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by
William Francis Collier L.D

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American Supplement

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A FIRST SKETCH

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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BY

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WITH SUPPLEMENT BRINGING THE WORK DOWN TO THE END OF QUEEN VICTORIA'S REIGN

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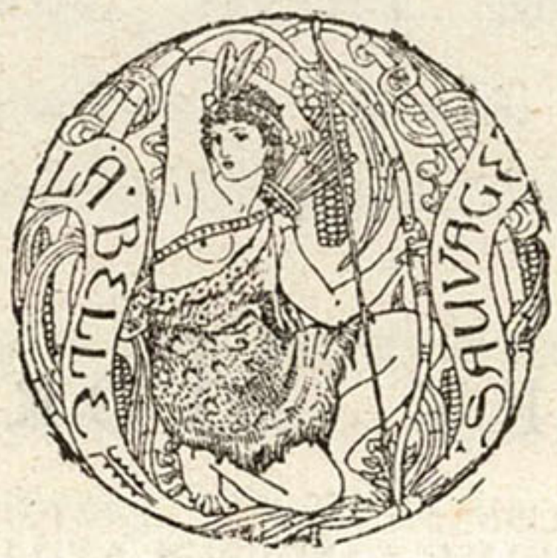

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

BASIL VALENTINE said, in his *Triumphant Chariot of Antimony*, "The shortness of life makes it impossible for one man thoroughly to learn Antimony, in which every day something of new is discovered." What shall we say then of all the best thought of the best men of our nation in all times? Let no beginner think that when he has read this book, or any book, or any number of books for any number of years, he will have thoroughly learned English Literature. We can but study faithfully and work on from little to more, never to much. Basil Valentine felt in his own way with that teacher of the highest truth who wrote, "If any man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

This book is but a first sketch of what in "English Writers" it is the chief work of my life to tell as fully and as truly as I can. But no labour of this kind is intended to save any one the pains of reading good books for himself. It is useful only when it quickens the desire to come into real contact with great minds of the past, and gives the kind of knowledge that will lessen distance between us and them.

Together with a first outline of our literature, some account of the political and social history of England should be read; and while each period is being studied, direct acquaintance should be made with one or two of its best books. Whatever examples may be chosen should be complete pieces, however short, not extracts, for we must learn from the first to recognise the unity of a true work of genius.

1873.

PREFACE TO THE TWELFTH EDITION.

FORMER Editions of this book touched very lightly on the Literature of the Nineteenth Century. An arrangement with Baron Tauchnitz, at whose request I wrote some account of "English Literature in the Reign of Victoria" for Number Two Thousand of his "Collection of British Authors," gives to his publishing house the copyright of that little book as a separate work, in England as well as in Germany, and to me the right of using any part of it in aid of the completion of this Sketch. Some part of the Tauchnitz volume has, therefore, with thanks to that friendly firm, been incorporated with new matter and serves now to secure for the "First Sketch of English Literature" (living writers excepted) the same fulness of detail in Victorian as in Elizabethan Literature.

H. M.

September, 1886.

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION.

THE last six pages of the preceding edition of this work have been cancelled, and the substance of them has been incorporated with the Supplement, which brings the "First Sketch" down to the end of the Victorian era. Otherwise, except that in the last chapter some dates have been inserted, the body of the book remains virtually as Henry Morley left it.

W. W. HUTCHINGS.

May, 1901.

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1. THE Literature of a People tells its life. History records its deeds; but Literature brings to us, yet warm with their first heat, the appetites and passions, the keen intellectual debate, the higher promptings of the soul, whose blended energies produced the substance of the record. We see some part of a man's outward life and guess his character, but do not know it as we should if we heard also the debate within, loud under outward silence, and could be spectators of each conflict for which lists are set within the soul. Such witnesses we are, through English Literature, of the life of our own country. Let us not begin the study with a dull belief that it is but a bewilderment of names, dates, and short summaries of conventional opinion, which must be learnt by rote. As soon as we can feel that we belong to a free country with a noble past, let us begin to learn through what endeavours and to what end it is free. Liberty as an abstraction is not worth a song. It is precious only for that which it enables us to be and do. Let us bring our hearts, then, to the study which we here begin, and seek through it accord with that true soul of our country by which we may be encouraged to maintain in our own day the best work of our forefathers.

The literature of this country has for its most distinctive mark the religious sense of duty. It represents a people striving through successive generations to find out the right and do it, to root out the wrong, and labour ever onward for the

love of God. If this be really the strong spirit of her people, to show that it is so is to tell how England won, and how alone she can expect to keep, her foremost place among the nations.

2. Once Europe was peopled only here and there by men who beat at the doors of nature and upon the heads of one another with sharp flints. What knowledge they struck out in many years was bettered by instruction from incoming tribes who, beginning earlier or learning faster, brought higher results of experience out of some part of the region that we now call Asia. Generation after generation came and went, and then Europe was peopled by tribes different in temper: some scattered among pastures with their flocks and herds, or gathering for fight and plunder around chiefs upon whom they depended; others drawing together on the fields they ploughed, able to win and strong to hold the good land of the plain in battle under chiefs whose strength depended upon them. But none can distinguish surely the forefathers of these most remote forefathers of the Celt and Teuton, in whose unlike tempers lay some of the elements from which, when generations after generations more had passed away, a Shakespeare was to come.

Their old home may have been upon the plains and in the valleys once occupied by the Medes and Persians, and in the lands watered by those five rivers of the Punjaub which flow into the Indus. We may look for it westward from the Indus to the Euphrates; northward from the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea to the Caucasus, the Caspian, and the river Oxus.

Through the passes of the Caucasus it may be true that those known as the Celts first migrated to the region north of the Black Sea. Ezekiel, 600 years B.C., named Gomer as a nation, placing it in the north quarter, that is, south of the Caucasus. Æschylus, about 130 years later, placed the Cimmerians (whose name lives with our Welsh countrymen as Cymry) about the Sea of Azov and in the peninsula called from them the Crimea. We are told that in Assyrian inscriptions the Sacan or Scythian population which spread over the Persian Empire was called Gimiri; and the two words (each, perhaps, meaning "rover") were applied afterwards to separate branches of the same national stock. North of the Black Sea, between the Danube and the Don, were the Cimmerian or Cymric Celts. East of the Don were the Scyths, whose name may live among ourselves as Scot, since they are thought to be forefathers of

those Gaels who are of our nation as the Celts of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands.

Then came the migrations in which, it is said, the Scythian or Gaelic Celts, pushing westward across the Don, forced the Cymry before them. The Cymry, crossing the Danube, ravaged part of Asia Minor, and spread into Europe. The Gaels who followed them spread also into Europe, and were also driven westward as more tribes came after them.

These next tribes appear to have been men of another stock, who held by the eastern plains of Europe, and there established the Slavonic populations.

Then came the Teutons. First, perhaps, came those from about the upper waters of the Tigris and Euphrates and the northern part of the plateau of Iran, who went north-westward towards the shores of the North Sea and western Baltic, there to become forefathers of Low German populations. From the coasts of France and Spain they were shut out by the strong Celtic occupation; and behind them pressed men of another branch of their own stock—men, perhaps, who had once occupied the highlands of Southern Iran. These established themselves on the higher lands of Central Europe, and were, if the theory be true, ancestors of the High Germans.

3. Gaelic Celts, migrating by sea from Spain, struck on the western coast of Ireland and on our south-western shores. Thence they spread over these islands, of which the first thin peopling seems to have been by a Celtic population of the Gaelic branch.

Low Germans afterwards crossed the Rhine, and made their way by Belgium along North France to the Seine, expelling Cymry whom they found there in possession. These Cymry, driven across the Channel, landed on the eastern part of our south coast, and forced Gaels there in occupation westward. The Low Germans, who had formed a Belgic Gaul, crossed also, and were strong enough to form a Belgic England. Low Germans and Scandinavians from all lands opposite our eastern coast came over as colonists. The Gaels went westward before pressure of the Cymry, as the Cymry were pushed westward by incoming Teutons. At last the main body of the Gaels of Southern Britain had been forced to join their countrymen across the Irish Sea. The Cymry held the pasture land among the mountain fastnesses of Western England, and the Teuton ploughed the plains.

This process of change was continuous, and may have been so for some centuries before the hundred years between the middle of the fifth and the middle of the sixth century after Christ, during which there were six Teutonic settlements thought worthy of especial record. The six settlements were thus distinguished because they established sovereignties and began the strong uprearing of the nation which took from a great immigrant Teutonic tribe its name of English.

4. As tribe pressed upon tribe, lands were not yielded without struggle. These changes and recombinations in the chemistry of nations were accompanied with a quick effervescence; there was war. War and the common needs of life were foremost in man's thought. We have in this country two famous traditional periods of Celtic literature. One belongs to the Gael, the other to the Cymry; and each centres in a battle.

5. About the **Battle of Gabhra**, said to have been fought A.D. 284, is gathered the main body of old GAELIC tradition. **Fionn** (which means "Fair-haired"), the son of Cumhaill, known in modern poetry as Fingal, had a son **Oisin** (which means "The Little Fawn"), who is known in modern poetry as Ossian. Fionn's father, Cumhaill, had been slain in battle by Goll Mac Morna, who, as Fionn's mortal enemy, and afterwards his friend, has an important place in the old traditions. Fionn led one of the four bands into which the Gaels were parted, that of Leinster, known as the Clanna Baoisgne. His clan attained to so much power that the other three combined against it, and then Fionn and his family had to fight for their lives against all the forces of Erin armed against them, except those of his friend the King of Munster. Stirred to the depths by a struggle that compelled them to put out all strength in the defence of what they held most dear, they felt keenly, reached the highest level of the life of their own time, and poured its music out in song. Fionn's cousin, **Caeilte Mac Ronan**, was warrior and bard. **Oisin**, the son of Fionn, was warrior and bard. The brother of Oisin, Fergus the Eloquent (**Fergus Finnbheoil**), was chief bard, and bard only.

More or less changed by time, some fragments of the singing of these men remain on the lips of country folks among the Scotch and Irish Gaels. Only eleven of them are to be found in records older than the fifteenth century; but others were collected from the lips of the people by a Dean of Lismore in Argyllshire, before the days of Queen Elizabeth.

Of the old Gaelic poems and histories Ireland has many remains, such as the tale of *The Battle of Moytura*, and the *Tain Bo*, or *Cattle Plunder of Chuailgne*. In the *Senchus Mor* are ancient laws of Ireland, ascribed sometimes to the third century, sometimes to the fifth, and certainly known as ancient in the days of Alfred. But the chief feature in old Gaelic literature is the development of song during the struggle that ended a year after the death of Fionn in the crushing of his tribe at the battle of Gabhra, which is said to have been fought in the year 284.

Oisin is said to have had a warrior son, Oscar, killed in the battle, and to have himself survived to an extreme old age, saddened by change of times. The name of Oisin was even blended in tradition with that of St. Patrick, who came to Ireland about a century and a half after the battle of Gabhra. Patrick is made to say to Oisin, "It is better for thee to be with me and the clergy, as thou art, than to be with Fionn and the Fenians, for they are in hell without order of release;" to which Oisin is made to answer, "By the book and its meaning, by thy crozier and by thine image, better were it for me to share their torments than to be among the clergy continually talking. . . Son of Alphinen of the Wise Words, woe is me that I am near the clergy of the bells! For a time I lived with Caeilte, and then we were not poor."

6. The flowering of the other branch of our old Celtic literature—the CYMRIC—is associated also with a struggle that brought out the noblest life of men touched to the quick and concentrating all their powers for defence of home and liberty. Here also was a struggle against overwhelming force, closed with a ruinous defeat in battle. This was the **Battle of Cattraeth**, said to have been fought in the year 570 by confederate Cymry to resist the advance of the Teuton inland, after the last of the six settlements upon our eastern shores. They were, indeed, men of the sixth settlement, who had landed (A.D. 547) in the north-east, under Ida, and then spread from the sea inland across a part of the land we now call Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire. They took certain lands of the Gododin (Otadini of the Romans), which the Cymry made a last great effort to wrest from them. The scene of battle was probably Catterick Bridge, a few miles from Richmond, in Yorkshire. The Cymric tribes were gathered at the call of the Lord of Eiddin, which means, perhaps, not Edinburgh, but the

region of the river Eden, flowing from a source near that of the Swale, through Westmoreland and Cumberiand, into the Solway Frith. They came from districts now known by such names as Dumbarton, Wigtown, Kirkcudbright, and Ayr, from Morecambe Bay and all surrounding regions, gathered their force on the hills about the sources of the Eden and the Swale, and thence marched (A.D. 570) down through Swaledale, some five and twenty miles, to Catterick, or Cattraeth. **Aneurin**, one of the chief of the bards inspired by the great life-struggle, sang the disasters of the battle in a poem called the *Gododin*, of which ninety-seven stanzas yet remain. Gray found in a translation of it the passage which he thus put into music of his own :—

"To Cattraeth's vale in glittering row
Twice two hundred warriors go;
Every warrior's manly neck
Chains of regal honour deck,
Wreathed in many a golden link:
From the golden cup they drink
Nectar that the bees produce,
Or the grape's ecstatic juice.
Flush'd with mirth and hope they burn;
But none from Cattraeth's vale return,
Save Aeron brave and Conan strong
(Bursting through the bloody throng).
And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep and sing their fall."

The battle began on a Tuesday, and continued for a week. The Cymry fought to the death, and of three hundred and sixty-three chiefs who had led their people to the conflict, only three, says Aneurin, besides himself, survived. "Morien lifted up again his ancient lance, and, roaring, stretching out death towards the warriors, whilst towards the lovely, slender, blood-stained body of Gwen, sighed Gwenabwy, the only son of Gwen. . . . Fain would I sing, 'would that Morien had not died.' I sigh for Gwenabwy the son of Gwen." Thus Aneurin ends his plaint over the crowning triumph of the Teuton. But hearts had beaten high among the Cymry, and from souls astir song had been poured throughout the days of long resistance that had come before. Urien was the great North of England chief who led the battle of the Cymry for their homes and liberties against invading Angles. Llywarch the Old (**Llywarch Hen**) Prince of Argoed, whom the remains of verse ascribed to him show to have been first in genius among the Cymric bards, was Urien's friend and fellow-combatant at Lindisfarne, between

the years 572 and 579. There, after the death of Urien, he carried the chief's head in his mantle from the field. "The head," he sang, "that I carry carried me; I shall find it no more; it will come no more to my succour. Woe to my hand, my happiness is lost!" After Urien's death Llywarch joined arms with Cyndyllan, Prince of Powys, at his capital, where Shrewsbury now stands. Cyndyllan fell in a battle at Tarn, near the Wrekin. "The hall of Cyndyllan," then sang his friend Llywarch, "is gloomy this night, without fire, without songs—tears afflict the cheeks! The hall of Cyndyllan is gloomy this night, without fire, without family—my overflowing tears gush out! The hall of Cyndyllan pierces me to see it, roofless, fireless. My chief is dead, and I alive myself." Twelfth century tradition says that this bard was for a time one of King Arthur's counsellors. Llywarch had many sons; he gave to all of them his heart to battle for their country, and lost them all upon the battle-field. "O, Gwenn," he sang of his youngest and last dead, "O, Gwenn, woe to him who is too old, since he has lost you. A man was my son, a hero, a generous warrior, and he was the nephew of Urien. Gwenn has been slain at the ford of Morlas. . . Sweetly sang a bird on a pear tree above the head of Gwenn before they covered him with the turf. That broke the heart of the old Llywarch."

Taliesin (Shining Forehead) was another of those Cymric bards who sang in the hall of Urien. He was bard only, chief bard, and sang Urien's victories over Ida at Argoed, at Gwenn Estrad, and at Menao, between the years 547 and 560. After the death of Urien, he was the bard of Urien's son, Owain, by whom Ida was slain. After the death of all Urien's sons, Taliesin ended a sad life in Wales, and was buried, it is said, under a cairn near Aberystwith.

Myrddhin, or **Merlin**, was another of these bards, the one who became afterwards one of the chief figures in Arthurian romance. He was born between the years 470 and 480; served first the British chief Ambrosius Aurelianus, from whom he took the name of Ambrose before his own name of Merlin; then served as bard with Arthur, leader of the Southern Britons. That was the **King Arthur** who fought as Urien fought, and who, though seldom named in our oldest Cymric remains, became afterwards typical hero of the contest, Arthur, the King of that heroic myth which runs through our literature and is made part of the life of England. Merlin, one day, between the years 560 and 574,

in a field of slaughter on the Solway Firth, lost reason at sight of the miseries and horrors that surrounded him, broke his sword, and fled the society of man. Thenceforth he poured lament through all his music, and at last he was found dead by the banks of a river. Of other bards the memories survive, but these were the chief; and if the records of their lives be blended with much fable, they do, nevertheless, retain truths out of the life of that great time of effervescence which preceded in this country a blending of the elements of English strength.

7. Influence of the Celt on English literature proceeds not from example set by one people and followed by another, but in the way of nature, by establishment of blood relationship, and the transmission of modified and blended character to a succeeding generation.

The pure Gael—now represented by the Irish and Scotch Celts—was, at his best, an artist. He had a sense of literature, he had active and bold imagination, joy in bright colour, skill in music, touches of a keen sense of honour in most savage times, and in religion fervent and self-sacrificing zeal. In the Cymry —now represented by the Celts of Wales—there was the same artist nature. By natural difference, and partly, no doubt, because their first known poets learnt in suffering what they taught in song, the oldest Cymric music comes to us, not like the music of the Irish harp, in throbbings of a pleasant tunefulness, but as a wail that beats again, again, and again some iterated burden on the ear.

