like the miracle play, was didactic. But its characters were personified abstractions. All sorts of mental and moral qualities thus appeared embodied in types free will, Perseverance, Five Senses, Seven Deadly Sins etc., Among such personification there was generally a place for devil, who held a prominent place in miracle plays. A later introduction of much importance was the vice. The Morality plays had greater freedom in the handling of plot and of characters. As the personified abstractions came more and more to resemble individual persons, the morality plays passed into comedy.

Interlude:

The Interlude was also a late product of the dramatic development of the morality play. There is some confusion regarding the exact scope and use of this word. But in it more specific it seems to mean any short dramatic piece of a satiric rather than of a religious or ethical character. In tone and purpose it is far less serious than the morality proper. This form grew up early in the 16th century. It is closely associated with John Heywood (1497-1580). His *Four P's* is in the form of the dialogue where four men enter into a competition as to which of them can tell the biggest lie. It is the most amusing specimen of its kind. Two other well known interludes are "*Interlude of the Four Elements*" and "*Thersytes*".

The beginning of the regular Comedy and Tragedy:

These early experiments did much to prepare the way for the regular drama. It was under the direct influence of the revival of learning that English comedy and tragedy passed out of the preliminary phases of the development into the forms of art. Men went to the classics for inspiration. At first the comedies of Plautus and Terence and the tragedies of Seneca were acted at universities before scholars. Then came Latin imitations. These were followed by attempts to fashion English plays. In such attempts English writers learned many valuable lessons in dramatic construction and technique.

Our first comedy "*Roister Doister*" was written about 1550 by Nicholas Udall. Our first real tragedy is fashioned after Senecan tragedy. It is entitled "*Gorboduc*" and written by Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst and Thomas Norton. It is interesting to note that his first English tragedy was also the first of our plays to use blank verse. The second English comedy is "*Gammer Gurton's Needle*" written by John Still in 1566.

The Present Age

G .M.HOPKINS

G.M. Hopkins published nothing during his lifetime. But when a collection of his poems was published in 1905 it was given a warm reception. His influence on the younger generation was tremendous. He studied in the Highgate School and the Balliol College, Oxford. He was an Anglican first and then became a Roman Catholic and finally he joined, the Society of Jesus. As a devout Jesuit, he decided to discontinue writing poetry. But when in 1875 five Franciscan monks died in a ship wreck, he wrote his outstanding poem, 'The Wreck of the Deutschland'. He was deeply religious and scholarly and he worked as a Professor of Greek at the Dublin University. Though he enjoyed the beauty of nature he turned away from the romantic style of poetry. For his metre and technique he owed much to John Donne and the other metaphysical poets of the 17th century. He used a kind of 'sprung rhythm' in his poetry. John Pick compiled 'A Hopkin's Reader' a collection of his poems with a useful introduction to the author. Though a difficult poet he was considered to be a great English poet by his disciples and admirers. He appeared both

religious and non – religious to the readers. He was considered to be a spiritual explorer who penetrated deep into the surface of life. His poetry was appropriate to the needs of the new generation. Many followers of Hopkins tried their best to write poetry like him but failed miserably. They had no language and no poetic technique of their own.

Hopkins is thought of as a pioneer of the modernist movement in English poetry. Yet he was a contemporary of the Victorian poets Tennyson and Browning. The peculiarities of his style, diction and syntax appeared strange to his cities as well as friends. His poems revealed his religious Un rest. His faith was rocked but with heroic self discipline, he managed to go back to the folds of Roman Catholicism. He inherited the artistic traditions of his family. His father was a poet and his mother a musician. He wrote much on his theory and practice of poetry. His sensuousness and felicity of his compound words owed much to Keats. When he became a Jesuit he destroyed all his early poetry. After writing the Wreck of the Deutschland an ode in two parts in eight lined stanzas of varying lengths, its rhythm puzzled everyone and the poem was rejected. But the creative impulse in Hopkins was so irresistible that he wrote several short poems till his death in 1889. He found that every object animate as well as inanimate has a distinctly individual quality a thinness which made him to think of the glory of its maker. His poems ‘The Wind hover’, ‘Pied Beauty’ and ‘Gods Grandeur’ belong to this group. When his religious faith was shaken, he wrote poems such as ‘CarrioD comfort’ described as terrible sonnets or sonnets of Desolation. He introduced a new rhythm in poetry. His verse was mainly based on the rhythm of music, the rhythm of rhetoric and the rhythm of natural speech. He warned his readers not to read his poetry by the eye but by the ear. He became serene and tranquil towards the end of his life.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800-1859)

Macaulay was born in 1800. After a brilliant academic record at Cambridge, opened a career of extraordinary and varied success with an essay on Milton in the Edinburgh Review for August 1825. He went to the bar, entered the House of Commons, and made a reputation as an orator and statesman. But all the time he was writing steadily for the Edinburgh. He was in India a legal adviser to the Supreme Council from 1834 to 1838. On his return o England re-entered public life. After many years of strenuous political activity, he was raised to the peerage a Baron Macaulay of Rothley. His chief literary work was now his History of England from the Accession of James II. The first two volumes of the above work were published in 1848, instantly scoring a success such as no purely historical production had ever before enjoyed. Despite collapse in health, he persevered with his great undertaking. His third and fourth volume appeared in 1855. The fifth volume was issued after his sudden death in 1859. Macaulay’s amazing vogue with the great public may be explained by reference to combination of qualities in his genius .It is rightly said that even his purely literary essays have been widely read by persons who as a rule never think of reading criticism of which some must be reckoned as excellences of the highest order, while others have rather to be set down on the adverse side of the account .He had a marvellous faculty for making everything he touched interesting

