manhood, and saying to him, "If thou work, thou art above all things save God alone." Let him seek the Pearl beyond price. The prisoner complained of the hard dealings of fortune. They have taught him, said Love, to know his friends; and if that Pearl shine to himward, he is more blessed than in worldly joy. The spiritual teaching of the book includes a passage that might be Chaucer's in its respect for women. These are its closing words: "He that them annoyeth doth his own shame; it is a comfortable pearl against all teens (sorrows). Every company is mirthed by their present being. Truly I wist never virtue but a woman was thereof the root." The author of "The Testament of Love" was a Londoner, and had also been, like Chaucer, employed under Government; for he says, "While I administered the office of common doing, as in ruling the stablishments emonges the people, I defouled never my conscience for ne manner deed, but ever by wit and by counsel of the wisest, the matters weren drawen to their right ends."

If Chaucer did not write "The Testament of Love"—and I believe that he did not—we have no evidence of his imprisonment by those who had deprived him of his Government offices. But we have evidence that he was pinched severely in his fortunes at the time of the sitting of the Merciless Parliament; for on May Day in this year, 1388, he was obliged to raise money on his two pensions, which were then cancelled and assigned to a John Scalby. What matter? Chaucer dined worse, and set to work upon the "Canterbury Tales."

42 In Guienne his friend John of Gaunt was repeating the last move in his chess play with fortune, and securing in 1388 a political match for Catherine, only daughter of his wife Constance, and inheritor of her pretensions to the Spanish crown. He married her to Henry, son and heir of the reigning King of Castile; and from this couple, established thus as Prince and Princess of Asturias, the line came down of Spanish sovereigns for many generations.

King Richard, in May, 1389, suddenly asked his uncle Gloucester how old he was; and, being told that he was in his twenty-second year, said he must then certainly be of age to manage his own concerns. So he dismissed his council, took the Government into his own hands, and left his uncle Gloucester to retire into the country, while John of Gaunt was desired to return to England. By this court revolution Chaucer profited. On the 12th of July in the same year he was appointed Clerk of

the Works at the Palace of Westminster, Tower of London, Castle of Berkhampstead, and at about a dozen royal manors and lodges, and at the mews for the king's falcons at Charing Cross. He might serve by deputy, and his salary was two shillings a day, which would be about twenty in present value. In November of the same year John of Gaunt returned to London.

During the next eight years of his reign, until the *coup d'état* of 1397, Richard II. remembered the rough lesson he had received. Living in some fear lest he might lose his crown, he was careful to avoid acts that would stir men to rebellion. John Gower was, during much of this time, like other patriots, loyally paying him the honour due to his apparent good intentions, and—considering his youth and noble birth, as son of the Black Prince—due also to the possible ripening of character, now that he had bought much hard experience with the follies of his earlier years.

In 1391 Chaucer, for some unknown reason, ceased to hold office as clerk of the king's works. His means were then very small; indeed it does not appear that he had other income than the £10 a year (say, now £100) for life, granted in 1374 by John of Gaunt, and his allowance of 40s. (say £20) half-yearly for robes as the king's esquire. And it was at this date, 1391, that he wrote for his son Lewis, ten years old, a book of instruction, *Bread and Milk for Babes*, or the *Conclusions of the Astrolabie;* simply and tenderly—true to the pure domestic feeling that shines through his verse—employed in a father's duty of encouraging his child's taste for ennobling studies. He had given the boy an astrolabe, and the little treatise was to show him how to use it, as far as a child could. Some of its uses, he said, "be too hard for thy tender age of ten years to conceive. By this treatise, divided in five parts, will I show thee wonder light rules and naked words in English, for Latin ne canst thou yet but small, my little son. But, nevertheless, sufficeth to thee these true conclusions in English, as well as sufficeth to those noble clerks, Greeks, these same conclusions in Greek; and to the Arabians in Arabic; and to Jews in Hebrew; and to the Latin folk in Latin; which Latin folk had them first out of divers other languages, and wrote them in their own tongue, that is to say in Latin. . . . . And, Lewis, if it so be that I show thee in my little English as true conclusions touching this matter, and not only as true, but as many and subtle conclusions, as he should in Latin in any common treatise of the

astrolabe, con me the more thanks, and pray God save the king that is the Lord of this language."

43. Meanwhile **John Gower** (§ 32) had been living in outward peace, and still was, as far as we know, unmarried. There was an old friendship between him and Chaucer. When, in the first year of Richard's reign, Chaucer went with a mission to Lombardy, he had left the care of his private interests in the hands of two friends, one of whom was John Gower. Chaucer had dedicated to Gower his "Troilus and Cressida," and had then joined to his friend's name a word of honour, as "the moral Gower," which cleaves to it still. Presently we come to a poem of Gower's from which we learn that this friendship remained unbroken to their later days.

In 1389 King Richard had taken the Government into his own hands, and, living in fear of his people, made some effort to rule also himself. For a few following years men who, like Gower, had their country's welfare at heart, credited the king with good intentions, and gave him loyally their friendship. In 1390 John Gower received from the Crown the rectory of Great Braxted, in Essex, a mile distant from the parish of Wigborough, where he had property. John Gower's name is on the list of rectors of this parish, not as priest—for he was not an ordained priest—but as clerk. In 1393 John Gower, rowing to town from his house in Kent or Essex by the river highway, then commonly used as the great London road, met the king's barge. At the invitation of Richard—who was at that time twenty-six years old, while the poet's age was nearer sixty-six—Gower left his boat and conversed with the king, who, in the course of conversation, asked him to write a new book for himself to read. Gower had been suffering from a long illness, and still was ill, but he undertook to write such a book in English for King Richard, to whom his allegiance and heart's obedience were due; and he resolved to write so that his words might be as wisdom to the wise and recreation to the idle. Thus Gower began his "Confessio Amantis" (Confession of a Lover), at a time when his friend Chaucer was at work upon the "Canterbury Tales;" and thus each poet in his latter years was following the example which had been set by Boccaccio in his "Decameron," except that they used verse instead of prose in stringing a chain of tales on a slight thread of story. But as to the spirit of their work our English poets differ much from the Italian.