The blending of the Celt and Teuton had begun in the north even before the days of the great battle at Cattraeth. Some passages in Aneurin's Gododin show that Celts of part of the Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire coast, the men of Deivyr and Bryneich (Deira and Bernicia), had remained there and become incorporated with the new possessors of the soil. There never was repulse of the whole body of the Cymry into Wales. Bede, writing a hundred and fifty years after the battle of Cattraeth, speaks of the Britons of Northumberland as being in his day partly free and partly subject to the Angles. In the hill-country of the north and west, to which the Teuton did not care to follow with his plough, and in the fens, were independent Celts. The drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe is one of Falstaff's similes for melancholy. The familiar presence of the bagpipe indicates a former Celtic occupation of the fens. In the West of England the Celts were so far from having been entirely driven

into Wales that in King Alfred's time, three centuries after the struggle ended at Cattraeth, a line from north to south, dividing England into equal parts, had on the west side of it a country in which Celts abounded. They were the chief occupants of the five south-western counties. In Athelstane's time, Celts and Teutons, Britons and Englishmen, divided equal rule in Exeter. Neither in the West nor in the North of England were the Celts enslaved. Wales they had to themselves; and there they cherished British nationality. But where they lived among the English they accepted, when outnumbered, the established power; or, if in equal force, divided rule, and lived in either case as fellow-citizens with their Teutonic neighbours.

In the fusion of the two races, which then slowly began among the hills and valleys of the North and West of England, where the populations came most freely into contact, the gift of genius was the contribution of the Celt. The writer of our latest and best history of Architecture, when preparing the ground for his work by a survey of the characteristics of different races in relation to his art, says that "the true glory of the Celt in Europe is his artistic eminence. It is not, perhaps," adds Mr. Fergusson, "too much to assert that without his intervention we should not have possessed in modern times a church worthy of admiration, or a picture or a statue we could look at without shame."

8. The sense of literature was shown in the earliest times by the support of a distinct literary class among the Celts who then possessed this country. In Erin, the first headquarters of song and story, even in the third century, there was the poet with his staff of office, a square tablet staff, on the four sides of which he cut his verse; and there were degrees in literature. There was the Ollamh, or perfect doctor, who could recite seven fifties of historic tales; and there were others, down to the Driseg, who could tell but twenty. As we travel down from the remotest time of which there can be doubtful record, we find the profession of historian to be a recognised calling, transmitted in one family from generation to generation, and these later professors of history still bore the name of Ollamhs. Of the active and bold fancy that accompanied this Celtic sense of literature as an art, and of the Celt's delight in bright colour, almost any one of the old Gaelic poems will bear witness. The delight in colour is less manifest in the first poems of the Cymry. For them the one colour was that of blood; they are

of the sixth century, and sing of men who died in the vain fight against the spreading power of the Teuton. Of those Gaels who were known as Gauls to Rome, Diodorus, the Sicilian, told, three centuries before the time of Fionn and Oisin, how they wore bracelets and costly finger-rings, gold corselets, and dyed tunics flowered with colours of every kind, trews, striped cloaks fastened with a brooch and divided into many parti-coloured squares, a taste still represented by the Highland plaid. In the old Gaelic tale of the "Tain Bo," men are described marching: "Some are with red cloaks; others with light blue cloaks; others with deep blue cloaks; others with green, or grey, or white, or yellow cloaks, bright and fluttering about them. There is a young, red-freckled lad, with a crimson cloak, in their midst; a golden brooch in that cloak at his breast." Even the ghost of a Celt, if it dropped the substance, retained all the colouring of life. The vivacity of Celtic fancy is shown also by an outpouring of bold metaphor and effective simile:—

> "Both shoulders covered with his painted shield
> The hero there, swift as the war-horse, rushed.
> Noise in the mount of slaughter, noise and fire;
> The darting lances were as gleams of sun.
> There the glad raven fed. The foe must fly
> While he so swept them as when in his course
> An eagle strikes the morning dews aside,
> And like a whelming billow struck their front.
> Brave men, so say the bards, are dumb to slaves.
> Spears wasted men, and ere the swan-white steeds
> Trod the still grave that hushed the master voice,
> His blood washed all his arms. Such was Buddvan,
> Son of Bleedvan the Bold."

Here, in a mere average stanza, containing one of the ninety celebrations of the Cymric chiefs who fell at Cattraeth, we have more similes than in the six thousand and odd lines (English measure) of "Beowulf," the first heroic poem of the Teutonic section of our people. The delight in music—among the old Irish Celts in the music of the harp and tabor, among the old Welsh Celts in music of the harp, the pipe, and the crowd—is another characteristic. It is noted also that the music of the Gaels was sweet, lively, and rapid; and that the music of the Cymry was slower and more monotonous.

In the old Gaelic story of the first appearance of their people in Erin, we read how the Milesians landed unobserved, marched upon Tara, and called on the three kings of the Tuatha de Danaan, who then held the country, to surrender. The kings

answered that they had been taken by surprise, and that the invaders ought to re-embark, retire nine waves, and try whether they could make good their landing in fair fight. The Milesians agreed that this was just, and did try back. We are not bound to believe that such things were ever done; enough for us that there is the temper of the people indicated by the character of its inventions. And they are suggestions of a chivalrous ideal in old days of savage artist life, when the Celt was a pagan gentleman very much in the rough; savage times when, says another of these old tales, the Ulster men mixed the brains of their slain enemies with lime, and played with the hard balls they made of them. Such a brainstone is said to have gone through the skull of Conchobar, who lived afterwards seven years with two brains in his head, always sitting very still, because it would be death to shake himself. The Ollamh of old told, doubtless, this story with a roguish twinkle of the eye that has descended to his children's children.

The self-sacrificing zeal that entered into the religion of the Celts bore fruit in the first Christianising of the English.

CHAPTER II.

THE FORMING OF THE PEOPLE: FIRST ENGLISH.

1. THE First English, who are commonly known by the school-name of Anglo-Saxons, but who called themselves, as we call ourselves now, the English people (*Englisc folc*), were formed by a gradual blending of Teutonic tribes. They came, at different times and in different generations, from different parts of the opposite coast. On our eastern shores, from the Moray Firth to below Whitby, the land lay readiest of access to men from the opposite side of the North Sea, among whom Scandinavians were numerous; accordingly, the Scandinavian element is chiefly represented in the character, form, face, and provincial dialects of our north country. The part of our east coast belonging now to Lincolnshire was readiest of access to the Danes; and in Lincolnshire the Danish element is strongly represented. Farther south, our coast was opposite the Frisian settlements; therefore, among the immigrants over the North Sea to Southern England, the Frisians, forefathers of the

modern Dutchmen, would predominate. Adventurers of many tribes might join in any single expedition. When they had formed their settlements, the Teutonic spirit of co-operation, and the social progress that came of it, produced changes of home, intermarriages, community of interests, community of speech in a language proper to the cultivated men of the whole country. This manner of speech, First English (or Anglo Saxon), was not brought complete from any place upon the Continent, but it was formed here by a fusion of the closely-related languages or dialects of the Teutonic immigrants. The Teutons of the coast being chiefly the Low Germans, our first English were chiefly a Low German people. The language formed by them, and written with care as they advanced in culture, was mainly Frisian in structure. They called it English. It was English. Let us call it, then, **First English**, and avoid the confusion of ideas produced by giving it—as if it were the language of another people—the separate name of Anglo-Saxon. Their educated men wrote it with much regard to uniformity of practice and grammatical accuracy. The main body of the people spoke it, as they still do, with less regard to grammar, and with great diversities of vocabulary, idiom, and pronunciation. Those diversities are still sharply defined, though in the course of centuries they have been softened by continuance of free communication, and by intermarriage between men and women of all English provinces. The provincial dialects still bear very distinct witness to the original diversity of the Teutonic colonists; but these differences are not expressed by the Latin words, *Anglus* and *Saxo*. *Anglus* was only a Latin form of *Englisc* (pronounced English), the name by which the people called itself; and Saxon was the name which others gave to them. This might readily come into some formal use in the south, where Church-bred statesmen had a Roman education; but in the north it might be less familiar, because there the first educated priestly class was not formed on the Roman model. Thus Bede, a north countryman, tells of English or Angle settlements in his own part of the country; but, being informed by a southern correspondent of the Saxon settlements of Southern England, supposes that the difference of word means difference of people. Difference there was—in the north were more Scandinavians, in the south more Frisians—but they all took English for their common name; and when they were first incidentally called Anglo-Saxons by Bishop Asser, the biographer of King

Alfred, the compound word was not meant to represent a race compounded of Angles and of Saxons, but the English part of that great Teutonic population which there was a growing tendency among foreign writers to call, without discrimination of tribes, by the common name of Saxon. Anglo-Saxons meant, therefore, those Saxons who called themselves the Angles; but Angle is no more than an imperfect re-translation of the Latinised name of the English.

2. Many Celts in our island had been converted to the Christian faith when the last strong settlements were being established here by pagan Teutons. The Teutonic settlers brought with them battle-songs and a heroic legend of a chief named **Beowulf**. This legend was afterwards put into First English verse, probably in the seventh century, perhaps earlier or later, and remains to us, under the name of its hero, one of the earliest monuments of English literature; a poem of 6,357 short lines, the most ancient heroic poem in any Germanic language. Its hero sails from a land of the Goths to a land of the Danes, and there he frees a chief named Hrothgar from the attacks of a monster of the fens and moors, named Grendel. Afterwards he is himself ruler, is wounded mortally in combat with a dragon, and is solemnly buried under a great barrow on a promontory rising high above the sea. "And round about the mound rode his hearth-sharers, who sang that he was of kings, of men, the mildest, kindest, to his people sweetest, and the readiest in search of praise." In this poem real events are transformed into legendary marvels; but the actual life of the old Danish and Scandinavian chiefs, as it was first transferred to this country, is vividly painted. It brings before us the feast in the mead-hall, with the chief and his hearth-sharers, the customs of the banquet, the rude beginnings of a courtly ceremony, the boastful talk, reliance upon strength of hand in grapple with the foe, and the practical spirit of adventure that seeks peril as a commercial speculation—for Beowulf is undisguisedly a tradesman in his sword. The poem includes also expression of the heathen fatalism, "What is to be goes ever as it must," tinged by the energetic sense of men who feel that even fate helps those who help themselves, or, as it stands in Beowulf that "the Must Be often helps an undoomed man when he is brave."

The original scene of the story of this poem was probably a corner of that island of Sæland upon which now stands the

capital of Denmark, the corner which lies opposite to Gothland, the southern promontory of Sweden. But if so, he who in this country told the old story in English metre did not paint the scenery of Sæland, but that which he knew. A twelve-mile walk by the Yorkshire coast, from Whitby northward to the top of Bowlby Cliff, makes real to the imagination all the country of Beowulf as we find it in the poem. Thus we are almost tempted to accept a theory which makes that cliff, the highest on our eastern coast, the ness upon which Beowulf was buried, and on the slope of which—Bowlby then being read as the corrupted form of Beowulfes-by—Beowulf once lived with his hearth-sharers. High sea-cliffs, worn into holes or "nickerhouses many," with glens rocky and wooded running up into great moors, are not characters of the coast of Sæland opposite to Sweden, but they are special characters of that corner of Yorkshire in which the tale of Beowulf seems to have been told as it now comes to us in First English verse.

To the same part of England, and to a date between the years 670 and 680, certainly belongs the other great First English poem, known as Cædmon's "Paraphrase," a paraphrase of some parts of the Bible story. This poem arose out of the Christian-ising of the English of the north by Celtic missionaries.

3. There are doubtful traditions which even brought the Apostle Paul to Britain; which found this country a first bishop in Aristobulus, one of the seventy disciples whom St. Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Romans; and made a King Lucius, who died A.D. 201, the first Christian King, founder also of the first church, St. Martin's, at Canterbury.

But we know more certainly from the evidence of Eusebius, towards the beginning, and of Chrysostom, towards the close of the fourth century, that Christian teachers then visited Britain and made converts. Alban is said to have been the first British martyr, and the date assigned to his martyrdom is the year 305. In 314 three British bishops were among those present at the Council of Arles. British bishops were also at the Council of Rimini, in 359. Between the years 394 and 415, a British Christian scholar, of independent mind and earnest piety, named Morgan, or Morgant (who transformed his Cymric name, which means "one born by the sea-shore," into its classical synonym, **Pelagius**), maintained opinions upon sundry points which were hotly opposed by the Augustine of the primitive Church, and by the great body of the Roman clergy, as the Pelagian heresy.

Patricius, the **St. Patrick** of the Irish, was Morgan's contemporary, but a younger man, born on the Clyde, near Dumbarton, in the year 372, and active during the former half of the fifth century. His work among the Gaelic Celts aided the efforts of the small communities of Celtic missionaries, called Culdees. **St. David,** who is remembered as the most famous teacher of the Welsh, was an austere and able priest of the school of the Egyptian monks, son of a Cymric prince, and by tradition uncle to King Arthur. He was at work during the former half of the sixth century. But the chief missionary work was then being done by the Culdees of the Irish Church. **Columba,** an Irish abbot of royal descent, after founding monasteries in the North of Ireland, passed in the year 563 to Scotland, and for the next thirty-four years laboured there as a missionary on the mainland and in the Hebrides, making his headquarters upon one of the Hebrides, the rocky island of Iona. Iona then became the most important of the Culdee missionary stations. It was not until Columba had been thus at work for three and thirty years that Pope Gregory I. sent the Italian **Augustine** into this country, where he acted as a missionary from Rome to the South of England, and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Celtic missionaries had then been at work for generations among the English of the north. They had received their own teaching rather from the Eastern than from the Western Church, and followed, therefore, the practice of the Eastern Church in fixing the time for Easter, and in points of ceremonial wherein that Church differed from the Church of Rome. As the influence of teachers from Rome spread northward, hot conflict was raised between the teachers of the south and of the north upon these points of ceremonial. They appeared more vital questions to the Rome-bred clergy than to those trained in the schools of the Culdees, at Iona or at Lindisfarne. In the year 634 Oswald became king over the rude population of Deivyr and Bryneich, among whom there had been that early fusion of Celts with the incoming English settlers which is referred to by Aneurin in the Gododin (ch. i. § 7). King Oswald sent for missionaries to Iona.

This was two years after the death of the Arabian prophet, Mahomet.

The first of the teachers who came from Iona to the Northumbrians went back and made hopeless report of the people

Then **Aidan** volunteered for the work, and led a religious colony to Lindisfarne, which is at low water a peninsula, at high water an island, nine miles to the southward of our present Berwick-upon-Tweed. At Lindisfarne, where Oswald founded for him a bishopric, Aidan formed the great missionary station for Northumbria. He gave his goods to the poor, travelled on foot among the people whom he sought to bring to Christ, and won their hearts by simple truth and self-denying earnestness. More Culdees passed through Lindisfarne to join the work, and thus the place came to be known as Holy Isle. For the next thirty years the Celts were in all this region spiritual teachers of the English, and it was out of the midst of this great North of England movement, in the newly-established monastery of Whitby, that the English heart sang through the verse of Cædmon its first great hymn based on the Word of Truth.

4. The Whitby monastery was founded by the Abbess Hilda, in the year 657. She then moved to it from the religious house at Hartlepool, over which she had presided, and into which she had received, two years before, Elfleda, the one-year-old daughter of King Oswald's brother and successor. In thanksgiving for a victory, Elfleda's father had devoted the child to religious life. With a community of both sexes, bound less by formal ties than by a common wish to serve God and aid one another in His service while they diffused Christianity among the people, Hilda lived in the first simple abbey built on the high cliff at Whitby, maintained by a grant of surrounding lands. That which maintained her maintained also the poor about her. She had been taught by Aidan ; had been for some years at Hartlepool much trusted, visited, and counselled by Aidan and other chief teachers of the Celtic Christians. Under her roof, in the year 664, when Whitby Abbey was but seven years old, there was held the Synod of Whitby, for settlement of the questions of ceremonial between the Celtic and the Roman Churches, and peace was secured by concession of the points upon which Rome insisted. At Whitby Hilda was as mother to the child-princess, who grew up under her care and became next abbess after her ; was as mother in her little community, and among the rude people round about, who long preserved the belief that her form is at certain times to be seen in a vision of sunshine among the ruins of the later abbey built upon the site of hers. She so much encouraged the close study of Scripture that in her time many worthy servants of the Church and five

bishops are said to have come out of her abbey. Afflicted during the last six years of her life, she never failed in any duty: and her last words to her people were that they should preserve the peace of the Gospel among themselves and with all others. At the time of her death, in 680, **Cuthbert**, who died in 686, was Bishop of Lindisfarne. He also left the mark of a true Christian's life among the people, and was remembered as an angelic missionary priest, who had deep sympathy for the neglected poor. He would seek them in their most craggy and inaccessible homes, to dwell with them by the week or month—their bishop and their brother. Such stir of human energies produced a poet worthy of the time. All that we know of him was told by Bede, who was also a north countryman, and who was born about the time when Cædmon's Paraphrase was written.