.Whatever might be the subject of his discourse ,his animation was unbounded and he rarely wrote a dull page. As a mere story-teller he could risk comparison with his greater contemporaries in fiction. He was as clear as he was energetic, vivacious and picturesque. But for his exceptional endowment of genius, he was an almost typical Englishman of his generation. By expressing so eloquently the average man's point of view about things, he delighted the average man. He was practical and positive in temper. Untroubled by doubts and wholly indifferent to 'the burden of the mystery' of life, he was the very embodiment of sturdy commonsense. He hated the vague and the mystical and had a firm faith in the Trappy materialism' a man after their own hearts his shallowness, too , made it all the easier for them to understand him. His brilliant style gave a wonderful charm to everything he said .Macaulay was not great thinker. He was not a great literary critic. As a biographer and historian, he was often led into inaccuracy by his love of sweeping statements and striking con - trasts. But his achievements were still remarkable. More than any other writer he may be said by his essays to have popularized a taste for literature. His History remains the most generally attractive piece of historical narrative in the language. . Tragedy Hardy bears comparison with the great figures in world literature. He falls short of their stature chiefly because he inclined to pursue his afflicted characters past the limits at which both art and nature are custom - arily satisfied to halt. In the use of pathos, however, he is unsurpassed. For example, the description of Tess's christening of her child by candlelight in bedroom, Marty South's lament over Giles at the close of Wood ladders, and the tragedy of the dog whose well-meaning zeal drives Gabriel Oak's flock to destruction in Far from the Madding Crowd. Hardy's novels and poems are the work of a man painfully dissatisfied with the age in which he lived. He was homesick for the past. The past of England, when there was strong root of English manhood and womanhood. To Hardy, this root had been overlaid by a thin soil of finicking niceness miscalled education and culture .He distrusted modern civilization because he suspected that its effect was frequently to decivilize and weaken those to whom Nature and old cutom had given stout hearts, clear heads, and an enduring spirit. Ancident and modern are constantly at war in his boob. None is happy where one has felt the alienating touch of school - bred refinement. Hardy thought gratefully of the simple paganism lingering on in Wessex beneath the Christian veneer. Wessex was still the old England its woods, its heaths, its barrows, its barns and byres – all these stood in memory of a noble antiquity making mute protest against invading aggressive modernity. What Wessex meant to Hardy, and its significance as a smbol in relation to his whole work, is indicated at the opening of The Return of the Native.

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JAMES JOYCE

James Joyce was a novelist of extraordinary genius. He was born in Dublin and his father was a middle class business man. He published his first volume of poems 'Chamber Music' and 'Dullers' and his subjective and introspective novel 'The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man'. Then he published 'Ulysses' in which he deals with the problems of contemporary literature and 'Work in Progress'. Though outspoken and aggressive he lived in retirement in Paris. As an exile he changed his skies but not the heart.

He was an artist and he observed details accurately. He was a realist and a symbolist. Suddenly he became aware of the unexplored regions of human nature. 'The Dubliners' was a study of environment and 'The Portrait' was a searching study in autobiography. As a young man Joyce was an enthusiastic student of Newman, Pater and Ibsen whom he imitated in 'Exiles' (1918). Since then he had caught up with the ideas of 20th century consciousness. Classical and scholarly ideas jumped into his mind and illustrated his casual impressions. He appreciated the psychological value of prosody and noted the meaning of rhythm in aesthetic enjoyment.

There are hints to surrealism in his 'Day Dreams' and of the internal monologue in his meditations. He penetrates below the ordinary indeterminateness and indecision of youth to the realization of difficulties. But Joyce lacked the sense of fellowship with the spirit of humanity. Then he worked hard and gained experience as a teacher of languages. He gained an insight into the psychology of speech. He published 'Ulysses' the modern *Odyssey* the most ancient of

epics. It was a great failure and yet it fascinates the readers. The sciences he has created are known their realism. Joyce has used the device of internal monologue in his novels. He is a master of for technique. He was so obsessed by his technique that he sacrificed the principles of his art. His novels reveal his remarkable intelligence .But the brilliance of his mind was subdued the constricting influences and the poverty of his family.’ A portrait’ was written craftsmanship and skill. Joyce was opposed to marrying and so he lived with lady. Bernacle for 27 years before they were legally married. In technique Joyce is comparable to T.S.Eliot and W.H.Faulkner. ‘A Portrait’ is based on the first 27 years of Joyce’s liofe. The novel seems to have written by Joyce with an astonishing objectivity and detachment.

In Stephen Dedalus there is a conflict between the artist and the society .Then novel is an autobiography in fiction .Stephen Dedalus is like Joyce in both physique and temperament. He experiments with complex technique and multiple levels of meanings. In ‘Ulysses’ there is symbolic and mythic content .His last work ‘Finnegans walk’ cannot be understood by the ordinary readers, But it has a rich language ,technical excellence and contextual meanings.

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