In the *Confessio Amantis*, Gower's notion of a poem that should be—

> "Wisdom to the wise,
> And play to them that list to play,"

was as serious as Hampole's "Prick of Conscience." He began by telling its origin, and dedicating it to the king. But in a revision of his book, made when Richard had cast down the hope of those who credited him, for a few years after 1389, with the desire to do his duty, Gower expunged his words of allegiance, said in place of them, "What shall befal here afterward God wot!" and transferred the dedication to Henry of Lancaster. For the fashionable device of his poem Gower, infirm and elderly, cared little. To the best of his power he used it as a sort of earthwork from behind which he set himself the task of digging and springing a mine under each of the seven deadly sins. There were eight books, with a Prologue. The Prologue repeated briefly the cry of the "Vox Clamantis." The eight books were, one for each of the seven sins, with one interpolated book, seventh in the series, which rhymed into English a digest of the "Secretum Secretorum." This was a summary of philosophical and political doctrine wrongly supposed in the Middle Ages to contain the pith of Aristotle's teaching, as drawn out by himself for the use of Alexander. The second part of it, "De Regimine Principum," on the duties of kings, or "Governail of Princes," as the English writers called it, enabled Gower to edify the unteachable Richard with much argument upon the state and duties of a king.

But how can "The Confession of a Lover" give occasion for seven sets of stories against the seven deadly sins? Gower feigns that he went to the woods on a May Day, as Lover, and called upon Cupid and Venus. Cupid and Venus came, but he was old, and they showed him no kind cheer, although he said that he was dying of love. If dying, then, said Venus, let her Confessor come and shrive him. The Confessor was Genius, the Priest of Nature, her own clerk, as appointed in "The Romaunt of the Rose," but who had first found his way into literature through "The Plaint of Nature," by Alain de l'Isle (§ 16). To this Confessor the Lover knelt in due form, and begged of Dominus his holy father Genius, as he was himself disturbed at heart, and had his wits greatly astray, that he would put before him the several points of his shrift, that there might be nothing forgotten. He was, in fact, to put, according to the manner of

the confessional, his searching questions; and he began in due form with questions as to the Lover's use of his five senses, especially of sight and hearing. The thread was now made ready for the stringing of the chain of stories. The tales lie close together, connected throughout, sometimes skilfully, sometimes with an obvious strain of ingenuity, by passages of dialogue between the Confessor and the Lover whom he systematically questions. Having discoursed on the delusions of the senses, the Confessor called his son's attention to the "deadly vices seven:" pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony, and lust; each classified into its chief forms, and every form illustrated with incident or tale. In the last book Gower elaborated the story of Apollonius of Tyre, which is in the "Gesta Romanorum," an old collection of stories, arranged according to subjects, with allegorical religious applications suitable for use in the enlivenment of sermons; and called "Deeds of the Romans," because every tale is associated with some real or fictitious Roman emperor. It is also in the "Pantheon" of Godfrey of Viterbo, whence Gower says that he took it. From Gower came the story of "Pericles" among the plays of Shakspeare—a play opened by Gower as chorus, with lines illustrating the use once made of stories furnished in this manner by the poets:

> "To sing a song of old was sung,
> From ashes ancient Gower is come;
> . . . . .
> It hath been sung at festivals,
> On Ember eves, and holy ales,
> And lords and ladies in their lives
> Have read it for restoratives."

Gower ended his "Confession of a Lover" by reverting to the love-plaint with renewed appeal to Venus, who then told him that his complaints were against Nature. He should remember his age. Cupid came by with the mirthful band of the young lovers. Age followed with a smaller company of old men who had been servants to Love. These pleaded for the poet. Cupid drew the dart out of his breast. Venus put cold ointment over his heart, and held to him a mirror in which he saw his faded colour, dim sad eyes, face wrinkled with age, and hoary hair. Then, laughing, she asked him what love was; and he replied that he knew not. So he had absolution from his Confessor, the Priest of Nature, and was dismissed from the Court of Venus with advice from her to go, "where moral virtue dwelleth." He was to take also a message from Venus to her

disciple and poet Chaucer, who in the flower of his youth made ditties and glad songs wherewith, said Venus,

> "The land fulfilled is over all;
> Whereof to him in special,
> Above all others I am most hold;
> Forthi now in his daiës old,
> Thou shalt him tellë this message:"

That he was to crown his work by making his Testament of Love as Gower had made his shrift, so that her Court might record it. Here it is quite evident that Gower, speaking of himself as one old man, turns with playful compliment to his friend Chaucer as another. A few years later this passage was omitted from a revised copy of the "Confessio Amantis;" for it would have been out of place—almost a trivial impertinence—when Gower had learnt how Chaucer was in his old days fashioning the crown of his life as a poet, with the "Canterbury Tales." In them we have indeed his Testament of Love to God and Man.

44. Contemporary with the "Confessio Amantis" was a poem of 850 lines, in the measure and outward manner of "The Vision of Piers Plowman," called *Piers Plowman's Crede*, and levelled with much bitterness of feeling against all orders of friars. In this poem an ignorant man who had learnt his Paternoster and Ave Mary wished to be taught his Creed, and, after seeking knowledge in vain of the friars, met with a common ploughman, who explained to him that the friars, although their orders were founded by good men, had become children of the devil, reminded him how they persecuted Wiclif, and himself gave the instruction sought. The ploughman in the poem was simply a poor rustic. There was no high allegory, as in the "Vision," and the antagonism to Church corruption was that of a lower and a harsher mind. The poem was written in or about the year 1394, and the author of it seems to have been the author of "The Plowman's Tale."

45. Geoffrey Chaucer was at work upon the "Canterbury Tales" during the last years of his life, and left them unfinished when he died. He must have lost his wife within a year after his loss of fortune by deprival of his offices in the Customs, for after June, 1387, the receipt of her pension by Philippa Chaucer ceased. But she left him at least two sons, an elder son, Thomas, and the Lewis for whom Chaucer wrote his treatise on the astrolabe. It is probable also that when, in 1381, John of Gaunt paid a substantial sum for the novitiate of an Elizabeth

Chaucer in the Abbey of Barking, he was dealing generously by one of the children of his friend. Chaucer's elder son Thomas, who was born about the year 1367, was advanced in his fortunes both by King Richard and by John of Gaunt. In some year between 1392 and 1404 he married an heiress, who brought him estates in Oxfordshire and other counties. In Thomas's daughter Alice, Geoffrey Chaucer was grandfather to the grandmother of John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, whom Richard III. declared heir apparent if the Prince of Wales died without issue. John de la Pole died childless. He was killed at the battle of Stoke, in 1487.