5. From Bede's account, without adopting its suggestion of miracle in the gift of song to the poet, we may infer that **Cædmon** was a tenant on some of the abbey lands at Whitby, and one of the converts who had a poet's nature stirred by Christian zeal. One day he joined a festive party at the house of some remoter neighbour of the country-side. The visitors came in on horseback and afoot, or in country cars, drawn some by horses and some by oxen. There was occasion for festivity that would last longer than a day. The draught cattle of the visitors were stabled, and would need watching of nights, since in wild times cattle-plunder also was a recreation, and one that joined business to pleasure. The visitors took turns by night in keeping watch over the stables. One evening when Cædmon sat with his companions over the ale-cup, and the song went round, his sense of song was keen, but, as a zealous Christian convert, he turned with repugnance from the battle-strains and heathen tales that were being chanted to the music of the rude harp which passed from hand to hand. As the harp came nearer to him he rose, since it was his turn that night to watch the cattle, and escaped into the stables. There, since we know by his work that he was true poet born, his train of thought doubtless continued till it led to a strong yearning for another form of song. If for these heathen hymns of war and rapine, knowledge and praise of God could be the glad theme of their household music, and if he, even he—perhaps we may accept as a true dream the vision which Bede next tells as a miracle. Cædmon watched, slept, and in his sleep one came to him and said, "Cædmon sing." He said, "I cannot. I came hither out of

the feast because I cannot sing." "But," answered the one who came to him, "you have to sing to me." "What," Cædmon asked, "ought I to sing?" And he answered, "Sing the origin of creatures." Having received which answer, Bede tells us, he began immediately to sing, in praise of God the Creator, verses of which this is the sense:—"Now we ought to praise the Author of the Heavenly Kingdom, the power of the Creator and His counsel, the deeds of the Father of Glory: how He, though the eternal God, became the Author of all marvels; Omnipotent Guardian, who created for the sons of men, first Heaven for their roof, and then the Earth." "This," adds Bede, "is the sense but not the order of the words which he sang when sleeping." Cædmon remembered upon waking the few lines he had made in his sleep, and continued to make others like them. The vision seems to have been simply the dream-form given to a continuation of his waking thoughts; and Cædmon may well have believed, according to the simple faith of his time, that in his dream he had received a command from heaven. He went in the morning to the steward of the land he held under the abbey, and proposed to use his gift of song in aid of the work that was being done by Abbess Hilda and her companions. Hilda called him to her, up the great rock, and, to test his power, caused pieces of Scripture story to be told to him, then bade him go home and turn them into verse. He returned next day with the work so well done that his teachers became in turn his hearers. Hilda then counselled him to give up his occupations as a layman, and received him with all his goods into the monastery. There sacred history was taught to him, that he might place the Word of God in pleasant song within their homes, and on their highways, and at festive gatherings, upon the lips of the surrounding people. He was himself taught by religious men trained in the Celtic school, which was more closely allied to the Eastern than the Western Church. They knew and read the Chaldee Scriptures, and as their new brother began his work with the song of Genesis, the name they gave him in the monastery was the Chaldee name of the book of Genesis, derived from its first words, "In the beginning," that being in the Chaldee b'Cadmon.

6. Cædmon sang, in what is now called his *Paraphrase*, of the Creation, and with it of the War in Heaven, of the fall of Satan, and of his counsellings in Hell as the Strong Angel of Presumption. Thus Cædmon began, first in time and among the first in genius, the strain of English poetry:

"Most right it is that we praise with our words,
Love in our minds, the Warden of the skies,
Glorious King of all the hosts of men;
He speeds the strong, and is the Head of all
His high Creation, the Almighty Lord.
None formed Him, no first was nor last shall be
Of the eternal Ruler, but His sway
Is everlasting over thrones in heaven."

Cædmon paints "The Angel of Presumption," yet in heaven, questioning whether he would serve God:

"'Wherefore,' he said, 'shall I toil?
No need have I of master. I can work
With my own hands great marvels, and have power
To build a throne more worthy of a God,
Higher in heaven. Why shall I, for His smile,
Serve Him, bend to Him thus in vassalage?
I may be God as He.
Stand by me, strong supporters, firm in strife.
Hard-mooded heroes, famous warriors,
Have chosen me for chief; one may take thought
With such for counsel, and with such secure
Large following. My friends in earnest they,
Faithful in all the shaping of their minds;
I am their master, and may rule this realm.

And thus, to quote one passage more, Cædmon, a thousand years before the time of Milton, sang of Satan fallen:

"Satan discoursed, he who henceforth ruled hell
Spake sorrowing.
God's Angel erst, he had shone white in heaven,
Till his soul urged, and most of all its pride,
That of the Lord of Hosts he should no more
Bend to the word. About his heart his soul
Tumultuously heaved, hot pains of wrath
Without him.
Then said he, 'Most unlike this narrow place
To that which once we knew, high in heaven's realm,
Which my Lord gave me, though therein no more
For the Almighty we hold royalties.
Yet right hath He not done in striking us
Down to the fiery bottom of hot hell,
Banished from heaven's kingdom, with decree
That He will set in it the race of man.
Worst of my sorrows this, that, wrought of earth,
Adam shall sit in bliss on my strong throne;
Whilst we these pangs endure, this grief in hell.
Woe! Woe! Had I the power of my hands,
And for a season, for one winter's space,
Might be without; then with this host, I——
But iron binds me round; this coil of chains
Rides me; I rule no more—close bonds of hell
Hem me their prisoner."

Cædmon, when he has thus told the story of Creation and the Fall of Man, follows the Scripture story to the Flood, and represents with simple words the rush of waters, and the ark "at large under the skies over the orb of ocean." So he goes on, picturing clearly to himself what with few words he pictures for his hearer. The story of Abraham proceeds to the triumph of his faith in God when he had led his son Isaac to the top of a high mount by the sea, "began to load the pile, awaken fire, and fettered the hands and feet of his child; then hove on the pile young Isaac, and then hastily gripped the sword by the hilt, would kill his son with his own hands, quench the fire with the youth's blood." From this scene of God's blessing on the perfect faith of Abraham, Cædmon proceeds next to the passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites, a story of the power of God, who is able to lead those who put their faith in Him unhurt through the midst of the great waters. And the next subject of the extant Paraphrase is taken from the book of Daniel, to show the same Power leading Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, with their garments unsinged, through the furnace fire. This paraphrase closes with Belshazzar's feast. The rest is from the New Testament, inscribed in the one extant manuscript less carefully, and by a later hand. It has for its subject Christ and Satan; it is fragmentary, and perhaps no part of it is by Cædmon, except that which describes the fasting and temptation in the wilderness.

7. As to their mechanism, there is one measure for Beowulf, Cædmon's Paraphrase, and all subsequent First English poems. There is no rhyme, and no counting of syllables. The lines are short, depending upon accent for a rhythm varying in accordance with the thought to be expressed, and depending for its emphasis upon alliteration. Usually in the first of a pair of short lines the two words of chief importance began with the same letter, and in the second line of the pair the chief word began also with that letter, that is to say, if the alliteration were of consonants; in the case of vowels the rule was reversed, the chief words would begin with vowels that were different.

8. As to their matter, if we except Cædmon, in whom there was an artistic power perhaps to be accounted for by the beginning of some mixture of blood between the northern English and their Celtic fellow-citizens, the First English writers, whether of verse or prose, were wanting in vivacity of genius. They were practical, earnest, social, true to a high sense of duty.

and had faith in God. They used few similes, and, although their poetry is sometimes said to abound in metaphor, its metaphors were few and obvious. By metaphor a word is turned out of its natural sense. There is little of metaphor in calling the sea the water-street, the whale-road, or the swan-road; the ship a wave-traverser, the sea-wood, or the floating-wood; a chief's retainers his hearth-sharers, or night the shadow-covering of creatures. This kind of poetical periphrasis abounds in First English poetry, but it proceeds from the thoughtful habit of realisation, which extends also to a representation of the sense of words by some literal suggestion, that will bring them quickened with a familiar experience or human association to the mind. There is in the unmixed English an imagination with deep roots and little flower, solid stem and no luxuriance of foliage. That which it was in a poet's mind to say was realised first, and then uttered with a direct earnestness which carried every thought straight home to the apprehension of the listener. The single authorship of early poems may be doubted without denial of the spirit that is in them. *Beowulf*, in whose King Hygelac are clear historical traces of a Chocilaicus killed in the year 520, is said by many critics to be hero of a poem formed by fusion of the separate work of several men. *Cædmon's Paraphrase* has been regarded as the work of several men, none of them Cædmon. Descriptions of such theories are in the first and second volumes of my "English Writers." Here *Beowulf* and *Cædmon's Paraphrase* can only be treated simply as independent works, and as the two first great expressions that we have of strength and reverence in English character. Christianity having been once accepted, aided as it was greatly in its first establishment among us by zeal of the Gael and Cymry, the First English writers fastened upon it, and throughout the whole subsequent history of our literature, varied and enlivened by the diverse blending of the races that joined in the forming of the nation, its religious energy has been the centre of its life.

9. Cædmon's Paraphrase, written certainly during Abbess Hilda's rule over Whitby, between 657 and 680, was probably being produced during the last ten years of her life, or between the years 670 and 680. **Aldhelm,** born in 656, was then a youth, well-born, and well-taught by the learned Adrian, spending alike his intellectual and his material wealth at Malmesbury for the love of God. In Cædmon's time, in the year 672,

Aldhelm, a youth of sixteen, joined the poor monastery which had been founded by a Scot more learned than rich, named Meldum, after whom the place had its name of Meldum's Byrig, or Malmesbury. The place was so poor that the monks had not enough to eat. Aldhelm obtained a grant of the monastery, rebuilt the church, gathered religious companies about him, and inspired in them his zeal for a pure life. He was a musician and a poet; played, it is said, all the instruments of music used in his time. His letters, and his Latin verse, chiefly in praise of chastity, survive, but those English songs of his which were still on the lips of the people in King Alfred's day are lost to us. William of Malmesbury has recorded, on King Alfred's authority, that Aldhelm was unequalled as an inventor and singer of English verse; and that a song ascribed to him, which was still familiar among the people, had been sung by Aldhelm on the bridge between country and town, in the character of an English minstrel or gleeman, to keep the people from running home directly after mass was sung, as it was their habit to do, without waiting for the sermon. Another story is, that on a Sunday, at a time when many traders from different parts of the country came into Malmesbury, Abbot Aldhelm stationed himself on the bridge, and there, by his songs, caused some of those who would have passed to stay by him and, leaving their trade until the morrow, follow him to church.

10. **Bede,** born in 673, was a child in arms when Cædmon sang the power of the Creator and his counsel, and the young Aldhelm had begun his work at Malmesbury. When seven years old—that is to say, about the time of the death of Abbess Hilda—Bede was placed in the newly-founded monastery of St. Peter, at Wearmouth. Three years later the associated monastery of St. Paul was opened at Jarrow, on the banks of the Tyne, about five miles distant from St. Peter's. Bede, then aged ten, was transferred to the Jarrow monastery. There he spent his life, punctual in all formal exercises of devotion, and employing his whole leisure, pen in hand, for the advancement of true knowledge. He digested and arranged the teaching of the fathers of the Church, that others might with the least possible difficulty study the Scriptures by the light they gave. He produced, in a Latin treatise on *The Nature of Things*, a text-book of the science of his day, digested and compacted out of many volumes. His works are almost an encyclopædia of the know-

ledge of his time. He drew it from many sources, where it lay hidden in dull, voluminous, or inaccessible books, and he set it forth in books which could be used in the monastery schools, or be read by the educated for their own further instruction. The fame of the devout and simple-minded English scholar spread beyond our shores. A pope in vain desired to have him brought to Rome. He refused in his own monastery the dignity of abbot, because "the office demands household care; and household care brings with it distraction of mind, which hinders the pursuit of learning." He was thus at work in his monastery, thirty-six years old, at the time of the death of Aldhelm.

It was in those days that Roderick the Goth lost Spain to the Arabs.

In 731, when in his fifty-ninth year, Bede finished the most important of his works, that known as his *Ecclesiastical History*. That History of the English Church was virtually a History of England brought down to the date of its completion, and based upon inquiries made with the true spirit of a historian. Bede did not doubt reported miracles, and that part of the religious faith of his time supplies details which we should be glad now to exchange for other information upon matters whereof he gives too bare a chronicle; but, whatever its defects, he has left us a history of the early years of England—succinct, yet often warm with life; business-like, and yet child-like in its tone; at once practical and spiritual, simply just, and the work of a true scholar, breathing love to God and man. We owe to Bede alone the knowledge of much that is most interesting in our early history. Where other authorities are cited, they are often writers who, on the points in question, know no more than Bede had told them. Bede died in the year 735, three years after the completion of his History. He wrote in Latin, then the language of all scholars; but in his last days, under painful illness, he was urging forward a translation into English of the Gospel of St. John. One of his pupils said to him, when the end was near, "Most dear master, there is still one chapter wanting; do you think it troublesome to be asked any more questions?" He answered, "It is no trouble. Take your pen and make ready, and write fast." Afterwards, says the pupil, who gave, in a letter that remains to us, the narrative of Bede's last days, when the dying scholar had been taking leave of his brethren in the monastery, and bequeathing among them his little wealth of pepper, napkins, and incense, "the boy said, 'Dear master,

there is yet one sentence not written.' He answered, 'Write quickly.' Soon after the boy said, 'The sentence is now written.' He replied, 'It is well. You have said the truth. It is ended. Receive my head into your hands, for it is a great satisfaction to me to sit facing my holy place, where I was wont to pray, that I may also sitting call upon my Father.' And thus on the pavement of his little cell, singing 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,' when he had named the Holy Spirit he breathed his last, and so departed into the heavenly kingdom."

11. The year of the death of Bede, 735, is the supposed date of the birth of **Alcuin**. Alcuin was bred from infancy in the monastery of York. He was there in the time of Egbert, who, in 735, received the pall as second Archbishop of York, and who is said to have founded in York monastery the famous school in which Alcuin was taught. The fame of the York school and library spread to the court of Charlemagne. Noble youths came from afar to be taught theology by Egbert, and other knowledge by his vice-master Albert who in the year 766 succeeded him in the archbishopric. Albert, with Alcuin's help, increased the fame of the school, and continued to be zealous beyond all others for the enrichment of the library. During the fourteen years of the archbishopric of Albert, Alcuin had in the York monastery immediate charge over the school and library. What he learnt from the books he told in his own words to his pupils, and with some of the best of them he established life-long friendships. One of his friends and pupils, Eanbald, in 780 became Albert's successor in the archbishopric. Alcuin had once been to Rome with Albert on a search for books; now he was sent again, that he might use the opportunity of a mission to fetch the archbishop's pall, and bring with it more books to the York library. Thus Alcuin chanced to be, in 781, at Parma when Charlemagne was passing through that town on the way home from the crowning of his infant son Louis, afterwards Louis le Débonnaire, as King of Aquitaine, and of his second son, Pepin, as King of Lombardy.

Alcuin then was, what Bede had been, the foremost scholar of his time, and Charlemagne sought aid from him as an intellectual ally. He invited Alcuin to his court, where in the winter, when fighting was not in season, Charlemagne studied himself and compelled all his family to study, and whence he would compel his people also to receive instruction under Alcuin's

directions. Having returned to York and obtained leave of absence from his superior, Alcuin went, therefore, in 782, to the court of Charlemagne, and took with him some of his best pupils as assistants. In the empire of Charlemagne his work was virtually that of a Minister of Public Instruction, the emperor supporting with despotic power every act of his for the establishment of well-disciplined schools throughout the land. There was also Charlemagne's own Palace School, which some believe to have been the germ of the first university, that of Paris. But 1215 is the date of the earliest record of a place of education called the University of Paris, and Alcuin went to the court of Charlemagne in the year 782. He remained with Charlemagne eight years, and then returned to York; Charlemagne, who had sought to retain him, still maintaining direct relations by investing Alcuin with the office of ambassador to Offa, King of Mercia. After a stay of not quite two years in England, Alcuin returned in the year 792, and spent the rest of his life in the service of Charlemagne, as faithful friend to him and to his empire. Wealth and power were at Alcuin's disposal, but he spoke of himself as "the humble Levite," and was single-hearted in austere performance of his duty. He was strict in discipline, and faithful in counsel to his headstrong master, as his extant correspondence shows. In his theological writing, Alcuin chiefly occupied himself with attack on heresy; but he wrote also text-books to provide means for efficient teaching in his schools, and he was energetic in repression of the love of wine and of the chase that had defied Church discipline.

The scriptorium, or writing-room in the monastery—which once was what the printing-office is to us—Alcuin developed with an energy that ensured rapid multiplication of good books. The hunting monks were bribed to industry by being allowed to chase as many beasts as would yield skins to meet the demand from the scriptorium for parchment. Wine-bibbing monks were told that it was better to copy books than to tend vineyards, by as much as reading lifted the soul higher than wine. But the books to be copied must be those which directly sought to raise men to a contemplation of the God of Christians. As a youth at York, Alcuin had hidden Virgil under his pillow from the eyes of the brother who came with a cane to rouse the sleepers to nocturns; in his later years Alcuin could see in Virgil no more than a heathen liar. "The good monk," he said, "should find enough to content him in the Christian poets." Throughout

Alcuin's writings, which include 232 letters, and some inscriptions, epigrams, and poems, there is a hard sense of duty for the love of God, but there is little liveliness of fancy. He was a thoroughly practical man, who carried into the empire of Charlemagne the same administrative ability which he had shown as schoolmaster and librarian in the monastery of York, labouring always with all his powers to bring men to knowledge, that they might come near to God. He worked on difficult material, a fact which may account for some of his severity; and when he died, in 804, he was in some trouble with his imperial master for misconduct of the monks in his own abbey of St. Martin's, at Tours.

12. Meanwhile, the spirit of the people was expressed also in song. Apart from "Beowulf," and Cædmon's "Paraphrase," each existing in a single manuscript, the main body of the First English poetry that has come down to us has been preserved in two collections, known as the *Exeter Book* and the *Vercelli Book*. Each is named from the place where it was found. The Exeter Book is a collection of poems given, with other volumes, to the library of his cathedral by Leofric, Bishop of Exeter, between the years 1046 and 1073. The other volume was discovered in 1823, in a monastery at Vercelli, in the Milanese, where it had been mistaken for a relic of Eusebius, who was once Bishop of Vercelli, and died in 371.

Among the pieces in these volumes are three of considerable length, by a poet named **Cynewulf**. His name comes down to us, because he had a peculiar way of distributing the letters of it among the verses in some part of each of his poems. In the Vercelli Book is Cynewulf's *Elene*, a poem of 2,648 lines, on the legend of St. Helen, or the Finding of the True Cross by the mother of Constantine. In the Exeter Book we have Cynewulf's legend of *Juliana*, martyr in the days of Emperor Maximian, and a series of poems which have unity among themselves, and have been read as a single work, Cynewulf's *Christ*. Cynewulf deals with Scripture history and legend in a devout spirit, and his poems are interesting, although their earnestness is not quickened by any touch of genius. He was probably, as Jacob Grimm suggests, a Cynewulf, Bishop of Lindisfarne, who died in the year 780; certainly of that century, and not Cynewulf, Abbot of Peterborough, who died Bishop of Winchester in 1008.

Among other poems in the two collections we have in the Exeter Book the *Traveller's Song*, which is sometimes thought

to be the oldest of First English poems. In it Widsith names the places through which he has wandered. He has witnessed the wars of an Ætla. Some say that this means Attila, the Hun. Another interpretation places the scene of the wandering in our own country, between the years 511 and 534. The Exeter Book contains also the legend of *St. Guthlac*, and a poem on the myth of *The Phœnix*, as an allegory of the life of the Christian; another of its poems is a fable of *The Panther*, applied to the resurrection of our Lord, and another is of *The Whale*, who attracts fishes by sweet odour from his mouth, "then suddenly around the prey the grim gums crash together. So is it to every man who often and negligently in this stormy world lets himself be deceived by sweet odour. . . Hell's barred doors have not return or escape, or any outlet for those who enter, any more than the fishes, sporting in ocean, can turn back from the whale's grip." The jaws of the whale were the accepted symbol of the mouth of hell. They stand for that in tenth century pictures which adorn the manuscript of Cædmon. In later years we still find them so accepted in the scenery of the miracle plays.

This method of reading natural history into religious parable occurred in scattered passages of many early fathers of the Church. By degrees a fixed association was established between the asserted properties of certain animals and the religious meaning given to them, and the collection of such parables into a religious manual of natural history was made at an early date in the Eastern Church, under the name of *Physiologus*. There was a Physiologus denounced as heretical by a council held in the year 496. Fisolog, or Physiolog, came to be quoted as man or book, and we have it as a book in Latin manuscripts of the eighth century. Out of this form of literature sprang the Bestiaries of the Middle Ages.

An Address of the Soul to the Body, a poem on *The Various Fortunes of Men*, *Proverbs*, and (Cynewulf's) *Riddles*, were also among the inventions copied into the Exeter Book. The collection includes a few pieces not exclusively devotional, and it represents in fair proportion the whole character of First English poetry. Since it was produced by an educated class, trained in the monasteries, the religious tone might be expected to predominate even if this were not also the literature of a religious people. The domestic feeling of the Teuton is tenderly expressed among these poems in a little strain from shipboard on the happiness of him whose wife awaits on shore the dear bread-winner, ready to

wash his travel-stained clothes and to clothe him anew by her own spinning and weaving.

In the Vercelli Book, beside Cynewulf's *Helen*, there is a still longer legend of *St. Andrew*, with a *Vision of the Holy Rood*, the beginning of a poem on *The Falsehood of Men*, a poem on *The Fates of the Apostles*, and two *Addresses of the Soul to the Body*, one corresponding to that in the Exeter Book. Such poems, in which the Soul debates with the Body as chief cause of sin, remained popular for centuries.

13. Among the remains of First English poetry, outside the Exeter and the Vercelli Book, the most interesting of those which seem to have been produced before the end of the eighth century is a fragment of old battle-song, known as *The Fight at Finnesburg*, discovered in the seventeenth century by Dr. George Hickes, on the cover of a manuscript of Homilies in Lambeth Palace; also a fine fragment of a poem on *Judith* in the same manuscript which contains Beowulf. Along the margin of a volume of Homilies in the Bodleian Library there is written also a fragment of a gloomy poem on *The Grave*.

14. When Alcuin died, in the year 804, the blending of the elements which were to build up a strong nation had advanced almost to the fusion of states into a single kingdom, with the name of England. The spirit of liberty had from oldest times been common to the Celt and Teuton. When Lucan, who lived in the first century, sang of the liberty, and with that the greatness, of Rome lost at Pharsalia, he said—

> "That liberty, ne'er to return again
> And flying civil war, her flight has ta'en
> O'er Tigris and the Rhine: and can be brought
> No more, though with our bloods so often sought.
> Would we had ne'er that happiness possessed
> Which Scythia and Germany has blest!
>
> (*Book. VII. May's Translation.*)

But the steady spirit of association which knits men together for the creation and maintenance of a free state against all adverse influences from without or from within, that was especially the contribution of the Germans to our strength. Their name of Germans meant "brothers-in-arms." Tacitus, when he described their customs at the end of the first century, told how among them the young member of a household was advanced, when able to bear arms, into the rank of member of the Commonwealth: how chiefs deliberated about minor matters,

but about the more important the whole tribe; though when the final decision rested with the people, the affair was always thoroughly discussed before them by their chiefs. There is the germ here of Parliamentary government; and the true home life, from which national life draws its strength, was indicated in the respect of the Germans for their women. "Almost alone among the barbarians," said Tacitus, "they are content with one wife. No one in Germany," he added, with a bitter thought of Rome, "no one in Germany laughs at vice, nor do they call it the fashion to corrupt and be corrupted." The first suggestion even of the spirit which led the Church Reformation of an after age is to be found when Tacitus says of the old German tribes that they "do not consider it consistent with the grandeur of celestial beings to confine the gods within walls, or to liken them to the form of any human countenance. They consecrate woods and groves, and they apply the names of deities to the abstraction which they see only in spiritual worship." Of a mind so characterised in its days of heathendom we have traced the later forms through "Beowulf," Cædmon's "Paraphrase," and other verses, and through the work of Bede and Alcuin, to the time when distinct communities are about to join in regarding England as their common country.

15. But they owed much to the fervour of the Celt. **Dicuil,** an Irish monk, who, in the year 825, at the age of seventy, wrote a Latin description of the earth, says he had spoken with Culdees, or Celtic missionary priests, whose zeal penetrated beyond the Faroes to distant Iceland.

The livelier genius, also, of the Celt, with its audacity of thought, is shown by the writer who best represented English intellect in the generation after Alcuin. This was **John Scotus Erigena,** whose names of Scot and of Erigena—whether that mean born in Erin or in Ayrshire—indicate with the form of his genius that Celtic blood flowed in his veins. He lived at the court of Charlemagne's grandson, Charles the Bald, King of France, who looked upon him as a miracle of wit and wisdom. He was a little man, and once, when he sat at dinner between two very fat monks, the king sent a dish from his own table of three fishes, one large and two small, which he was to share equally with his two neighbours. He gave to each of the fat monks a little fish, and took the big fish for himself. "That is not equal division," said the king. "It is," said Erigena. "There is a little one for a big one, there is a little one for a big one, and I'm

a little one for a big one." Such stories indicate lively familiarity of intercourse between the king and the philosopher. Erigena was distinguished for his knowledge of Greek, and he translated for Charles into Latin certain works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, a traditional convert of St. Paul's, and first Bishop of Athens. These were mystical, half Platonic writings, first produced at an Eastern Church conference in the year 532, and there used to support opinions which the theologians of the Western Church denounced as heretical as soon as Erigena's translation made the nature of the teaching known. Erigena produced also a great work of his own in Latin *On the Division of Nature*, in the form of dialogue between pupil and master, which, placing reason higher than authority, set out with the doctrine that there is a perfect harmony between reason and revelation; and that all philosophy tends to a knowledge of the unity of the Creator, in whom all things begin and end. Evil, Erigena taught, being the opposite to the eternal God, could not be eternal. "A vice," he said, "is a spoilt virtue that can have no separate existence." In eternal fire he saw a material adaptation of spiritual thought to the unstrengthed faith, and he idealised some parts of Old Testament story into spiritual symbols. The pure study of Plato, the quick fancy, the bold speculation, brought John Scotus Erigena within the censure of the Pope and of two councils; but as long as Charles the Bald lived, there was shelter in his court. When Charles the Bald died, in 877, Erigena returned to England; and it is said that, about the year 884, when he was teaching in the monastery at Malmesbury, his pupils attacked his theology by stabbing him to death with the pointed iron styles used for school writing.

16. About this time, perhaps, there was produced by a Celtic writer a Latin *History of the Britons*. In a prologue which began to appear before the twelfth century copies of the history, its author's name is said to be **Nennius**. Nothing is known of Nennius, and the date of his writing is variously inferred from internal evidence to have been 796, or 800, or 879, or 980. This history tells of the contests of the Britons with the Romans and the Saxons. It derives their name from Brutus, a Roman Consul, and it thus names King Arthur to recite his twelve great battles against the Saxons:—"There it was that the magnanimous Arthur, with all the kings and military force of Britain, fought against the Saxons. And though there were many more noble than himself, yet he was twelve times chosen their commander,

and as often conqueror." Here follow the old names of the places where the twelve battles were fought—1, at the mouth of the river Gleni; 2, 3, 4, 5, by the river Dulas, in the region Linius; 6, by the river Bassas; 7, in the wood Celidon; 8, near Gurnion Castle, where, it is said, Arthur bore the image of the Virgin on his shoulders; 9, at Caer Leon; 10, by the river Trat Treuroit; 11, on the mountain Breguoin; and, 12, a severe battle in which Arthur penetrated to the hill of Badon (Bath? Badbury Hill, Dorsetshire? Bowden Hill, on the Avon, near Linlithgow?). "In this engagement," adds Nennius, "nine hundred and forty fell by his hand alone, no one but the Lord affording him assistance." No more is said about King Arthur in this early history, and when he is there spoken of it is in association with the year 452. The history of Nennius was ascribed in some manuscripts to Gildas, in whose name there remains a slighter British chronicle, and who is said to have been a fellow pupil of Llywarch Hen, and a brother of Aneurin. But the writer of this chronicle or *The Subjection of Britain* was evidently not one of the Cymry; he speaks of them with contempt, under the cloak of brotherly reproof. He was a monk of Teutonic race, who lived before the writer of that history ascribed to Nennius in which King Arthur is first mentioned. The two chronicles differ much in spirit, and cannot be by the same writer. In Gildas, who has been sometimes confounded with Nennius, there is no mention of Arthur. But the history of Nennius has some importance in our literature, as evidence that a tradition of King Arthur and his twelve great battles was extant among us in King Alfred's time.

17. In the year of the death of Erigena, 884, Alfred was king of England; indeed, it is he who is said to have invited Erigena back to his own country. When Alfred became king, in 871, the same races which, by their settlements three or four centuries earlier had laid the foundations of England, were again descending on the coasts of the North Sea and the Atlantic. They spread their ravages from Friesland to Aquitaine, and pushed inland by way of the Rhine, the Seine, the Loire, and the Garonne. In England they were called the Danes, in France the Normans. In 845 Regner Lodbrok and his Danes entered Paris, and took for ship's timber the beams of the church of St. Germain-des-Prés. These bold seafarers had long occupied Shetland, Orkney, and the Hebrides, and formed settlements in Ireland, which in 852 obeyed a chief of their own, who ruled in Dublin. There were minor chiefs of the same race ruling in

Waterford and Limerick. In 860 one of the northern Vikings, on his way to the Faroe Islands, discovered Iceland. In and after 870 Iceland was colonised by northmen of mark, whose power at home was being crushed by Harold Harfagr, then making himself paramount in Norway. These men took with them to Iceland the old language, customs, and traditions of their country, which have there suffered less change than on the mainland.

In the autumn of 866 the Danes occupied in strength part of our eastern coast, and in the following spring they plundered and burnt churches and monasteries of East Anglia. The Abbess Hilda's was among the monasteries burnt in 867, and it was then that a Danish settlement gave to the place, formerly called, from its sacred treasures, Streoneshalh, the name it has since borne—Whitby; "by" being the commonest of those endings which denote a Danish settlement.

In 876, when our Alfred, aged twenty-seven, had been for five years an unlucky king, with Healfdene strong at the head of his Danes in the North of England, and Guthrum in the South, Rolf (called also Rollo and Rou) entered the Seine. He and his brother Gorm had, like others, contended with their own king at home. Gorm had been killed, and Rolf had gone into independent exile as a bold adventurer by sea. He had sought prizes in England and Belgium before he went up the Seine, and was then invited to take peaceful occupation of Rouen. In 879 King Alfred obtained peace by his treaty with Guthrum. Thirty-two years afterwards, in 911, the land of the Normans, afterwards called Normandy, was yielded to Rollo and his followers.

Thus we see that King Alfred in his struggle with the Danes was battling only with one part of a great movement akin to that which had first brought the English into Britain; and that the foundation of Normandy about ten years after King Alfred's death, is but another of its incidents, although an incident of first importance in the history of Europe.

18. **King Alfred** having secured some peace with the new settlers on his coast, proceeded to restore strength to his people with the help of the best advisers he could gather to his court. Churches and monasteries had suffered for their wealth, but their plunder and destruction meant also destruction of their schools. "There are only a few," said Alfred, "on this side of the Humber who can understand the Divine service, or even translate a Latin letter into English; and I believe not many on

tne other side of the Humber either. They are so few, indeed, that I cannot remember one south of the Thames when I began to reign." Alfred re-established monasteries, and took pains to make them efficient centres of education for his people. Partly because the knowledge of Latin had to be recovered, partly because good knowledge is most widely diffused through a land when it is written in the language of the people, Alfred made, or caused to be made for him, translations of the books which had been most valued when they were among the Latin text-books of the days of Bede and Alcuin. One of these was *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, or History of England, translated into English without any of the added information with which it could have been enriched. Perhaps a reverence for Bede's work caused Alfred to present it to his countrymen without change or addition.

The same feeling would not stand in the way of a free handling of the Universal History of *Orosius*. This had been the accepted manual in monastery schools for general history from the Creation to A.D. 416. Its author was a Spanish controversial Christian of the fifth century, and it was written at the suggestion of St. Augustine of Hippo. Augustine was himself writing "De Civitate Dei" to sustain the faith of Christians who had seen Alaric sack Rome, by showing from Church history that the preaching of the Gospel could not add to the world's misery. He suggested to Orosius, who just then came to consult him on some question of heresy, that he might show from profane history the same thing for the reassurance of the faithful. Orosius produced, therefore, in Latin, a dull book, written, as Pope Gelasius I. said, "with wonderful brevity against heathen perversions," and it became in the monastery schools the chief manual of universal history. King Alfred, in giving a free translation of it to his people, cleared the book of Church controversy, omitted, altered, and added, with the sole purpose of producing a good summary of general history and geography. He made these three special additions:—1. Much from the knowledge of his own time on the geography of Europe, which he called Germania, north of the Rhine and Danube. 2. A geographical sketch of two voyages: one from Halgoland on the coast of Norway, round the North Cape into the White Sea; the other from Halgoland to the Bay of Christiania, and thence to Slesvig: these being taken from the lips of Ohthere, a rich Norwegian, who made voyages for love of adventure and discovery, for the

sake also of taking walrus and for whale-fishing. 3. A geographical sketch of a voyage in the Baltic from Slesvig to Truso in Prussia, taken from the lips of Wulfstan, who was perhaps a Jutlander, and who enriched his dry detail with a lively account of the manners and customs of the Esthonians.

King Alfred's other work in aid of a right knowledge of history was, probably, the establishment of that national record of events which was kept afterwards for a long time from year to year, and is now commonly known as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. It begins, after a brief account of Britain, with Cæsar's invasion; is in its earlier details obviously a compilation, and that chiefly from Bede, but begins to give fuller details after the year 853; and so, from a date within Alfred's lifetime, begins to take rank even with Bede as one of the great sources of information on the early history of England. It may be supposed that, for the keeping of this annual record of the nation's life, local events were reported at the headquarters of some one monastery in which was a monk commissioned to act as historiographer; that at the end of each year this monk set down what he thought most worthy to be remembered, and that he then had transcripts of his brief note made in the scriptorium of his monastery, and forwarded to other houses for addition to the copies kept by them of the great year-book of the nation. Geoffrey Gaimar, writing in the twelfth century, says that King Alfred had at Winchester a copy of a chronicle fastened by a chain, so that all who wished might read. In some such way as this the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was kept up until the time of the Norman Conquest, and for three generations after that. Its last record is of the accession of Henry II. in the year 1154.