It was in the sixteenth year of Richard, 1393, that Gower, invited courteously into the king's barge, was commissioned to write a new poem for his Majesty. It was in the seventeenth year of King Richard, 1394, that Chaucer, whose means then were very small, received from the king a pension of £20 (equal to £200) a year for life, payable half-yearly, at Michaelmas and Easter. In 1395 Chaucer's straitened means were indicated by four borrowings from the exchequer of money in advance. There was but one such borrowing in 1396; but there were four again in 1397, the year in which King Richard II. cast himself out finally from the hearts of any who had thus far struggled to retain hope of his future.

In 1396, when Richard, aged twenty-nine, was about to ally himself by marriage with an eight-year old French princess, Froissart tells that this king of England spoke to the Count of St. Pol, the French king's representative, of his uncles, among whom Gloucester was opposed to the French match. St. Pol advised dissimulation till the match was made, telling how, "that done, he would be of puissance to oppose all his rebels, for he might rely on aid from the French king." "Thus shall I do," said Richard, and thus he did.

When the discrowning treachery of the *coup d'état* was in preparation, Gower, aged about seventy, resigned the living that he held at Richard's gift, and withdrew from the outer life of the world. The Priory of St. Mary Overies, on the Southwark side of London Bridge (of which the chapel is now represented by the parish church of St. Saviour), was being rebuilt in the reigns of Richard II. and Henry IV. The masons were still at their work when John Gower, who was the most liberal contributor towards the cost of re-building, established lodgings and a chapel of his own in the new priory, and withdrew from the world to spend his

last years peacefully, a clerk among clerks, within shadow of the church of which he was an honoured benefactor. Gower's faith in Richard was gone, and the public events which immediately followed his retirement caused the old poet to write in Latin leonine hexameter his *Tripartite Chronicle.* This is the sequel to his "Vox Clamantis," since it tells the issue of the misgovernment against which that earlier work had been a note of warning. The Chronicle was called "Tripartite" because it told the story of Richard's ruin in three parts, of which the first, said Gower, related human work, the second hellish work, the third a work in Christ. Human work was the control of Richard by his uncle Gloucester when the Commission of Regency was established; hellish work was the *coup d'état;* the work in Christ was the consequent dethronement of King Richard.

In July, 1397, having secured the French alliance, the king invited the Earl of Warwick (the Bear) to dine with him, and by a treacherous breach of hospitality arrested him, seized his lands, and made him prisoner in the Isle of Man. The Earl of Arundel (the Horse) was invited to a conference, assured by the king's oath that he should not be injured in person or property. He was seized at the conference, sent to prison in the Isle of Wight, and afterwards beheaded. By treachery as false, the Duke of Gloucester (the Swan) was seized, imprisoned, and, Gower says, smothered at Calais with a feather bed, by murderers whom his nephew had sent over for the purpose. Gloucester was murdered in September, 1397. At the same time there was obtained from a servile parliament a statute (of the twenty-first year of Richard II.) which was virtually abnegation of the power of the Lords and Commons, and its transfer to a junta of the creatures of the king. Richard was during the next year (1398) supreme, for there was no immediate resistance to his personal government. In that year Chaucer was very poor. In January of the same year John Gower had been married in his own chapel under his rooms in the priory. He doubtless felt need of a kindly woman's care in his old age, and married to obtain good nursing, for his health was weak, and two years later he entirely lost his sight. While the rich Gower was thus housed, and spending liberally on the building-works of the priory in which he lodged, his friend Chaucer obtained, in May, 1398, the king's letters of protection from arrest, on any plea except it were connected with land, for the next two years, on the ground of "various arduous and urgent duties in divers parts of the

realm of England." After this Chaucer, on account either of sickness or occupation, did not apply for money personally; but in July, 1398, within three months of his obtaining letters of exemption from arrest, he sent to the exchequer for a loan of 6s. 8d.—say £3 6s. 8d. present value.

In the following September lists were set at Coventry for combat between John of Gaunt's son, Henry, and the Duke of Norfolk. Richard, staying the combat, banished both. John of Gaunt survived his son's banishment but a few months, and, dying in 1399, was buried near the high altar in St. Paul's, by the side of his first wife, the Duchess Blanche. Then King Richard added to all other acts of rapacity, by which he was making his name daily more infamous, the seizure of the large inheritance of John of Gaunt's son Henry. In the summer Richard spent in Ireland upon war against the Irish some of the wealth he had wrung by acts of tyranny out of the English. The new Duke of Lancaster was then summoned by his friends from France, and John of Gaunt's son, to whom Chaucer was as an old household friend, landed at Grimsby to claim his inheritance. He had taken to himself the well-known badge of his murdered uncle Gloucester, the Swan. The end soon followed. In September, 1397, the Duke of Gloucester was murdered; in September, 1398, John of Gaunt's son was banished; in September, 1399, Richard II. publicly surrendered his crown to the returned exile.

The Act of the Deposition of Richard II. was read in Westminster Hall on the last day of September, and on the 3rd of October the new king granted to Chaucer forty marks a year, in addition to the smaller annuity that King Richard had given him. The old poet had then only a year to live, but his last year was freed from care. At Christmas he took the lease of a house in the garden of the chapel of St. Mary, Westminster, and there he died, advanced in years, on the 25th of October, 1400.

John Gower, who needed no money, received from the new king recognition of his hearty sympathy with what he looked upon as Christ's work in the overthrow of tyranny. In the year of Chaucer's death Gower became blind; but he lived on in the priory till 1408, and after his death in that year, considering his liberal aid to their building-works, his brethren there honoured his memory with a painted window and a tomb upon which his effigy is still to be seen lying, adorned with the Lancastrian collar of SS, with an appended badge of the Swan. This was the

valued gift of the new king, Henry IV. When in his blindness his hand touched it, the moralist might now and then recall the past, and blend hope for the future with abiding faith that "often where the people cries there is God."