King Alfred not only tried to make his countrymen acquainted with the world in which they lived, but he sought also to aid each in acquiring a firm rule over the world within himself. For this reason he turned into English the famous Latin work of *Boëthius*, the last man of genius produced by ancient Rome. Boëthius, a Roman senator, lost the favour of Theodoric by a love for his country, which his enemies called treason, was imprisoned, and from prison led to execution, about the year 525. In prison he wrote his noble work called *The Consolation of Philosophy*, in five books of prose, mixed with verse. The first of its five books recognised as the great source of consolation that a wise God rules the world; the second argued that man in his worst extremity possesses much, and ought to fix his mind

on the imperishable; the third maintained that God is the chief good, and works no evil; the fourth, that, as seen from above, only the good are happy; and the fifth sought to reconcile God's knowledge of what is necessary with the freewill of mankind. The charm of a philosophic mind expressed through a pure strain of natural piety had made this dialogue between Philosophy and the Prisoner so popular that the Church justified its use of the volume in schools by claiming Boëthius as a Christian martyr. He was canonised as a saint in the eighth century, though in his book he turns from the depth of worldly calamity to explore all sources of true consolation, and does not name Christ. Alfred believed, as he was told, that Boëthius suffered as a Christian under Theodoric, and told it again when he gave the "Consolations of Philosophy" in English to his people.

King Alfred also, with the same desire to give men inward strength, translated into English a famous book by Pope Gregory the Great. This book, known as the "Regula Pastoralis," showing what the mind of a true spiritual pastor ought to be, was made English as *Gregory's Book on the Care of the Soul.* It is in the preface to this that King Alfred tells of the decay of learning in his kingdom, and of his desire for its true restoration.

19. We cannot know with certainty whether much of the work ascribed to King Alfred was done by his own hand, or whether he may rather be said to have encouraged, by strong fellowship in industry, the labours of those good men whom he gathered to his court, and who worked under his direction, giving and receiving counsel, for the furtherance of his most royal enterprise. What we do know with certainty assures us that, although King Alfred lived a thousand years ago, a thousand years hence, if there be England then, his memory will yet be precious to his country.

The oldest account of the *Life of Alfred* is that ascribed to his fellow-worker **Asser**, a Welsh monk of St. David's, who died Bishop of Sherborne. This Life comes down to us only in late manuscripts, with interpolations from a "Life of St. Neot," which probably was not written until sixty-four years after Asser's death. A manuscript as old as the tenth century existed until 1731, when it was burnt in the fire at the Cotton Library; but from printed references to its contents we learn that it did not contain those passages from the St. Neot's chronicle and idle legends which have caused some to deny that Asser could have been the writer of this Life. There are other reasons for believing

that what we now receive as a Life of Alfred by Asser, his friend and fellow-worker, is really Asser's Life of him with later interpolations.

20. There is little to be said of our First English Literature after the time of King Alfred. **Ethelwold** became in 947 a monk at Glastonbury, when **Dunstan**, aged two-and-twenty, was made abbot there. Dunstan and Ethelwold sought the establishment of utmost strictness in monastic rule. Ethelwold restored the decayed abbey at Abingdon, became in 953 Bishop of Winchester, bought and rebuilt the ruins of Medeshamstead, now called Peterborough, and rebuilt Winchester Cathedral. Some fragments of First English in the chapter library at Gloucester have been partly published in fac-simile as *Gloucester Fragments*, and include a detail of miracles that preceded and directed the dedication, by Archbishop Dunstan, of Ethelwold's restored cathedral of Winchester to St. Swithin, who had been Bishop of Winchester a hundred years before. In aid of his own work as a Church reformer, Ethelwold translated into English Benedict's *Rule of a Monastic Life*. Dunstan wrote an adaptation of the same rule for the use of English monks, and also a large *Commentary on the Benedictine Rule*, doubtless from notes of the lectures given by him to his pupils in the monastery schools.

21. No vigour of independent genius was developed by this movement towards greater strictness of monastic rule. The best intellectual effort among us in the century following the death of Alfred took the same direction. Earnest and religious men felt in their youth an enthusiasm stirred by the re-founding of those monasteries in which they were trained; and, looking only to the farthest limit of their little world, they devoutly sought to raise their country by putting purer and intenser life into the men who were its teachers. But the nation was advancing, through much stir of blood, into a new age of its life, and could be little helped by a fixed reproduction of past forms.

Alfred's grandson Athelstane, attacked by Danes from Ireland and Danes of the North of England, with allies from among the Gael and Cymry, overcame his enemies in the year 937 at the great battle of Brunanburh, a place unidentified, which may be Brunton, a few miles from Newcastle, by the Roman wall. This victory over Anlaf the Dane from Ireland, Constantine of Scotland, and Owen of Cumberland, caused the writer of the national record for the year 937 to break into song.

The account given in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of *The Battle of Brunanburh* is a poem; and a precedent having thus been established, scraps of verse of less mark occur now and then in the chronicle at the later dates 941, 942, 958, 973, 975, and 1002. Trouble with Danes continued, till there was more quiet in the reign of Edgar, who began to rule at the age of sixteen, and from the outset of his reign took Dunstan for chief counsellor. Edgar, therefore, supported the great efforts made for a revival of monasticism. He died in the year 975, after sixteen years of rule, and was called Lord of the whole Isle of Albion. Blending of all constituents of the great nation of the future was still going on. An England had been formed, and now came the foreshadowing of a Great Britain. The days of the first generations of English are therefore drawing to a close.

Meanwhile Denmark, Sweden, and Norway had grown also into compact powers, and in the reign of Ethelred the Unready England was not merely disturbed by the Danes settled on her shores, but had to face their power as invaders. In the year 994 they attacked Ipswich, ravaged the surrounding country, and were met unsuccessfully at Maldon in Essex by the patriotic bands which had been trained and led by Byrhtnoth, who fell in the battle. There remains to us, nearly complete, a First English poem on *The Battle of Maldon*, or, as it is also called, *The Death of Byrhtnoth*, warm with the generous love of independence, and yet simply honest in its record of defeat, through which we feel, as it were, the pulse of the nation beating healthily.

22. These were the days of outward tumult in which Ælfric wrote his Homilies. Ælfric was one of the first pupils of Ethelwold at Abingdon. When Ethelwold became Bishop of Winchester, Ælfric acted as chief of the teachers in his diocese, and wrote for the use of schools a lively little book of Latin *Colloquy*. It was afterwards enlarged and republished by Ælfric Bata, who had himself been taught Latin by it at Winchester. Latin being in his time, and long before and after, spoken and written as the common language of the learned, colloquy was a common way of teaching. Ælfric represents in his dialogue pupils, who beg to be taught, answering questions as to their respective trades; and thus he brings out in a few pages a very large number of words that would be used by them in talk over the daily business of life. Ælfric wrote also for his pupils a *Glossary* in Latin and English. He was removed from Winchester to the Abbey of Cerne in Dorsetshire by the wish of its founder, and there it

was that, at the request of the founder's son, Ælfric produced his *Homilies*, compiled and translated from the Fathers, in two sets each of forty sermons. The first set was completed in the year 990, and is a harmony of the opinions of the Fathers on all points of faith, as the English Church of his time accepted them. It was made public by the authority of Sigeric, then Archbishop of Canterbury. The other set tells of the saints whom the Church then revered. Ælfric also began a translation, in abridgment, of the Bible into English, and completed in this way the whole Pentateuch, as well as the Book of Job. About the year 1005 Ælfric became an abbot; and 1006 was the year of the death of Ælfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom the Ælfric of literature has, by mistake, usually been identified.

23. Some months after the death of Ethelred, Canute King of Denmark was also King of England. A monk of Ely, who wrote, after 1166, a history of his church, records a scrap of song said to be of Canute's composing. When he was going by boat to Ely to keep a Church festival, he ordered his men to row slowly and near shore, that he might hear the psalms of the monks; then he called to his companions to sing with him, and invented on the spot a little song:

"Merie sungen the Muneches binnen Ely
Tha Cnut ching reu therby;
Roweth cnites ner the land
And here ye thes Muneches sang.
(Pleasantly sang the monks in Ely
When Canute the King rowed by;
Row, boys, near the land,
And hear ye the song of the monks)."

With other following words, said to have been still remembered and sung a hundred years after the Conquest.

Earl Godwin was a strong man in the days of Canute's two weak Danish successors; and after the death of Hardicanute, in 1042, he led the English party, and secured for his countrymen an English king in Edward the Confessor, who in 1045 married the great Earl's daughter Edith. The story of First English Literature ends with the work of an unknown writer, who knew intimately Harold and Tostig, who was a loving dependant on their sister Edith, by whom he had first been saved from want, and who wrote in Latin prose, intermixed with verse, a *Life of Edward the Confessor*, which he dedicated to his patroness when she was Edward's widow. This writer was an honest man and clever, with personal affection for Earl Godwin and his

household added to his patriotic sympathies. He put his heart into a narrative of those events before the Norman Conquest in which Godwin and his sons Harold and Tostig were chief actors.

CHAPTER III.

TRANSITION ENGLISH.

1. DURING the four centuries from Cædmon to the Conquest, the language of books written in English may be said to have been fixed. Among the First English themselves, mixtures of race and tribe from the Continent varied in different parts of the country, and in each place the constituents and the proportions of the mixture were shown by the form of speech. Our provincial dialects were thus established. Then, as now, the spoken language of the country had its local differences, only more strongly marked than they now are; and the untaught multitude was careless about grammar, while the cultivated class, which produced books, maintained in them a standard of the language, being careful to preserve accuracy in use of inflexion, discrimination of gender, and upon all other such points. Even the vocabulary of First English literature remained for those four centuries very uniform; so that, with a few traces of provincialism which may point towards the birthplace of a writer, and perhaps some looseness of grammar towards the close of the period, during the four centuries of First English Literature all English thought written in English may be said to have come down to us in one language as fixed as that which we now speak.

But during the three centuries from the Conquest to the time of Chaucer there was continuous change. The language then was in transition to the later form, in which again it became fixed. In race the Normans were another combination of the English elements. Even the part of France on which they had established themselves was Teutonized before they came to it, for it was that which had in Cæsar's time a population traceable to a Teutonic immigration, and to which there had come in the fifth century the Franks—Teutons again. As far as concerned race only, there was quite as much of original kindred in the

blood of those whom we call Normans and Saxons as between fellow-Englishmen now living in Yorkshire and in Hampshire. But the energetic Normans had been drawing, for the subsequent advantage of the world, their own separate lessons from the school of life. They had dropped in France their own language, their sons learnt speech of the mothers found in the new country, and when they first came over here as rulers, gave us kings who spoke only French; ecclesiastics whom their kings could trust, French-speaking abbots at the head of the monasteries, which were the only conservators of knowledge and centres of education; and French-speaking knights in their castles, as centres of influence among the native rural population.

French was the language of the ruling class in Church and State. Latin was used in books habitually, as the common language of the educated throughout Europe; the only language in which a scholar might hope to address not merely the few among a single people, but the whole Republic of Letters. English remained the language of the people, and its predominance was sure.

But there was no longer in the monasteries a cultivated class maintaining a standard of the language. The common people were not strict in care of genders and inflexions. Those newcomers who sought to make themselves understood in English helped also to bring old niceties of inflexion to decay. At the same time old words were modified, and some were dropped, when their places were completely taken by convenient new words that formed part of the large vocabulary wherewith our language was now being enriched. In large towns change was continuous and somewhat rapid; in country districts it was slow. Thus, while the provincial distinctions all remained, local conditions, here advancing there retarding the new movement, caused increase of difference between the forms of speech current in England at one time.

The books written in English during this transition period of the language are usually said to be in Early English. The Early English Text Society, by including Anglo-Saxon, or First English, among its publications, has wisely recognised the fact that English before the Conquest has as much right to be called Early as the English after it. We will take the name, then, as a good general term for the English of all books written before our language had in most respects attained its present form. If we give this sense to the current term of EARLY ENGLISH, there

will be a natural division of the Early English period into its two parts; and as we have spoken of *First English* (or Anglo-Saxon) Literature, we come now to speak of the literature of *Transition English*. Various suggestions have been made for the subdivision of this period. Sir Frederick Madden has called our language Semi-Saxon from 1100 to 1230, Early English only from 1230 to 1330, and Middle English from 1330 to 1500. It is better to shun vagueness. Having a piece of Transition English to place in its proper subdivision, we will therefore simply say that it is Transition English of the former or the latter half of such a century, or of a given date, if date can be more nearly given; and that it is Northern, Midland, or Southern, or of a given county or town, if we can tell more nearly where its author wrote.

2. In the years next following the Conquest the chief authors were ecclesiastics, and their language Latin. The books were usually Chronicles and Lives of Saints; but there was representation also of the love of travel, and already a faint indication of the new spirit of free inquiry that was to break the bonds of ancient science.

To the reign of William the Conqueror (1066—1087) belongs the History by **Marianus Scotus**, who was born in 1028, went to Germany in 1052, became a monk at Cologne, and died at Mayence in 1086. He compiled a *History* from the Creation to the year 1083. In the same reign a translation of *Lives of Native Saints* from First English into Latin was made by **Osbern** of Canterbury, who tells that he saw Canterbury Cathedral burnt in the year 1070; and a work was produced on the *Computus*, or Calculation of Easter, by **Gerland**, our earliest mathematician, who observed an eclipse of the sun in the year 1086.

During the reign of William II. (1087—1100), **Turgot**, who had assisted in the rebuilding of the ruined monastery of Jarrow, became prior of the greater monastery of Durham, to which Bede's twin monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth then became cells. Turgot's *History of the Monastery of Durham*, in four books, begins with its foundation, and passes into a vivid sketch of what he had himself seen of its history within the stir of his own time. It ends with the year 1096, and has been wrongly ascribed to Simeon of Durham.

3. In the reign of Henry I. (1100-1135), **Sæwulf**, a merchant, the first English traveller who followed in the track of

the Crusaders, went to the East, escaped by accident from a great storm at Joppa, which destroyed a thousand persons, and lived to produce a lively record of all that he saw in Palestine during the years 1102 and 1103. When he came home, Sæwulf withdrew from the world, and became a monk of Malmesbury, where the best of the chroniclers after Bede was then librarian.

Our Monastic Chronicles were at their best in Henry I.'s reign. Then were produced the Chronicles of Ordericus Vitalis and of William of Malmesbury. To record the deeds of the history makers, sing the glories of their warrior chiefs, had been a foremost occupation of the Celtic and First English bards and gleemen. The history-making Normans gave from the first much occupation for the pen of the good monk in his Scriptorium. In that room he copied the desirable things that were not bought for the monastic library: works of the Fathers, writings in defence of orthodox belief; a good book on the right computation of Easter; a treatise on each of the seven steps of knowledge which led up to Theology, namely, Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic, forming the Trivium of Ethics, with Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy, the Quadrivium of Physics. There would be need also of a fresher history than Orosius could furnish. The framer of such a history might begin with Adam, and cause any short sketch of the History of the World from the Creation to be copied, or a larger history to be reduced in scale. As he proceeded towards his own time, he would give out now this now that accepted history of a particular period, to be copied literally or condensed. But when he came down to a time within his own memory, or that of men about him, he began to tell his story for himself, and spoke from living knowledge; from this point, therefore, his chronicle became for after-times an independent record of great value. In days when the strong sought conquest, and lands often changed masters, the monasteries, with wide-spread possessions, had reason to keep themselves well informed in the history-making of the great lords of the soil. The Chronicle, which faithfully preserved a record of events in the surrounding world during the years last past, would be one of the best read and most useful books in the monastic library. Monasteries were many, and the number also of the chroniclers was great. In England they were usually men whose hearts were with the people to which they belonged. Not brilliant, like those chroniclers of France who gave their souls up to outside enjoyment of court glitter and the pomp of war; but

sober and accurate recorders of such matter as concerned realities of life, they saw in England the home of a people, not the playground of a king.

Florence of Worcester was a brother of the monastery in that town, where he died on the 7th of July, 1118. He wrote a *Chronicle*, which at first was a copy from that of Marianus Scotus, with inserted additions to enlarge the record of English events. His additions he took chiefly from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Bede, Lives of Saints, and Asser's "Life of Alfred." From 1082, where Marianus Scotus ended, Florence continued the work on the same plan, noting events abroad, although chiefly concerned with English history. He brought his record down to 1117, the year before his death; and it was continued to 1141 by other brethren of his monastery.

Eadmer, one of the Benedictines of Canterbury, who says that from childhood he was in the habit of noting and remembering events, wrote, in six books, a History of his own Time—*Historia Novorum*—from the Conquest to the year 1122. Eadmer wrote also a life of his friend Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, and other ecclesiastical biographies. He was a bright enthusiastic churchman, who refused a bishopric in Scotland because he might not subject it to the Primacy of Canterbury. Archbishop Anselm is the central figure of his History.

But the chief chroniclers who wrote in the time of Henry I., and also during the first seven years of the reign of Stephen, were Ordericus Vitalis and William of Malmesbury. Orderic was by about twenty years the elder man, but as authors they were exactly contemporary, and they both ceased to write—probably, therefore, they both died—in the same year, 1142.