46. Such work as that upon the unfinished *Canterbury Tales* could not have been laid aside by Chaucer for work of less account. This must have been the main occupation of the poet's latter days, and the last words of the last tale in the papers gathered together by the hand of his son Thomas may have been the last words from his pen. They look up to heaven where "the body of man, that whilom was sick and frail, feeble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so whole that there may no thing impair it: there is neither hunger, nor thirst, nor cold, but every soul replenished with the sight of the perfect knowing of God. This blissful reign may men purchase by poverty spiritual, and the glory by lowness, the plenty of joy by hunger and thirst, and rest by travail, and the life by death and mortification of sin. To this life He us bring that bought us with His precious blood. Amen." Chaucer was one of the few greatest poets of the world who rise to a perception of its harmonies and have a faith in God forbidding all despair of man. No troubles could extort from him a fretful note. Wisely, kindly, with shrewd humour and scorn only of hypocrisy, he read the characters of men, and seeing far into their hearts was, in his "Canterbury Tales," a dramatist before there was a drama, a poet who set the life of his own England to its proper music. In this complete work, had it been completed, the whole character of England would have been expressed, as it is already expressed or implied in the great fragment left to us. Boccaccio, who died twenty-five years before Chaucer, placed the scene of his "Decameron" (§ 14) in a garden, to which seven fashionable ladies had retired with three fashionable gentlemen during the plague that devasted Florence in 1348. They told one another stories, usually dissolute, often witty, sometimes exquisitely poetical, and always in simple charming prose. The purpose of these people was to forget the duties on which they had turned their backs, and stifle any sympathies they might have had for the terrible grief of their friends and neighbours who were dying a few miles away. For these fine ladies and gentlemen, equal in rank and insignificance, Chaucer gave us a group of about thirty English people, of ranks widely different, in hearty human fellowship together. Instead of setting them down to lounge in

a garden, he mounted them on horseback, set them on the high road, and gave them somewhere to go and something to do. The bond of fellowship was not a common selfishness. It was religion; not, indeed, in a form so solemn as to make laughter and jest unseemly, yet, according to the custom of his day, a popular form of religion—the pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas à Becket (ch. iii. § 11)—into which men entered with much heartiness. It happened to be a custom which had one of the best uses of religion, in serving as a bond of fellowship wherein conventional divisions of rank were for a time disregarded; partly because of the sense, more or less joined to religious exercise of any sort, that men are equal before God, and also, in no slight degree, because men of all ranks, trotting upon the high road with chance companions, whom they might never see again, have been in all generations disposed to put off restraint and enjoy such intercourse as will relieve the tediousness of travel. Boccaccio could produce nothing of mark in description of his ten fine gentlemen and ladies. The procession of Chaucer's Pilgrims is the very march of man on the high road of life.

From different parts of London or the surrounding country Canterbury pilgrims met in one of the inns on the Southwark side of London Bridge, to set forth together upon the Kent road. Chaucer's Pilgrims started from the "Tabard," an inn named after the sleeveless coat once worn by labourers, now worn only in a glorified form by heralds. Chaucer feigns that he was at the "Tabard" ready to make his own pilgrimage, when he found a company of nine-and-twenty on the point of starting, and joined them, so making the number thirty. Harry Bailly, the host of the "Tabard," also joined the party, so making thirty-one. When Chaucer describes the pilgrims in his Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales," his list contains thirty-one without reckoning the host. This little discrepancy is one of many reminders in the work itself that Chaucer died while it was incomplete. As he proceeded with his story-telling he probably was modifying, to suit the development of his plan, several of the first written details of his Prologue. The Pilgrims were: 1, 2, 3, a knight, his son, and an attendant yeoman; 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, a prioress, another nun, who was her chaplain, and three priests; 9, 10, a monk and a friar; 11, a merchant; 12, a clerk of Oxford; 13, a serjeant-at-law; 14, a franklin, that is, a landholder free of feudal service, holding immediately from the king; 15, 16, 17,

18, 19. a haberdasher, a carpenter, a weaver, a dyer, and a tapestry maker; 20, Roger, or Hodge, of Ware, a London cook; 21, a sailor from the West country; 22, a doctor of physic; 23, Alisoun. a wife of Bath; 24, 25, two brothers: a poor town parson and a ploughman; 26, a reeve, or lord's servant as steward or overseer; 27, a miller; 28, a sompnour, or summoner of delinquents to the ecclesiastical courts; 29, a pardoner, who dealt in pardons from the pope; 30, a manciple of a lawyer's Inn of Court (a manciple was a buyer of victuals for a corporation); 31, Chaucer himself, who is described by 32, Harry Bailly, the host, as one who looked on the ground as he would find a hare, seemed elvish by his countenance, for he did unto no wight dalliance, yet was stout; for, says the host, "he in the waist is shape as well as I."

Harry Bailly, large, bright-eyed, bold of speech, shrewd, manly, well-informed, had a shrew of a wife. He gave his guests a good supper, and jested merrily when they had paid their reckonings. It was the best company of pilgrims that had been at his inn that year, he said, and he should like to secure them mirth upon the way. They were all ready for his counsel; and it was that each of them should tell two tales on the way to Canterbury, and two other tales on the way home. The one whose tales proved to be "of best sentence and of solas" should have a supper in that room at the cost of all when they came back from Canterbury. He was to be their guide; and whoever gainsaid his judgment was to pay for all they spent upon the way. All agreed, and appointed the host governor, judge, and reporter of the tales. Then wine was fetched, they drank, and went to bed. The host roused them at dawn next morning, the 28th of April (our 7th of May), when the length of day was a few minutes over fifteen hours. The company rode slowly to the watering of St. Thomas—that is to say, of the Hospital of St. Thomas the Martyr in Southwark, which may be called, in the series of Church stations, the London terminus of the line of pilgrimage to St. Thomas the Martyr's shrine at Canterbury. Here the host reminded the companions of their undertaking; and all, at his bidding, drew out slips by way of lot. Whoever had the shortest should begin. This wholesome device excluded all questions of precedence of rank among the fellow-pilgrims. The lot fell to the knight, whereat all were glad; and with the courtesy of prompt assent he began.

47. The knight's tale is the tale of "Palamon and Arcite,"

Englished by Chaucer, in spirit as well language, from the "Teseide" of Boccaccio. The monk is asked for the next story, but the miller is drunk, and forces on his companions what he calls a noble tale. This is a coarse tale told with vivid master-touches; and, as its jest is against a carpenter, Oswald the reeve is provoked to match it with a coarser jest against a miller. An honest warning of their nature is placed by Chaucer before these two stories, which belong to the broad view of life, but show the low animal part of it:

> "And therefore whoso list it not to hear
> Turn over the leaf and choose another tale;
> For he shall find ynow both great and smale
> Of storial thing that toucheth gentilesse,
> And eke morality and holiness."