4. **Ordericus Vitalis**, born during the reign of William the Conqueror, near Shrewsbury, at Atcham on the Severn, was the son of Odelire, a married priest from Orleans, who had come over to England with Roger de Montgomery, made Earl of Shrewsbury. Orderic was the name given to the child by the English curate who baptised him. When Orderic was ten years old he had lost his mother, and his father retired, as a monk of the strict Benedictine rule, into a monastery which he had caused the earl to found. Half his estates Odelire gave to the abbey, and the other half as a fief to be held under the abbey by his second son, Everard, who remained outside in the world. Orderic was taken into the monastery with a father who soon found it to be too much indulgence of the flesh to have a

beloved child for his companion. Odelire sent him, therefore, a boy of eleven, to the Benedictine abbey of Ouche, buried among forests in Normandy, and known afterwards by its founder's name, as the Abbey of St. Evroult. There the child, in his twelfth year, received the tonsure on the day of the Feast of St. Maurice, and changed his lay name of Orderic for that of Vitalis, who was one of the two lieutenants of St. Maurice, named with him in the Church celebration of their martyrdom with the whole Roman legion under their command. Ordericus Vitalis spent all the rest of his life at St. Evroult, where there was a great library, as simply as the venerable Bede had spent his life at Jarrow. His work was an *Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*, in thirteen books. It begins with brief compilation, and becomes full from the year 1084, early in the seventh book. The first two books, written while Orderic was at work upon a later portion of his narrative, gave a compilation of Church History from the birth of Christ to the year 855; with the addition of a list of Popes from that date to the year 1142. The next four books, setting out with the foundation of monasteries in Normandy, are a history of the Abbey of St. Evroult, and of ecclesiastical affairs immediately concerning it. This was the part of the work first written. Then come the seven books (vii.—xiii.) which are now most to be valued, giving Orderic's conscientious and trustworthy, though confused record of the political events of his own time in Normandy and England. He is chronicler, not historian; shows no artistic faculty in the arrangement of his work. But it abounds in trustworthy suggestive facts, genuine copies of letters, epitaphs, and proceedings in council; shows good sense, as well as piety, in its judgments, and some skilful suggestion of character in the speeches which the author now and then attributes to his heroes. The time of Orderic's death is inferred from the date of the conclusion of his history, 1142, when he was sixty-seven years old.

5. The artistic faculty wanting in Orderic was not wanting in **William of Malmesbury**, who almost rose from the chronicler into the historian. He was born probably about the year 1095 and of his parents one was English and one Norman. He went as a boy into the monastery at Malmesbury, was known there as an enthusiast for books, sought, bought, and read them, and gave all the intervals between religious exercises to his active literary work. He was made librarian at Malmesbury, and would not be made abbot. Robert, Earl of Gloucester, that

natural son of Henry I. who fought afterwards for his sister against King Stephen, was a man of refined taste, and, among our nobles, then the great patron of letters. To him William of Malmesbury dedicated his chief work, the *History of the Kings of England* ("De Gestis Regum"), as well as other writings. The History of English Kings is in five books, beginning with the arrival of the First English in 449, reaching to the Norman Conquest by the close of Book 2, giving the third book to William the Conqueror, the fourth to William Rufus, and the fifth to Henry I., as far as the twentieth year of his reign. Under a separate title, *Historia Novella*—Modern History—William, at the request of Robert of Gloucester, continued his record of current events, in three short books, to the year 1142, where he broke off in the story of his patron's contest with King Stephen at Matilda's escape over the ice from Oxford to Wallingford. "This," he said, "I purpose describing more fully if, by God's permission, I shall ever learn the truth of it from those who were present." As he wrote no more, the time of William of Malmesbury's death is inferred from the date of the conclusion of his history, 1142, when his age was about forty-seven. So able a scholar had, of course, many commissions from the other monasteries to produce Lives of their Saints. He wrote also in four books a *History of the Prelates of England*—"De Gestis Pontificum."

6. We have interesting evidence of the impulse given by the Arabs to the advance of Science, in the literature of this country during the reign of Henry I. The old school may be said to be represented by continued work on the calculation of Easter, and in 1124 **Roger Infans,** who says that he was then very young, produced a *Computus*, following and connecting that of Gerland. The new school is now represented in its first faint dawn by **Athelard of Bath,** born some time in the reign of William the Conqueror. He studied at Tours and Laon, taught at Laon, and went eastward; made his way to Greece and Asia Minor, perhaps even to Bagdad; and coming home to England in the reign of Henry I., on his way home taught the Arabian sciences, which he then discussed in a book of *Questions in Nature*—"Quæstiones Naturales". In this book Athelard represented himself, on his return to England, hearing from his friends their complaint of "violent princes, vinolent chiefs, mercenery judges," and more ills of life. These ills, he said, he should cure by forgetting them, and withdrawing his mind to the

study of Nature. His nephew, interested also in the causes of things, asked Athelard for an account of his Arabian studies, and the book was his answer. He had left his nephew, seven years ago, a youth in his class at Laon. It had been agreed then that the uncle should seek knowledge of the Arabs, and the nephew be taught by the Franks. The nephew doubted the advantage of his uncle's course of study. What could he show for it? To give proof of its value, Athelard proceeded to results: "And because," he said, "it is the inborn vice of this generation to think nothing discovered by the moderns worth receiving; whence it comes that if you wish to publish anything of your own you say, putting it off on another person, It was Somebody who said it, not I—so, that I may not go quite unheard, Mr. Somebody is father to all I know, not I." He then proposed and discussed sixty-seven Questions in Nature, beginning with the grass, and rising to the stars, the nephew solving problems in accordance with the knowledge of the West, the uncle according to knowledge of the East, where the Arabians were then bringing a free spirit of inquiry to the mysteries of science. Athelard of Bath wrote also on the Abacus and the Astrolabe, translated an Arabic work upon Astronomy, and was the first bringer of *Euclid* into England by a translation, which remained the text-book of succeeding mathematicians, and was among the works first issued from the printing-press.

7. Athelard of Bath expressed his love of science in a little allegory, *De Eodem et Diverso*—"On the Same and the Different"—published before 1116. The taste for allegory was now gathering strength in Europe. It had arisen in the early Church, especially among the Greek Fathers, with ingenious interpretation of the Scriptures. Bede, following this example, showed how in Solomon's Temple the windows represented holy teachers through whom enters the light of heaven, and the cedar was the incorruptible beauty of the virtues. When the monasteries passed from their active work as missionary stations into intellectual strife concerning orthodoxy of opinions, volleys of subtle interpretation and strained parallel were exchanged continually by the combatants. As the monasteries became rich, wealth brought them leisure and temptation of the flesh, but still they were centres of intelligence; and as, in Southern Europe, along the coasts of the Mediterranean, contact with tuneful rhyming Arabs was awakening a soft strain of love music, the educated men of leisure in the monasteries must also exercise their skill

Love, it was said, after the Arabs, is the only noble theme of song. We also, said the church-bound, obey poet's law and sing of love; but when we name a lady we mean Holy Church, or we mean the Virgin, or we mean some virtue. It is earthly love to the ear, but there is always an underlying spiritual sense. Thus we shall find, in a few generations more, the taste for allegory colouring almost the whole texture of European literature, and then remaining for a long time dominant. Athelard's little allegory is the first example in our literature of what afterwards became one of the commonest of allegoric forms. He represents Philosophy and Philocosmia, or love of worldly enjoyment, as having appeared to him, when he was a student on the banks of the Loire, in the form of two women, who disputed for his affections until he threw himself into the arms of Philosophy, drove away her rival with disgrace, and sought the object of his choice with an ardour that carried him in search of knowledge to the distant Arabs.

8. We now pass from the literature of the reign of Henry I. to that of Stephen (1135—1154), remembering that the last seven years of the work of Ordericus Vitalis and William of Malmesbury, and some years of the work of Athelard of Bath, fall within Stephen's reign. Five years after Orderic and William of Malmesbury had ceased to write, **Geoffrey of Monmouth** completed his Latin *History of British Kings*. The patron of William of Malmesbury was the patron also of Geoffrey of Monmouth; the "History of the Kings of England" and the "History of British Kings" are both dedicated to Robert Earl of Gloucester. In one of these works William of Malmesbury brought chronicle writing to perfection; in the other Geoffrey of Monmouth produced out of the form of the chronicle the spirit that was to animate new forms of literature, and opened a spring of poetry that we find running through the fields of English Literature in all after time.

Geoffrey was a Welsh priest, in whom there was blood of the Cymry quickening his genius. He had made a translation of the *Prophecies of Merlin*, when, as he tells us, Walter Calenius, Archdeacon of Oxford, found in Brittany an ancient History of Britain, written in the Cymric tongue. He knew no man better able to translate it than Geoffrey of Monmouth, who had credit as an elegant writer of Latin verse and prose. Geoffrey undertook the task, and formed accordingly his History of British Kings in four books, dedicated to Robert Earl of Gloucester.

Afterwards he made alterations, and formed the work into eight books; to which he added Merlin's Prophecies, translated out of Cymric verse into Latin prose. The History, as finally completed by him in 1147, is in twelve books, and the whole work was a romance of history taking the grave form of authentic chronicle. Geoffrey closed his budget with a playful reference to more exact historians, to whom he left the deeds of the Saxons, but whom he advised "to be silent about the kings of the Britons, since they have not that book in the British language, which Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, brought out of Brittany." There is a sly vein of banter in this reference to the mysterious book upon which Geoffrey fathered his ingenious invention of a list of British kings, who did wonderful deeds, gave their names to this place and that, reigned each of them exactly so many years and months, and made an unbroken series from Brut, great-grandson of Æneas, through King Arthur to Cadwallo, who died in the year 689. "It was Somebody who said it, not I." We first read in this fiction of Sabrina, "virgin daughter of Locrine;" of Gorboduc, whose story was the theme of the earliest English tragedy; of Lear and his daughter; and, above all, of KING ARTHUR as the recognised hero of a national romance. Geoffrey obtained the by-name of Arturus, and was said to have "made the little finger of his Arthur stouter than the back of Alexander the Great." So wrote a painstaking unimaginative chronicler of the next generation, William of Newbury, who considering "how saucily and how shamelessly he lies almost throughout,"[2] and not caring to specify "how much of the acts of the Britons before Julius Cæsar that man invented, or wrote from the inventions of others as if authentic," said of Geoffrey, "as in all things we trust Bede, whose wisdom and sincerity are beyond doubt; so that fabler with his fables shall be straightway spat out by us all." Far from it. The regular chronicler was scandalised at the pretensions of a perfectly new form of literature, a work of fancy dressed in the form of one of his own faithful records of events. But the work stirred men's imaginations. It was short as well as lively, the twelve books being no longer than two of the thirteen books of Orderic's Ecclesiastical History. Short as it was, **Alfred of Beverley,** charmed with it, in a copy which he had with difficulty borrowed, at once made an abridgment of it, because he had not time to copy all, or money to pay for a full transcript. In the household of Ralph Fitz-Gilbert, a strong baron of the North, lived **Geoffrey Gaimar.** Constance, the

baron's wife, could read no Latin, but desired to read the much talked of chronicle. Gaimar undertook, therefore, to translate it for her into French verse, and made his translation perhaps from the book written by Geoffrey himself for his patron, since the copy used was obtained through a friendly Yorkshire baron from the Earl of Gloucester himself. Gaimar continued his chronicle, in French or Anglo-Norman verse,. by adding the series of Saxon kings; and this latter part of his work was all that survived when Wace's more popular version of the famous history into French verse for the use of the court, caused that of Gaimar to be neglected by the copyists.

Wace (who has been miscalled Robert Wace through a misunderstanding of five lines in his "Life of St. Nicholas") was born at Jersey, educated at Caen, and was a reading clerk and a romance writer at Caen in the latter part of Stephen's reign. He shared the enthusiasm with which men of bright imagination received Geoffrey of Monmouth's Chronicle, and reproduced it as a French metrical romance, the *Brut*, in more than 15,000 lines. Sometimes he translated closely, sometimes paraphrased, sometimes added fresh legends from Brittany, or fresh inventions of his own. His work was completed in 1155, immediately after the accession of Henry II., who gave him a prebend at Bayeux. Wace afterwards amplified a Latin chronicle of the deeds of William the Conqueror, by William of Poitiers, that king's chaplain, into a *Roman de Rou*. But there was no continuance of royal favour, and he died unprosperous in England, in 1184. He was eclipsed at court by Benoit de St. Maure, the author of the "Geste de Troie."

The Welsh priest whose bright invention had thus broken fresh ground in literature was made Bishop of St. Asaph six years after the appearance of his Chronicle. He died in 1154, about a year after he had obtained his bishopric.

9. It was in the time also of Stephen that there was an Englishman in France, **Hilarius**, who had gone to be taught by Abelard at Paraclete, and from whom we have our earliest known *Miracle Plays*. The acting of such plays seems to have been introduced into this country soon after the Conquest. Matthew Paris, a chronicler who lived in the thirteenth century, refers to a miracle-play of St. Katherine, written some years before 1119, by Geoffrey of Gorham, who became afterwards prior, and was in 1119 made Abbot of St. Alban's. Geoffrey had been invited from Normandy by Richard, the preceding abbot, to establish a

school at St. Alban's. He arrived too late, and settled at Dunstable, where there was a school subordinate to that of St. Alban's, while waiting for the possible reversion of the office which had then been given to another. Meanwhile he composed at Dunstable his miracle-play, and, when it was ready, borrowed copes from St. Alban's for the decoration of it. But on the following night his house was burnt, together with the copes and all his books. This is the earliest allusion to the acting of such pieces in this country. They had arisen out of the desire of the clergy to bring leading facts of Bible history and the legends of the saints home to the hearts of the illiterate. A great church was dedicated to some saint. The celebration of the saint's day was an occasion for drawing from afar, if possible, devout worshippers, and offerings to the shrine. Some incidents from the life of the saint, enforcing perhaps his power to help those who chose him for their patron, it was thought good to place, at some part of the Church service of the day, with dramatic ingenuity, before the eyes of the unlettered congregation.

Take, for example, one of the three plays by Hilarius, written in France in the time of Stephen, or not later than the beginning of the reign of Henry II. In a church dedicated to *St. Nicholas*, upon St. Nicholas's Day, the Image of the Saint was removed, and a living actor, dressed to represent the statue, was placed in the shrine. When the pause was made in the service for the acting of the Miracle, one came in at the church door dressed as a rich heathen, deposited his treasure at the shrine, said that he was going on a journey, and called on the Saint to be the guardian of his property. When the heathen had gone out, thieves entered and silently carried off the treasure. Then came the heathen back and furiously raged. He took a whip and began to thrash the Image of the Saint. But upon this the Image moved, descended from its niche, went out and reasoned with the robbers, threatening also to denounce them to the people. Terrified by this miracle, the thieves returned tremblingly, and so, in silence, they brought everything back. The statue was again in its niche, motionless. The heathen sang his joy to a popular tune of the time, and turned to adore the Image. Then St. Nicholas himself appeared, bidding the heathen worship God alone and praise the name of Christ. The heathen was converted. The piece ended with adoration of the Almighty, and the Church service was then continued.

It was probably with such plays that the practice of acting in churches was begun by the clergy in France, where the delight in dramatic entertainment had remained strong since the Roman time. Against the theatres of failing Rome the early Fathers of the Church had battled as against idolatry These things, they said, have their rise from idols, and are baits of a false religion. The Roman stage fell into ruin; but the dramatic instinct is part of man's nature. At the close of the second century Ezekiel, a tragic poet of the Jews, put the story of the Exodus into the form of a Greek drama. In the fourth century Gregory Nazianzen, as Patriarch of Constantinople, attacked the Greek theatre there flourishing by substituting for the heathen plays plays of his own on stories of the Old and New Testament. They were written to the pattern of those of Sophocles and Euripides, Christian hymns taking the place of the old choruses. In humbler fashion, prompted perhaps by the success of their miracle plays, well-meaning priests endeavoured, on those great days of the Church which commemorate the birth or death of our Lord, or any other of the sublimer mysteries of Christian faith, to bring forcibly before the very eyes of the congregation the events told in the Bible lesson of the day. When, in the course of the service, the time came for the reading of the Lesson, it was not read but realised within the church. Such a play was called, not a MIRACLE PLAY but a MYSTERY; because it dealt not with the miracles of saints, but with the great mysteries of Christianity drawn from the life of Christ. In what way they were at first represented is shown clearly by that one of the three plays of Hilarius which happens to be not a miracle-play but a mystery. Its subject is the *Raising of Lazarus*—mystery of the resurrection of the dead. Its incidents having been realised to the utmost, and its dialogues set to popular tunes of the day, the officiating priest who, as Lazarus, has risen from the tomb, turns in that character to admonish the assembled people. He turns then to the representation of Jesus, whom he adores as master, king, and lord, who wipes out the sins of the people, whose ordinance is sure, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end; and the closing direction of the author is, that "This being finished, if it was played at matins, Lazarus shall begin 'Te Deum Laudamus;' but if at vespers, 'Magnificat anima mea Dominum;'" and so the Church service proceeds. The last of the three plays by Hilarius was designed for a pompous Christmas

representation of the story of *Daniel*, and at its close the Church service was to be continued by the priest who played Darius. Such were the miracle and mystery plays written in France by Hilarius, an Englishman, in or a few years after the reign of King Stephen.

10. One other book written in Stephen's reign points also to the future course of thought. This was a little treatise by **Henry of Huntingdon,** entitled "De Contemptu Mundi" (On Contempt of the World). Its author was the son of a married clerk, and was trained in the household of a Bishop of Lincoln, who remained his patron. He wrote verse and prose on divers subjects, compiled a *Chronicle* in seven books, which ended with the death of Henry I., and then added an eighth book on the reign of Stephen. It was at the end of Stephen's reign, when he was Prior of Huntingdon, that this busy writer closed his career with a treatise *On Contempt of the World*, addressed to the same friend Walter to whom his youthful poems had been dedicated: "A youth to a youth I dedicated juvenilities; an old man to an old man I destine now the thoughts of age." He recalled in this little book the friends they had both lost. Men rich in luxury were gone, so were the wise, so was the strong man who was cruel in his strength. Of the great kings also who are as gods the lives are vanity. Men of great name were recalled and passed before the imagination in a spirit kindred to that of books of later time which yielded Tragedies to dramatists when they arose.

11. We pass now from the reign of Stephen to the reign of Henry II. (1154—1189), a time of great interest in the early story of our literature. Throughout Europe there was a new activity of thought among the foremost nations, and that which was partly represented by the contest between Henry and Becket was in the general life of the time. Contest upon the limit of authority, which in its successive forms is the most vital part of our own history, and has been essential everywhere to the advance of modern Europe, became active in many places in the days of Henry II. As we shall find the course of English Literature illustrating throughout a steady maintenance of the principle out of which this contest arises, let us at once settle the point of view from which it will be here regarded.

No two men think alike upon all points, and some part of the difference is as distinctly natural as that which distinguishes one man from another by his outward form and face. It is

part of the Divine plan of the world that we should not all have the same opinions. If we observe in one man the group of ideas forming his principles of thought, we find that they have well-marked characters, which are common to him and to many others. One might even imagine an arrangement of men by their way of thought, as of plants by their way of growth, into primary classes, sections, alliances, families, genera, and species. And as the two primary classes of the flowering plants are exogens and endogens, so the two primary classes of civilised men are (1) those in whom it is the natural tendency of the mind to treasure knowledge of the past, and shun departure from that which has been affirmed by wise and good men throughout many generations, those, in short, who find rest and hope of unity in the upholding of authority; and (2) those in whom it is the natural tendency of the mind to claim free right of examining and testing past opinions, who seek the utmost liberty of thought and action, holding that the best interests of the future are advanced when every man labours for truth in his own way, and holds sincerely by his individual convictions. Look where we may, to parties in the Church, to parties in the State, or any chance knot of a dozen men collected at a dinner-party, the form of debate invariably shows this natural division of men's minds, serving its purpose for the thorough trial of new truth. No bold assertion is allowed to pass unquestioned. Whoever states a fact must also be prepared to prove it against ready opponents, who produce all possible grounds of doubt and forms of evidence against it. Thus men are trained in the right use of reason; their intellectual limbs gather strength by healthy exercise; and wholesome truths come out of the ordeal, as the pure grain winnowed from the chaff. Instead of wishing that all men were of our minds, we should account it one of the first blessings of life that there are men who don't agree with us. The currents of the air and sea are not more necessary and more surely a part of the wise ordinance of the Creator than those great currents of thought which, with all the storms bred of their conflict, maintain health in man's intellectual universe.

When the millions lie in darkness and are thought for by the few, they need the guidance of an absolute authority. As the light grows on them, each becomes more able to help himself. External aids and restrictions become gradually less and less necessary; exercise of authority falls within narrower limits, and exercise of individual discretion takes a wider range

This constant readjustment of the boundary-line between individual right and the restraint of law must needs advance with civilisation, as keen intellectual debate prepares the way for every change. In England such a process has gone on so actively and freely that our political institutions, which have grown and are growing with our growth, are strong also with all our strength.

In the time of Henry II. the contest between the king and Becket represented what was then the chief point to be settled in the argument as to the limit of authority. It was a question of supremacy between the two great forms of authority to which men were subjected. Was the Church, representing God on earth, to be, through its chief, the pope, a supreme arbiter in the affairs of men—a lord of lords and king of kings? Or was the king alone supreme in every temporal relation with his subjects? Becket devoutly battled for supreme rule of the Church. Henry maintained the independence of his crown. That battle won, the next part of our controversy on the limit of authority would concern the relations between king and people. When Henry's cause was stained with the crime of Becket's murder, the Church had an advantage of which it understood the value. All that was done to make the shrine of the martyred Becket a place of pilgrimage and to exalt the saint was exaltation of the name inseparable from the cause of an unlimited Church supremacy.

After his murder, in 1170, *The Life of Thomas à Becket* was written by **William Fitzstephen**, a Londoner, who had been a trusted clerk in the Archbishop's household, and was witness to his death. Fitzstephen's life of Becket includes an interesting account of London as it was in Henry II.'s time, with incidental evidence of the growing interest in miracle-plays. London, he says, instead of the shows of the ancient theatre, "has entertainments of a more devout kind, either representations of those miracles which were wrought by holy confessors, or those passions and sufferings in which the martyrs so rigidly displayed their fortitude." It may be observed that Fitzstephen's definition of these entertainments limits them to the miracle-play; there is no reference to any acting of a mystery. When, afterwards, both forms were common, no distinction of name was made between them in this country. All were called miracle-plays; doubtless, because that name alone had become familiar during a long period, in which the only plays acted were

miracles. Perhaps a sense of reverence delayed the introduction of the mystery.

12. Outside England the literature of Europe was now taking forms more and more representative of the advance of thought. There was what may be called a Court literature, concerned only with the pleasures of the rich; and there was a National literature, through which men, thinking with or for the people, showed their sense of life and its duties. The famous beast epic of "Reynard the Fox" and Isegrim the Wolf, still vigorous and fresh, first came into literature as a Flemish poem of "Reinaert" in the year 1150, or towards the close of the reign of Stephen. During the reign of Henry II. it was popular abroad as a keen satire from the side of the people on the current misuse of authority. The essence of the work in its first form, and in all early adaptations of it to other countries, was a homely spirit of freedom. The reign of Henry II. was also the time when the Germans gathered fragments of romance into their great national epic of the Nibelungen. It was at the close of the same period that the Spaniards poured out their national spirit in the poem of the Cid. Crusades had brought men into contact with the bright imagination of the East. Romances, brisk with action, were recited or sung to the Norman lords; and southern poets were taught by the Arabs to rhyme tunefully on love. The oldest extant troubadour verse dates from a year after the accession of King Henry II.; and his were the times in which were born the Suabian Minnesänger Hartmann von Aue and Walther von der Vogelweide. Their master, Barbarossa, was then bringing Germans into Italy, and forced the states of the Lombard League into that patriotic contest which, in 1182, left them free republics, with a nominal allegiance to the empire. In Italy the conflict was begun that should stir presently a mighty soul to song.

13. At home, in good harmony with the spirit of Reinaert, or Reineke Fuchs, we have, among the books written in Henry II.'s reign, the "Brunellus" of **Nigel Wireker.** Nigel Wireker was precentor in the Benedictine monastery at Canterbury, friend to William de Longchamp, afterwards Bishop of Ely, to whom he dedicated a treatise *On the Corruptions of the Church.* Wireker's minor writings were attacks upon self-seeking and hypocrisy among those who made religion their profession; for the movement towards reformation in the Church was now begun. Wireker's chief work, *Brunellus*, or

Speculum Stultorum (The Mirror of Fools), is a satirical poem in about 3,800 Latin elegiac lines, which has for its hero an Ass, who goes the round of the monastic orders. His name, Brunellus, a diminutive of Brown, is taken from the scholastic logic of the day. It was first applied to the horse when a particular idea—say this horse Brunellus—had to be discussed instead of the general idea, represented, say, by horse. But when the logicians took to calling the particular idea Bucephalus, the old names of Brunellus and Favellus were transferred to the ass; and a logician would write thus: "Grant there are two men, say Socrates and Plato, of which each has an ass; precisely, Socrates Brunellus, Plato Favellus," and so forth. Taking the name of his hero, then, from the jargon of the schools he meant to satirise, Nigel Wireker represented that the Ass Brunellus found his tail too short, and went to consult Galen on the subject. The author explained that his "Ass is that monk who, not content with his own condition, wants to have his old tail pulled off, and try by all means to get a new and longer tail to grow in its place—that is to say, by attaching to himself priories and abbeys." Brunellus was unlucky with his medicines, and had part of his tail, short as he thought it, bitten off by four great mastiffs. He could not go home to his friends in that state. He felt that he had an immense power of patient labour. He would go and study at the University of Paris. After seven years of hard work there, he could not remember the name of the town in which he had been living. But he was proud of his erudition. He did also remember one syllable of the town's name, and had been taught that part may stand for the whole. The sketch of Brunellus at Paris is a lively satire upon the shortcomings of the schools. Brunellus having gone straight through the sciences, it was only left for him to perfect himself in religion. He tried all the orders in succession, and ended in the resolve to construct for himself out of them a new composite order of his own. Meeting Galen, Brunellus entered into discussion with him on the state of the Church and of society, until he fell into the hand of his old master, and returned to the true duties of his life.

14. Nigel Wireker did not fight unaided in this battle against the corruption which had come into the Church with wealth and idleness. A like battle formed part of the work of the man of greatest genius among those who wrote in the time of Henry II. This was **Walter Map**, sometimes called Mapes, because

the Latinised form of his name was Mapus. Walter Map had, like Geoffrey of Monmouth, Celtic blood in his veins. Born, about the year 1143, on the borders of Wales, he called the Welsh his countrymen, and England "our mother."

Map studied in the University of Paris, which was then in the first days of its fame. Students were gathered there from many lands; English enough were among them to form one of the four schools into which it became divided. We know what it was from Wireker's "Brunellus;" and Map tells that he saw, when he was there, town and gown riots: but an ordinance of Innocent III., dated 1215, five-and-twenty years after the death of Henry II., is the first official document in which we find the body of teachers and students gathered in Paris to have been formally called a University. The first document which speaks formally of a University of Oxford is dated 1201; and the University of Cambridge first appears by that name in a document of the year 1223. At the time, therefore, of which we now speak, the Universities were first ceasing to be places in which individual teachers and students came together for their common advantage, and they were acquiring recognition of their corporate existence by the application to them of a name at first not limited to places of education, but applied also to other organised bodies, as to a corporate town, or to an incorporated trade within a town.

After his studies in Paris, Walter Map came home, and was at Court in attendance on King Henry II., who had received much good service from Map's family. In 1173, when his age was about thirty, Map was presiding at the Gloucester assizes as one of the king's ambulant judges, justices in eyre. In the same year he was with the court at Limoges, host, at the king's cost, to a foreign archbishop. He attended Henry II., probably as chaplain, during his war with his sons; represented the king at the court of Louis VII., where he was received as an intimate guest; was sent to Rome to the Lateran Council of 1179, and was hospitably entertained on the way by Henry Count of Champagne.

At that Council appeared some of the Waldenses, or followers of Peter Waldo, with a Psalter and several books of the Old and New Testament in their own tongue, which they wished the Pope to license. Although Map fought stoutly against fleshly corruption of the clergy, and was an earnest Church reformer, he was not advanced beyond the dread of danger from giving

the Scriptures in their own tongue to the common people. "Water," he said, "is taken from the spring, and not from the broad marshes." But the question was so far new that this Council of 1179 did not interdict Peter Waldo's Bible. Waldo himself may be remembered as another sign of the growing life of Europe in the days of Henry II. After he had become rich, as a merchant of Lyons, he gave his goods to the poor, gathered followers about him as Poor Men of Lyons, who preached in the villages, opposing a simpler faith and purer rule of life to the corruptions of the Church, and labouring to give the Bible itself to the people as the one authority in matters of religion. Waldo died in 1179, the year of Map's attendance at the Council before which some of the Waldenses came to ask for the Pope's license to their translation of Scripture. The use of it was not forbidden until fifty years afterwards.

After his return from Rome, Map was made a canon of St. Paul's, and also precentor of Lincoln. He held also the parsonage of Westbury, in Gloucestershire. but still was in attendance on the king, and especially attached to the young Prince Henry, after he had been crowned by his father. In the reign of Richard I., and the year 1196, when his age was about fifty-three, Map was made Archdeacon of Oxford, but beyond that date nothing is known of him.

Walter Map was a bright man of the world, with a high purpose in his life; poet and wit, a spiritual man of genius. He fought with his own weapons against the prevalent corruption of the clergy. While he was at court, there began to pass from hand to hand copies of Latin verse purporting to be poems of a certain Bishop Golias, a gluttonous dignitary, glorying in self-indulgence, his name probably derived from gula, the gullet. The verses were audacious, lively, and so true to the assumed character that some believed them to come really from a shameless bishop. Here was the corruption of the Church personified and made a by-word among men. The poems gave a new word to the language—"goliard." Walter Map was the creator of this character; but the keen satire of his lively Latin verse bred imitators, and Father Golias soon had many sons. A fashion for Golias poetry sprang up, and then the earnest man of genius had fellow-labourers in plenty. In one of Map's poems, called the *Confession of Golias*, the bishop is supposed to be confessing himself with the candour of despair. He reveals first the levity of his mind; he who should make his seat upon a

rock is as a ship without a mariner, a lost bird borne through pathless air. He next declares his lust. And then he remembers the tavern he has never scorned, nor ever will scorn till he hears the angels sing his requiem. Here Map, with a terrible earnestness of satire, images the heavens opening upon the drunkard priest, who lies in a tavern, where, too weak himself to hold the wine-cup, he has it put to his lips, and so dies in his shame. "What I set before me," he says, "is to die in a tavern; let there be wine put to my mouth when I am dying, that the choirs of the angels when they come, may say, 'The grace of God be on this bibber!'"

"Meum est propositum in taberna mori,
Vinum sit appositum morientis ori,
Ut dicant cum venerint angelorum chori,
Deus sit propitius huic potatori."

Somebody having set these four lines to light music as a drinking song, without a suspicion of their meaning, somebody else, equally wise, has made them a reason for ticketing Walter Map as "the jovial archdeacon." Jovial, however, Walter Map may have been, for he was keen of wit, and knew how to make a light jest do the work of earnest argument.

15. Another of Map's books took one of the names of a work written at the beginning of Henry II.'s reign by John of Salisbury, a man of considerable learning, who was born about the year 1120. He also had studied at Paris. He had attended Abelard's lectures on Mont St. Geneviève, and was fellow-pupil afterwards with Thomas à Becket under an English pupil of Abelard's. John of Salisbury studied on, and as he advanced in knowledge, sought to make a living by the teaching of young noblemen. After twelve years of study and teaching, he was a penniless scholar whom a kindly French abbot took for his chaplain, and in about three years more, in 1151, was able to help to the post of secretary to Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury. When Becket became archbishop, John of Salisbury remained in office, and was his devoted follower. He shared Becket's exile, and narrowly escaped sharing his fate at the assassination. After this, John of Salisbury remained as secretary with the next archbishop, and in 1176 was made Bishop of Chartres, where he died in 1180. John of Salisbury's book was entitled *Polycraticus, or De Nugis Curialium et Vestigiis Philosophorum* (On the Trifles of the Courtiers and Tracks of the Philosophers). It is in eight books, which were finished in

1156. The first treats with much erudition of the vanities of hunting, dice, music, mimes, minstrelsy, magic, soothsaying, and astrology, which his second book argues to be not always contemptible. In the third book he treats of flatterers and parasites, and then comes to the remarkable feature of his work, its argument for tyrannicide, which is scholastic altogether in its tone. The fourth book argues that it is only for the Church to say what tyrants shall be slain, and enters into learned disquisitions on the state and duties of a king. The fifth book treats of the king and great officials in their relation to the commonwealth. In his sixth book, John of Salisbury treats of the duties, privileges, and corruptions of the knights; and in the last two books follows the tracks of the ancient philosophers in discussing virtue and vice, true and false glory, with return at last to the doctrine of tyrannicide under the guidance of the Church. In its pedantic way, the "Polycraticus" is interesting as a clumsily aimed return shot in the controversy between Church and State, levelled at the corruption and levity of kings and courts, and claiming for the Church a power to destroy kings at discretion.

16. The second title of this book by John of Salisbury—*De Nugis Curialium* (On the Trifles of the Courtiers)—was that taken by Walter Map for a book of his own, which was very different in texture. He had been asked, he says, by a friend, Geoffrey, to write something as a philosopher and poet, courtly and pleasant. He replied that poetical invention needs a quiet, concentrated mind, and that this was not to be had in the turmoil of a court. But he did accept a lighter commission, and "would endeavour to set down in a book whatever he had seen or heard that seemed to him worth note, and that had not yet been written, so that the telling should be pleasant, and the instruction should tend to morality." His work, therefore, which is in five divisions, is a volume of trustworthy contemporary anecdote by the man who knew better than any other what was worth observing. There is no pedantry at all, no waste of words. There is not a fact or story that might not have been matter of table talk at Henry's Court. Anecdotes on subjects allied to one another are generally arranged together; but there is a new topic in every chapter, and the work is a miscellany rich in illustration of its time, and free enough in its plan to admit any fact or opinion or current event worth record. It includes bold speaking against crusading zeal, that left home duties unper-

formed ; against the vices of the court of Rome ; even against that vice in the kings of England which caused their people to be oppressed by unjust game-laws. Under this head King Henry II. is himself the subject of a warning anecdote.