In plainest words the reader is warned beforehand by the pure-hearted poet of the character of these two stories; in order that they may be passed over by those who would avoid their theme. The miller's tale has in its coarseness a rough moral at the close. The reeve's tale paints a form of life that we can well spare from the picture. Yet it is taken from the "Decameron," and was put by Boccaccio not, as by Chaucer, in a churl's mouth, but upon the lips of one of his fine ladies. After this, we find throughout what we found in the knight's tale, Chaucer's sense of the pure beauty of womanhood. There is the whole range of character to be included in his picture, but on the fleshly side most natural and genial are the touches with which he gives the wife of Bath her place among the company. Chaucer began a cook's tale of a riotous apprentice, as if he meant to read a lesson to the Perkin revellers of the day, but he broke off, weary of low themes. The *Tale of Gamelyn*, a bright piece of the class of poetry to which the Robin Hood ballads belong, is here placed, as a cook's tale, in Chaucer's series. It may have been among his papers, but it probably is from another hand. There is in this tale an Adam Spencer—that is Adam the butler or cellarer—who, with certain changes, reappeared after many years in "As You Like It," and whose part Shakespeare himself is said to have acted. The "Man of Law's Tale" is of a good woman, the pious Constance, and seems to have been taken from the second book of Gower's "Confessio Amantis." The "Wife of Bath's Tale" of a knight, Florentius, who by obedience won a perfect bride, is again one of the tales of the "Confessio Amantis." The "Friar's Tale" contemns the cruel rapacity of

sompnours; and the "Sompnour's Tale" scorns hypocritical rapacity in friars. The "Clerk's Tale" is the story of the patience of Griselda, the last tale in the "Decameron," and one which Petrarch said none had been able to read without tears. With the last letter he ever wrote, Petrarch sent to Boccaccio his own Latin prose version of it, as a religious allegory, made in 1373, the year before his own death, and two years before the death of Boccaccio; the year also of Chaucer's visit to Italy. It was "De Obedientia et Fide Uxoria, Mythologia" (A Myth upon Wifely Obedience and Faith), and Chaucer's poem is distinctly founded not on the tale as it stands in the "Decameron," but upon Petrarch's moralised version. This we find throughout, from the form of opening down to the religious application at the end, and the citation of the general Epistle of St. James, in the stanzas beginning—

"For sith a woman was so patiënt
Unto a mortal man, well more we ought,
Receiven all in gree that God us sent."

But the poetical treatment of the story is so individual that it all comes afresh out of the mind of Chaucer. Its pathos is heightened by the humanising touch with which the English poet reconciles the most matter-of-fact reader to its questionable aspects. He feels that the incidents of the myth are against Nature, and at every difficult turn in the story he disarms the realist with a light passage of fence, and wins to his own side the host of readers who have the common English turn for ridicule of an ideal that conflicts with reason. Chaucer's "Merchant's Tale" is that afterwards modernised by Pope in his "January and May." His "Squire's Tale" is of the Tartar Cambys Kan, or Cambuscan, of his two sons Algarsif and Camballo, and of his daughter Canace, who had a ring enabling her to hear the speech of birds, and a mirror which showed coming adversity, or falsehood in a lover. This is a tale of enchantment, left unfinished, with stately promise of a sage and solemn tune, and which suggested to Milton the wish that the grave spirit of thoughtfulness would raise Musæus or Orpheus—

"Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold.
Of Cambell and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass;
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride."

The "Franklin's Tale," to be found also in the "Decameron" (fifth of the tenth day), was of a wife true of word as true of heart. The second "Nun's Tale" was of St. Cecilia, from the "Golden Legend," a treatise on Church Festivals, written at the end of the thirteenth century by an Archbishop of Genoa, Jacobus à Voragine, and translated into French by Jehan de Vignoy. The "Pardoner's Tale" (eighty-second in the "Cento Novelle Antiche") is a lesson against riotous living. Three profligates would slay Death, the slayer of the young. An old man said they would find him under an oak in the wood. They found there nearly eight bushels of gold florins. At this they rejoiced, and cast lots which of them should go to the town to fetch bread and wine while the others watched the treasure. The lot fell on the youngest. While he was gone his comrades plotted to kill him on his return, that the gold might be divided between two only; and he himself plotted to poison two of the bottles of wine he brought, that all the gold might belong to himself alone. So they slew him, and had short mirth afterwards over the wine he had poisoned.

The "Shipman's Tale" was from the "Decameron" (first of the eighth day), of a knavish young monk. The prioress told the legend of a Christian child killed by the Jews in Asia. The child when living loved the Virgin, who appeared to it when dying and put a grain under its tongue, so that the dead child-martyr still sang "*O alma Redemptoris Mater.*" Until the grain was removed the song continued. Chaucer himself began "The Rime of Sir Thopas," a merry burlesque upon the metrical romances of the day, ridiculing the profusion of trivial detail that impeded the progress of a story of tasteless adventures. Sir Thopas rode into a forest, where he lay down, and as he had dreamed all night that he should have an elf queen for his love, got on his horse again to go in search of the elf queen; met a giant, whom he promised to kill next day, the giant throwing stones at him; and came again to town to dress himself for the adventure. The pertinacity with which the rhyme proceeds to spin and hammer out all articles of clothing and armour worn by Sir Thopas makes the Host exclaim at the story-teller, "Mine earës aken for thy drasty speech," and cry "no more." The device, too, is ingenious which puts the poet out of court in his own company, so far as regards the question who won the supper. His verse having been cried out upon, Chaucer answers the demand upon him for a tale in prose with the tale of

Melibæus, a moral allegory upon the duties of life, translated from the Latin of Albertano de Brescia, or its French version, the "Livre de Melibée et de Dame Prudence." Only this and the "Parson's Tale" are written in prose. The "Monk's Tale" is of men in high estate who have fallen into hopeless adversity—a series of short "tragedies," suggested by a popular Latin prose book of Boccaccio's, on the "Falls of Illustrious Men" (De Casibus Illustrium Virorum). Among the Monk's examples is that of Ugolino, whereof Chaucer writes that they who would hear it at length should go to Dante, "the gretë poete of Itaille," as he had said of any reader curious to hear more of Zenobia, "Let him unto my maister Petrarch go." The Host at last stopped Piers the Monk because his tales were dismal; and Sir John, the Nun's Priest, asked for something merry, told a tale of the Cock and the Fox, taken from the fifth chapter of the "Roman de Renart."