17. But Map's great work was that which justified his friend Geoffrey in demanding of him "something as a philosopher and poet." He it was who first gave a soul to the KING ARTHUR legends, and from whom we date the beginning of a spiritual harmony between the life of the English people and the forms given to the national hero by our poets. The Latin races have made no such use of Charlemagne or Roland as we shall find the English to have made of the King Arthur myth. The cycle of the Charlemagne romances offers a wide field for study, bright with life and colour derived from the active genius of the *trouvères.* But these tales remain what those of the Arthurian cycle were before the genius of Walter Map had harmonised them with the spirit of his country. The Normans had brought a song of Roland to the battle-field of Hastings, and it was during the reign of our Henry I., that in 1122, Pope Calixtus II. officially authenticated the Latin "Life of Charlemagne and Roland," which was said to have been written by one of Charlemagne's companions, Turpin, who was Archbishop of Rheims in the eighth century. This book, which became a source of Charlemagne romance, and earned the title of "Le Magnanime Mensonge," may possibly have been invented by the order of the pope who guaranteed the authorship of Turpin. Its object was to increase the number of the pilgrims to the shrine of St. James of Compostella. Thenceforth, the Charlemagne romances multiplied, and side by side with them sprang up stories of Arthur, a hero popular among the Bretons, for whom the hills of Wales and Cornwall were a playground of romance. The *trouvères* of northern France, who catered for energetic men, ill satisfied with the mere love music of the southern *troubadours*, had tales, no doubt, of Arthur, Merlin, and Lancelot, which had been partly founded upon Cymric traditions. Thus L'Ancelot, a diminutive form of Ancel (*ancilla*) a servant, might be a translation of the Cymric Mael, which also means a servant; and there is Cymric tradition of a Mael, king of the native tribes in the year 560, famous for strength and crimes of unchaste violence; the Meluas who carried off Guinever, wife of his uncle Arthur, and with whom Arthur made disgraceful peace. The old tales were tales of animal strength, courage,

and passion. The spiritual life was added to them when Walter Map placed in the midst of them the Holy Graal, type of the heavenly mysteries.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's Chronicle had suddenly made King Arthur famous in England. Wace's romance version had quickened the interest in his adventures, and then it seems to have occurred to Walter Map, or to have been suggested to him, to arrange and harmonise, and put a Christian soul into the entire body of Arthurian romance. For this purpose he would associate it with the legend of the Holy Graal, and that legend itself became the first piece in the series of prose romances, now produced and written to be read aloud, forming the ground-work on which metrical romances afterwards were based. These French prose romances seem to have been translated from Latin originals; and Robert de Borron, to whom it is ascribed, may rather have been translator than author of (1) the first of the series, *The Romance of the Holy Graal*, sometimes also called *The Romance of Joseph of Arimathea*, which was written at least twenty years later than Geoffrey of Monmouth's Chronicle. It is professedly told by a hermit, to whom in the year 717, appeared, in England, a vision of Joseph of Arimathea and the Holy Graal. The hermit set down in Latin what was then revealed to him, and his Latin Robert de Borron said that he proposed to set forth in French. The Graal, according to its legend, was the Holy Dish (low Latin, *gradale*) which contained the paschal lamb at the Last Supper. After the supper it was taken by a Jew to Pilate, who gave it to Joseph of Arimathea. It was used by Joseph of Arimathea at the taking down of our Lord from the cross, to receive the gore from his wounds; and thus it became doubly sacred. When the Jews imprisoned Joseph, the Holy Graal, placed miraculously in his hands, kept him from pain and hunger for two-and-forty years. Released by Vespasian, Joseph quitted Jerusalem and went with the Graal through France into Britain, where it was carefully deposited in the treasury of one of the kings of the island, called the Fisherman King. The Latin adaptation of this legend to the purpose it was to serve, in the addition of the Graal as a type of the mystery of godliness to the mere animal life of the King Arthur romances, we may suppose to have been the work of Walter Map; Robert de Borron putting into French not that only, but also the next part of the series, (2) the romance of *Merlin*. Then followed (3) the romance of *Lancelot of the*

Lake, ascribed always and only to Walter Map. In it, while developing the Arthur legend, Map idealised that bright animal life which it had been the only object of preceding stories to express. The romance is rich in delicate poetical invention. Lancelot is the bright pattern of a knight according to the flesh, cleared in one respect of many scattered offences, which are concentrated in a single blot, represented always as a dark blot on his character, the unlawful love for Guinevere. Next in the series comes (4) the Romance of the *Quest of the Holy Graal*, written also indisputably by Walter Map. From Lancelot, who had been painted as the ornament of an unspiritual chivalry, Map caused a son to spring, Sir Galahad, the spiritual knight, whose dress of flame-colour mystically typified the Holy Spirit that came down in tongues of fire. The son and namesake of Joseph of Arimathea, Bishop Joseph, to whom the holy dish was bequeathed, first instituted the order of the Round Table. The initiated at their festivals sat as apostle knights, with the Holy Ghost in their midst, leaving one seat vacant as that which the Lord had occupied, and which was reserved for the pure Galahad. Whatever impure man sat there the earth swallowed. It was called, therefore, the Seat Perilous. When men became sinful, the Holy Graal, visible only to pure eyes, disappeared. On its recovery (on the recovered purity of its people) depended the honour and peace of England; but only Sir Galahad—who at the appointed time was brought to the knights by a mysterious old man clothed in white—only the unstained Sir Galahad succeeded in the quest. Throughout the "Quest of the Graal," Map knitted the threads of Arthurian romance into the form which it was his high purpose to give them, and made what had become the most popular tales of his time in England, an expression of the English earnestness that seeks to find the right, and do it for the love of God. All their old charm is left, intensified in the romance of Lancelot; but all is now for the first time shaped into a legend of man's spiritual battle, and a lesson on the search, through a pure life alone, for the full revelation of God's glory upon earth. After this, it remained only to complete the series of the romances by adding (5) the *Mort Artus*, the Death of Arthur; this also was written by Walter Map, and as a distinct romance, although combined in the printed editions with his Lancelot. The spiritual significance thus given by Walter Map to King Arthur, as the romance hero of the English, he is so far from having lost among us, that we shall find great phases in

the history of English thought distinctly illustrated by modifications in the treatment of the myth.

18. Meanwhile, the demand for Arthurian romances grew; and when Map's work was done another Englishman, **Luces de Gast,** living near Salisbury, wrote, probably towards the close of Henry II.'s reign, the first part of *Tristan*, or Tristram. The second part was added by Helie de Borron. Popular as it became, this romance is, in spirit and execution, of inferior quality. Sir Tristram and the fair Isoude are but coarse doubles of Map's Lancelot and Guinevere.

A Frenchman, Chrestien of Troyes, who began writing before the close of Henry II.'s reign, was, in Arthurian romance, the ablest of the contemporaries and immediate followers of Walter Map. He began, about the year 1180, with the romance of "Erec and Enid," and produced metrical versions of Map's Lancelot and Graal romances. He wrote also the romance of Percival le Gallois.

Not long afterwards a German poet, Wolfram von Eschenbach, fastened upon the Graal story in the true spirit of Map's work. Taking the sight of the Graal as the symbol of nearness to God, he painted in his romance of "Parzival" the soul of a man striving heavenward, erring, straying, yielding to despair, repenting, and in deep humility at last attaining its desire. The Graal, thus become famous, was said to be made of one emerald lost from the crown of Lucifer as he was falling out of heaven. Is it a sign of the improvement of the world that a hexagonal dish of greenish glass, called emerald, which is said to be the Graal itself, is now visible to all eyes in the treasury of the Cathedral of San Lorenzo at Genoa?

19. In the earlier part of Henry II.'s reign, **Ailred of Rievaulx** wrote a *Rule of Nuns*, thirty-three *Homilies*, and other books, including a chronicle which described Stephen's *Battle of the Standard.* Ailred was born in the north of England, and educated with the King of Scotland's son, but he left the Scottish court to become a Cistercian monk in Rievaulx Abbey. In 1146 he became Abbot of Rievaulx, and he died, aged fifty-seven, in 1166. Five-and-twenty years afterwards he was canonised as a saint, for he was so holy that he forbade nuns to teach little girls, because they could not do so without carnally patting and fondling them.

Thomas of Ely also wrote, early in Henry II.'s reign, a *History of the Church of Ely.*

20. In the latter part of this reign **Ralph Glanville** wrote his Latin treatise *Upon the Laws and Customs of the Kingdom of England* (Tractatus de Legibus et Consuetudinibus Regni Angliæ), which was completed towards the close of Henry's reign, and is the first treatise on English law. Ralph, or Ranulph de Glanville, famous as a lawyer and a soldier, was appointed, in 1180, Chief Justiciary of England under Henry II. He distinguished himself by valour in repelling the invasion of William King of Scotland, who was taken prisoner while besieging Alnwick Castle. After the death of Henry II., Richard I. is said to have extorted from Glanville £15,000 towards the expenses of the crusade in which he accompanied his new master. He was killed at the siege of Acre, in 1190. Glanville's authorship of the book attributed to him has been questioned, but is not open to much doubt. He says that the confusion of our laws made it impossible to give a general view of the whole laws and customs of the land; he sought rather to give a practical sketch of forms of procedure in the king's courts, and of the principles of law most frequently arising; discussing only incidentally the first principles upon which law is based.

21. Latin poems also were produced in the closing years of Henry II.'s reign by Joseph of Exeter and Alexander Neckam **Joseph of Exeter,** or Josephus Iscanus, dedicated to Archbishop Baldwin a Latin poem, in six books, *On the Trojan War*, founded on Dares Phrygius, and finished when Henry II. was preparing for the crusade that Baldwin preached. He wrote also an *Antiocheis*, of which there remains only a fragment. Joseph of Exeter's Latin poem on the Trojan war was written about the same time as the French metrical romance, the "Geste de Troie," by that Benoit de St. Maure who supplanted Wace in the favour of King Henry II. Geoffrey of Monmouth's chronicle, and Wace's romance version of it, called the "Brut," had brought Troy stories, as well as King Arthur stories, into fashion among us. For we had now been taught that the British were descended from the Trojans. After his escape from Troy with his son Ascanius and their followers, his establishment in Italy and marriage with Lavinia the daughter of King Turnus, Æneas died. Ascanius, the son of Æneas, had a son, named Silvius, who secretly loved Lavinia's niece. To this couple a son was born, of whom it was foretold that he should slay his father and his mother, and be driven from the land. The son was called Brutus; was the Brut who gave his name to Britain.

His mother died in giving birth to him. At the age of fifteen he accidentally shot his father when they were out hunting together. He was banished, went to Greece, and there found kindred Trojans who were slaves. He stirred them to revolt, was made their duke, compelled the King of Greece to give him his daughter Ignogen to wife, and freedom to the Trojans; also to give them all the ships of Greece in which to depart and establish themselves in a new country. On their way from Greece these Trojans landed in the island of Leogice, where Brutus sought counsel in the temple of Diana, and was directed to seek beyond France a winsome land named Albion, surrounded by the sea. So he sailed on, and added to his company, from Spain, a fourfold host of Trojans born of those who had been led thither by Atenor after the fall of Troy. Their chief was Corineus, he who gave his name to Cornwall. After many adventures, Brutus, Corineus, and their Trojans reached this country, landed at Dartmouth, destroyed a few giants who were then the sole possessors of the land, and founded London as New Troy, or Troynovant. Such stories quickened interest in the affairs of Troy, and we have evidence of the new interest in Joseph of Exeter's Latin poem, and the French romance of Benoit de St. Maure. They both based their Troy legends upon the narratives ascribed to Dares and Dictys. Homer was no eyewitness of the siege; he was a partisan, too, of the Greeks. Dares, to whom a Phrygian Iliad was ascribed as early as the year 230, an account said to have been written before Homer's, was a Trojan priest of Vulcan, who warned Hector not to kill Patroclus, and was himself killed by Ulysses. His book existed only in a Latin version, said to have been made by Cornelius Nepos from the Greek autograph found at Athens This prose history of the fall of Troy was usually associated with the six books on the history of the Trojan war ascribed to Dictys of Gnossus, the companion of Idomeneus. His narrative, said to have been written at the request of Idomeneus, on tablets of bark, in Phœnician characters, was further said to have been buried with its author in a leaden box, and disclosed by an earthquake in the thirteenth year of the reign of Nero. Nero caused the work to be translated into Greek, and from that Greek the Latin version was said to have been made by one Q. Septimius Romanus. In and long after the time of Henry II., Dictys and Dares were regarded as the chief original authorities for the story of the siege of Troy.

It is in Benoit de St. Maure's "Geste de Troie," based chiefly upon Dictys, that we have the germ of the tale, afterwards famous in literature, of Troilus and Cressida.

Alexander Neckam was born at St. Albans, in September, 1157, on the same night as King Richard, and was the king's foster brother. He was educated at St. Albans, and early entrusted with the school at Dunstable, dependent on St. Albans Abbey. In 1180, at the age of twenty-three, he was in Paris, distinguished as a teacher. He wrote, within the next ten years, a *Treatise on Science*, in ten books of Latin elegiac verse, wherein he treated of creation, the elements, water and its contents, fire, air, the earth's surface, its interior, plants, animals, and the seven arts. He wrote a similar book in prose, besides other Latin poems, grammatical and theological treatises, and commentaries upon works of Aristotle. Neckam lived on through the reigns of Richard I. and John. In 1213 he became abbot of the Augustines at Cirencester, and he died in 1217.

22. We now pass from the reign of Henry II. to that of Richard I. (1189—1199). In this reign Walter Map was adding to the anecdotes in his "De Nugis Curialium." Towards the close of it, in 1198, **William of Newbury** wrote his Latin chronicle, the *History of English Affairs*. He was a Yorkshireman born and bred; born at Bridlington, and educated by the Austin canons at Newbury, in the North Riding. As a monk in their abbey he became known for his industry and skill as a writer; and it was at the request of the Abbot of Rievaulx that he wrote his "Historia Rerum Anglicarum," of which the preface hotly denied Geoffrey of Monmouth's credibility, and the substance proved himself to be a trustworthy chronicler of facts. Beginning at the Conquest, he ran through the events before his own time in a very short summary, and occupied himself almost wholly with the careful record of contemporary events. He died in 1208, aged seventy-two.

Another chronicler of this time, also a Yorkshireman, was **Roger of Hoveden,** or Howden, in the East Riding. He was attached to the household of Henry II., who employed him in collection of the revenues due to the crown from abbeys without abbots or priors. Roger of Hoveden is said to have been at one time a Professor of Theology at Oxford. He was writing in the time of Richard I. his *Annals*, which extend to the year 1201. They begin at the year 732 with a compilation

which professes to be planned as a continuation of Bede's History, and come in the second part to a more valuable history of the reigns of Henry II. and Richard I., continued to the third year of John, 1201. For their last nine years Hoveden's Annals are a minute and diffuse contemporary record of events.

23. To the reign of Richard I. belongs also our earliest piece of literary criticism, the treatise of **Geoffrey de Vinsauf** on the New Poetry, *De Nova Poetria.* This writer is called also Galfridus Anglicus. He was educated in the priory of St. Frideswide at Oxford, and in the nascent Universities of France and Italy. He was at Rome when, about the year 1195, he dedicated to his patron there, Pope Innocent III., his Latin critical didactic poem on the New Poetry. His new poetry was the old revived; Joseph of Exeter's Latin poem on the Trojan war was an example of it. Geoffrey of Vinsauf warned men back to the ancient measures, and to the critical standard of Horace. He condemned the Latin rhymes by which they had been superseded. There was, at least, some sign in the book of a tendency to the revival of scholarship. Geoffrey of Vinsauf probably was not the author of an *Itinerary of King Richard* and others to Jerusalem, which has been ascribed to him, and which sets forth that it had been written by Richard the Canon. This is the lively chronicle of an eyewitness, who went himself with King Richard, and saw the last flash of the crusading enthusiasm that Rome afterwards wanted power to sustain in Europe.

24. There is no more to be said of our literature in the reign of Richard I., except in discussion of one writer of mark, who began to use his pen at the close of the reign of Henry II., was writing throughout the reign of Richard I., and continued to write until the reign of John (1199—1216) was nearly ended. This was Gerald du Barri, or Gerald of Wales, commonly known as **Giraldus Cambrensis.** He was born in 1147, and died in the same year as King John, 1216. Gerald came of a fighting family, whose home was in the Castle of Manorbeer, four miles from Pembroke Castle, and who were among the chief helpers in Strongbow's conquest of Ireland. There was an uncle David, Bishop of St. David's, who cherished the young Gerald's turn for study. Study in Wales was continued abroad, and Gerald came home from Paris when his age was about twenty-five, to be entrusted at once with a share in the work of managing wild Wales by a well-organised ecclesiastical discipline. Gerald

came of a Norman father and Welsh mother; he was tall, stalwart, and bold of spirit. As an archdeacon he laboured to re-establish Church discipline among clergy as well as laity, with a fiery zeal that proved inconvenient to many. He was unflinching in performance of his own duties, and in claim of his own rights; played a bold match of excommunication against a bishop himself, and told his story to the king, who heard it with shouts of laughter, but saw, nevertheless, that this hot Welsh enthusiast for right and duty would not much help the English Church and State as a Welsh bishop. After the death of Gerald's uncle there was a strong desire in Wales to get the vacant see of St. David's restored to its old metropolitan dignity. Archdeacon Gerald, who shared this desier, was elected bishop by the chapter; but King Henry was for the repression of Welsh national enthusiasm. The election was not confirmed, and soon afterwards Gerald went to Paris for more study. He came home and worried away from St. David's the feeble man to whom that bishopric had been given. In 1184 Henry II. invited the clever Welshman to Court, made him one of his chaplains, and used him in the pacification of Wales, but gave him no substantial reward. In the following year Gerald was ordered to attend upon Prince John, then eighteen years old, in his unsuccessful Irish expedition; for Gerald's counsels would be vigorous, and he had intimate connection with many leading Irish families. It was then that he wrote his *Topography of Ireland*, and this was presently followed—both books, and all other writings of Gerald, being in Latin—by his *History of the Conquest of Ireland*, the best of his writings. The Irish chiefs had their names made classical—Fitzstephen became Stephanides—and they were furnished with ornamental orations, but their characters were described by a lively and shrewd observer, events were told after a careful sifting of evidence, and careful observation of the ground in the case of battles, sieges, &c. At Easter, 1186, Gerald returned to England, and soon afterwards went home to Wales, where he worked on at his "Topography of Ireland." This he published by reading it at Oxford in 1187. The three divisions of the work were read on three successive days, and Gerald entertained at his lodgings on the first day, the poor of the town; on the second day, the doctors and the more eminent pupils; on the third day, the other scholars and many citizens. The capture of Jerusalem by Saladin stirred Europe in the latter part of this year. In 1188 Gerald was by the side