Thus the pilgrims made for themselves entertainment by the way till they reached Boughton-under-Blean, seven miles from Canterbury, where they were overtaken by a Canon's Yeoman, who was followed by his master. These had ridden after the pilgrims for three miles. They seem to have followed them from Faversham, where the Canon—a ragged, joyless alchemist, who lived in a thieves' lane of the suburb—was on the watch for travellers whom he might join and dupe with his pretensions to a power of transmuting metals. This Canon, said his man, after other flourishing as herald of his master, could pave all their road to Canterbury with silver and gold. "I wonder, then," said Harry Bailly, "that your lord is so sluttish, if he can buy better clothes. His overslop is not worth a mite; it is all dirty and torn." Chaucer proceeds then skilfully to represent the gradual but quick slide of the yeoman's faith from his master, who, when he caught up the company, found his man owning that they lived by borrowing gold of men who think that of a pound they can make two:

> "Yet it is false; and ay we have good hope
> It is for to doon, and after it we grope."

The Canon cried at his man for a slanderer. The Host bade the man tell on, and not mind his master, who then turned and fled for shame, leaving the company to be entertained with the "Canon's Yeoman's Tale," preluded with experience of alchemy.

The Manciple related after this the tale from Ovid's "Metamorphoses" of the turning of the crow from white to black for having told Apollo of the falsehood of his Coronis. There is

then an indication of the time of day, four o'clock in the afternoon, before the "Parson's Tale," which evidently was meant to stand last, for it is a long and earnest sermon in prose on a text applying the parable of a pilgrimage to man's heavenward journey. The text is from Jeremiah vi. 16: "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

CHAPTER V.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

1. THE fifteenth century, which added to our literature not one masterpiece, fed with its very mists the great streams of the future. Scattered personal interest sped over the scene as a wild mass of clouds, and rolled at times into a tempest to which mists of darkness seemed to be reserved for ever. But in the clods of the earth—among its unconsidered people—there lay forces to which even mist and storm gave energy; and still over all there shone the light of Him whose strength is in the clouds. The vigour of a nation lies, at all times, in the character and action of the common body of its people. The highest genius, which implies good sense, true insight, and quick sympathy, must draw its sustenance from the surrounding world of man and Nature. When it mistakes, if it ever can mistake, the conventional life of a court for the soul of a nation, seeking to strike root down into that only and draw support from that, it must be as good seed fallen among stones. When it mistakes, if it ever can mistake, the mere dust of the high road, the day's fashions blown about by every wind, for source of life, it dies under the feet of the next comer. The good soil is everywhere in the minds of men. Culture may be confined to a few patches, but everywhere in the common ground lies that of which fruit shall come.

2. When Chaucer died, in the year 1400, the first printers were unborn. John Gutenberg may, indeed, have been an infant in the first year of the fifteenth century. John Faust was not born until three years after Chaucer's death; and his son-in-law, Peter Schœffer, was some twenty years younger than Faust.

In Spain the Moors held Granada, and the Christians were

divided under the three kingdoms of Leon and Castile, Navarre, and Aragon.

In Germany, the nobles, in the year of Chaucer's death, deposed Emperor Wenzel, and, choosing for themselves a ruler as conveniently incapable but less inconveniently drunken and self-willed, made the Count Palatine of the Rhine Emperor Rupert. To Wenzel they left, for the nineteen remaining years of his life, the sovereignty of Bohemia. A sister to this Wenzel was our Richard II.'s "Good Queen Anne," who died six years before the beginning of the fifteenth century; and it was to this Wenzel's wife that John Huss, ordained priest in the year 1400 was made confessor.

The marriage between our King Richard and Anne of Bohemia had brought Bohemians to England. One of them, who had been studying at Oxford, took home and communicated to his friend Huss some of the books of Wiclif. The social corruptness of the clergy in Bohemia had prepared the suffering people for an effort to cast out the money-changers from the temple. Huss looked upon his meeting with the works of Wiclif as the happiest event of his life; and, through him, Wiclif raised revolt of the Bohemians against Italian trading on the national religion. Huss restored also to the University of Prague its nationality. The Archbishop of Prague, called Alphabetarius because his scholarship stopped short at A B C, burned the books of Wiclif, which he could not read, and interdicted the preaching of Huss. But Huss's gospellers sustained him against excommunication by the pope, and their chief battle was not on grounds of controversial theology. Its energies were quickened by the striving of the English people towards national independence in Church matters, and for a religion that no man in Church authority might follow as a knavish trade. The followers of Huss continued, indeed, in a modified and not unorthodox form, Wiclif's attack upon adoration of the host; but otherwise their assault was upon simony in the Church and upon adding belief in the pope to a belief in the three persons of the Trinity. The pope's claim to unlimited obedience, his indulgences, his abuse of excommunication, and the false faith in him, were four of "the six errors" posted by Huss on the gate of the Chapel of Bethlehem. Simony, and the belief that priests made the body of Christ in the mass, were the other two. The argument upon this last head (which did not include denial of transubstantiation itself) was so far an

open one that when Huss went, in 1414, to the Council of Constance, he took with him a declaration from the Inquisitor-General of Heresy in Bohemia that, as far as the Inquisitor knew, Huss had shown no disposition to impugn any article of the Christian faith. Condemned as "a disciple of Wiclif, of damnable memory," John Huss, aged forty, whose worst heresy was the belief that liberty of conscience is a right of man, was burnt at Constance, on the 6th of July, in the year 1415, three or four months before the battle of Agincourt. From among the fagots rose a steady hymn of trust in God, till the smoke and the flames choked the firm voice and concealed the singer from the people while his soul was passing to its rest. Huss was afterwards reported to have said, playing upon his own name, which, in Bohemian, means goose: "To-day you burn a goose; in a hundred years a swan shall arise whom you cannot burn." A hundred and two years after the burning of Huss, Luther affixed to the church-door at Wittenburg his ninety-five theses against indulgences.

3. The heat of struggle against heresy had become fiercer, while effort was made to end that schism in the papacy which had encouraged opposition to its rule (ch. iv. § 33). The Council of Constance that burnt Huss was also to restore unity by subjecting the claims of rival popes to a decision of the Church. In 1406 the death of the Italian, Innocent VII., gave hope to the cardinals at Rome. They elected a quiet old man of eighty pope for Italy, as Gregory XII., with a provision that he was to hold office only till he could arrange with the French pope, Benedict XIII., for a simultaneous abdication. Gregory was at first true to the understanding. Some months after his election he refused to give benefices, saying that he was not made pope for that, but only to end the schism. His friends and kinsmen, who flocked round him clamouring for loaves and fishes, caused him to halt on the way. He became rich in excuses for inaction; and, when nothing else availed, could stop and pray, in high pontifical state, for the peace of the Church, and so dispose of the time he did not wish to spend in action for securing it. Benedict, on the other side, though equally determined to do nothing, professed great readiness to meet Gregory and fulfil the desires of good churchmen. Europe was little edified to see the dance accordingly set up by the two aged popes, who poussetted to each other about France and Italy, but took care never to come near enough to join hands. One professed

fear of hostile ships, and would not approach the coast; the other professed fear of ambuscades, and would not venture far inland. So that, as Aretin wrote, one was a water animal to whom dry land was death; the other a land animal who looked with profound horror at water. By this trifling, and by yet more open swerving from the policy dictated by a true sense of religion, each lost friends. The Italian pope had Italy and the cardinals against him; the French pope was opposed by the French king and the University of Paris. Forsaken by the Church of France, Benedict went to his native Aragon, and then joined Gregory in the convocation of a General Council; this was to meet at Pisa, in the year 1409, for the establishment of unity and good religious order in the Church. It was opened by Jean Charlier, better known as Gerson, Chancellor of the Church and University of Paris, with his essay on the Unity of the Church. The council took into its own hands a power supreme over the popes', thus carrying out the principle advocated by the University of Paris. Gerson and the party represented by him held the whole Church to be bound by what they called essentials of theology, but were so tolerant of minor differences that they were not without hope of reuniting the Eastern with the Western Church. The two popes refused to recognise a council that usurped papal authority; therefore they were deposed, and in their place was set up a third pope, an Alexander V. This added to the confusion. The new pope owed his rise to a cardinal ex-pirate, Balthazar Cossa, the most infamous man of his order, whose influence came of vast wealth ill-gotten, whose ambition was unscrupulous, and whom it suited at that time to place a creature of his own upon the vacant throne of Christendom. A year afterwards, when Alexander V. died, it was widely believed that the Cardinal Balthazar Cossa had sent him to heaven as soon as he was himself disposed to fill his place in this world. The belief shows what was thought of the man who, in 1410, as John XXIII., inherited the pledge to labour for a reformation of the Church. It was in his time that the reformatory council, which he was at last obliged to summon, met at Constance. It began work in November, 1414, declaring itself to be a continuation of the Council of Pisa. Within four months it had received accusations of deep crime against Pope John. The Council maintained Gerson's principle that the pope is subject to a Church assembly. It tried and deposed

Pope John, humoured Gregory into abdication, left Benedict, deserted by his followers, pope only in his own esteem, and made Cardinal Otto of Colonna, Pope Martin V. The streets of Constance bore daily a shameful witness to the corruption widely spread among the clergy who attended at this Council, and who witnessed the execution of their sentence for the burning of John Huss.

Meanwhile a large part of Europe was fairly upon the way from Huss to Luther. The relation of earnest educated churchmen to the pope, as pope, in the early years of the fifteenth century, remained what it had been in the latter years of the fourteenth (ch. iv. § 33). We find it expressed by Chancellor Gerson in his treatise on the Methods of Uniting and Reforming the Church. "A pope," he said, "is a man, descended from men, earth from earth, a sinner and subject to sin. A few days ago the son of a poor peasant, he is exalted to the papal chair. Does such a one become a sinless man, a saint, without the least repentance for his sins, without confessing them, without contrition of heart? Who has made him a saint? Not the Holy Ghost; for it is not dignity of station that brings the influences of the Holy Ghost, but the grace of God and love; not the authority of the office, for it may be enjoyed by bad men as well as good." This was the free speech of one who avoided the free speculations of the English, and saw no security outside the system of theology accounted orthodox in his own time and country. "Where," he asked, "will you find charity in a pope? At the Roman court the daily talk is of castles, of territorial domains, of the different kind of weapons, of gold; but seldom or never of chastity, alms, righteousness, faith, or holy manners: so that the court, once a spiritual one, has become a secular, devilish, tyrannical court, and worse in manners and civil transactions than any other." This had been the language of Gower's *Vox Clamantis*, and the language used by many educated earnest men whom the Church never accused of heresy, but who belonged to the most faithful of her sons.

4. From King Henry IV. (1399—1413) the English Church reformers, like all other reformers, looked for support; but he had not long worn his crown before he leagued with the clergy against them. As it had been settled by statute of the fifth year of Richard II., so it was confirmed by statute of the second year of Henry IV., that part of the sheriff's oath when he took office was to be that he should seek to redress all errors and heresies.

commonly called Lollards. This indicates the early sense of the word which, though otherwise derived from an Englishman, Walter Lollardus, burnt for heresy at Cologne in 1322, was then held to be derived from the Latin *lolia* or *lollia* ("tares"); and that Walter probably was called Lollardus for his sowing of tares among the good wheat of the Church. In the second year of Henry IV. heretics were also left to be dealt with by the clergy at their own discretion, provided always that the proceedings against them were publicly and judicially ended within three months. The end might be a sentence of imprisonment or fine to any extent, or a delivering over to the secular power to be burnt to death before the people. No time was lost by Archbishop Arundel in exercising this new privilege. In February, 1401, William Sawtree (Salter), priest of St. Osyth's in London, was burnt alive in Smithfield. In 1410 the Commons of England prayed the king for repeal or mitigation of the statute against the Lollards. The king said that he wished it had been more severe, and immediately signed a warrant for the burning of a blacksmith named John Badby.

Henry Knighton, who wrote during this reign a Latin chronicle of events in England from the time of King Edgar to the death of Richard II., is full of bitterness against the Lollards. He was a regular canon of the abbey of Leicester; and of Wiclif's translation of the Bible into English his chronicle said: "This Master John Wiclif translated into the Anglic—not angelic—tongue the Gospel that Christ gave to the clergy and the doctors of the Church, that they might minister it gently to laymen and weaker persons, according to the exigence of their time, their personal wants, and the hunger of their minds, whence it is made vulgar by him, and more open to the reading of laymen and women than it usually is to the knowledge of lettered and intelligent clergy; and thus the pearl of the Gospel is cast forth and trodden under feet of swine."

There was only one other writer who produced a book of any note during the reign of Henry IV., and he was a Dominican —**John of Bromyard**—bitter as Knighton in assault upon the Lollards. John of Bromyard, in Herefordshire, taught theology at Cambridge, and his great work, among others upon theological, civil, and moral law, was a *Summa Predicantium*, an alphabetical compilation of material for use in preaching, arranged under such heads as Abstinence, Absolution, Avarice,

and ending in Xhristus; a work upon so large a scale that when first printed at Nürnberg, in 1485, it filled a thousand large folio pages of double-column black letter. It is an earnest, erudite, and interesting mass of mediæval practical theology.

5. Of our three poets of chief mark during the former haif of the fifteenth century, two, John Lydgate and Thomas Occleve, were men about thirty years old at the time of Chaucer's death. They were more than forty when Henry IV. died; but neither of them seems to have attempted to produce any important work during his reign. The third poet, a younger man, was **James I. of Scotland,** whom Henry IV. made his prisoner in 1405.

The father of James I. was John, who, in 1390, succeeded his father, Robert II., as Robert III. The Scottish nobles had been bred by the long contest with England to use of arms, and were not nice as to the amount of liberty they took. Robert III. was weak, and the Estates of Scotland in Parliament assembled made him answerable for all that the people suffered by misgovernment. In 1398 they transferred his power to his son, whom they made acting-lieutenant for his father, with the title of Duke of Rothsay. Robert III. had also a brother, who was made at the same time Duke of Albany. In 1402 the Duke of Albany contrived to get his nephew the acting-lieutenant into a prison, from which he was soon afterwards brought out for burial. The king had another son, the boy James; but Albany became sole Governor of Scotland in a time of trouble. The Percys were preparing insurrection against Henry IV.; they were in secret alliance with Owen Glendower, who had so headed a Welsh struggle for independence as to be for a time King of Wales. Percy, in defiance of a royal order, released Douglas and other Scots taken at Homildon Hill. Douglas marched into England, joined Percy, and shared defeat with him at Shrewsbury. Albany had raised an army, and masked his designs; but if he had meant to join Percy he was too late. He then favoured the fiction, or maintained the fact, that in Scotland King Richard II. was still living. Either Henry IV. had produced some other body as that of the dead Richard in St. Paul's; or Albany was showing somebody else as the live Richard in Scotland, for his own future benefit as ruler there. Probably it was Albany who, in 1405, contrived that his nephew James, then a boy of eleven, should, during a time of truce, be intercepted by an armed ship of the English when

upon his voyage to France, whither he was being sent for education. In the following year King Robert died, and the boy of twelve became King James I.; but the Duke of Albany, aged sixty-seven, with a son, Murdoch, to leave in his place, was actually reigning sovereign of Scotland. Thus the boy-king, James I., received his education as a prisoner at the English court, and was a young man of about nineteen, with some genius as a poet and much energy of character, when Henry IV. died and bequeathed the care of him to his son Henry V. Henry V. was also counselled by his father to divert the attention of the English from domestic griefs by foreign war.

Before the death of Henry IV. in England, the northern districts of the Scottish Lowlands were, in 1411, threatened with a descent of Highland marauders in unexampled force, under Donald, the Lord of the Isles. There was a hasty gathering of defenders under Alexander Stewart, Earl of Mar, who checked the advance of the Highlanders at the *Battle of Harlaw*. Poems were written on this battle; Scottish schoolboys took sides, and played at it. Harlaw remained the name of a tune in the beginning of the seventeenth century.

6. During the reign of Henry V. (1413—1422), James I. of Scotland remained prisoner at the English court; well educated, trained in English laws and customs, and to be released when further bound by marriage with a lady of the royal family of England. Nature assisted Henry's policy, for a true affection sprang up between King James and the Lady Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, niece to King Henry IV., and first cousin to Henry V. The love was celebrated in a poem known as *The King's Quair*, that is, "King's Little Book," from the old French *quayer* or *cayer*, modern French *cahier*. This is a graceful piece of court poetry, inspired by love and a study of Chaucer, and written in Chaucer's own seven-lined stanza, which long remained a favourite with his successors. It has been called rhyme royal, because this particular disciple used it. The "King's Quair" is in six cantos. It begins with (1) the poet in his bed at midnight reading Boëthius, thinking of the wheel of fortune, and likening his own life to a ship among black rocks with empty sail; proceeds (2) to tell of his capture in boyhood, his listening from his prison window to the love-songs of the birds, his wonder what love is, till looking down he saw walking under his tower, newly come to make her morning orisons, the lady whose thrall he became. When she was gone

he lamented, till at evening he lay with his head against a stone, half sleeping, half in swoon with sorrow. Then (3) a dazzling light seemed to come in at the window whereat he leant, and a voice said, "I bring thee comfort and heal; be not afraid." The light went out, and he rose through sphere and sphere to Venus, with her allegorical court, and made his plaint to her. She sent him to Minerva. He went then (4) to Minerva, who bade him base his love on virtue, be true, and meek, and steadfast in his thought, doing fit service to his lady in word and work, and so abide his time. The poet declared in three stanzas that his love was pure as his desire was great.

> "'Desire,' quod she, 'I nyl it not deny,
> So thou it ground and set in Christin wise.'"

Then at the bidding of Minerva the poet went (5) to Fortune, whose dwelling is, of course, allegorically described. Fortune placed him on her wheel, bade him take heed, and took him by the ear "so earnestly that therewithal I woke." The next and last canto (6) tells how the poet rose from his uneasy sleep and went to the window, where a white turtle-dove, the bird of Venus, alighted on his hand, and turning to him showed him in her bill a fair branch of red gilly-flowers with their green stalks, which had written in gold on every leaf a message of glad comfort to the lover. King James I. ended his poem with a strain of true love, thanked the prison wall from which he had looked forth and leaned, and rejoiced in the unfading flower of his love. An epilogue, or "excusation of the author," represents James, king though he be, acknowledging his "masters" in three poets, whose royalty was more than the inheritance of worldly rank, Gower and Chaucer, and next to these John Lydgate, who, when the young king wrote his poem, was first in repute among men of the generation after Chaucer.

7. **John Lydgate** was born not later than 1370, in Suffolk, at the village of Lydgate, six or seven miles from Newmarket. In the Benedictine Monastery of Bury St. Edmunds he was ordained subdeacon in 1389, deacon in 1393, and priest in 1397. After studying at Oxford, Paris, and Padua, he opened a school of rhetoric at his monastery of Bury St. Edmunds, where Dan (that is Dominus) John Lydgate, the Monk of Bury, became a famous teacher of literature and the art of versifying. He was well read in ancient lore, mathematician also and astronomer as well as orator and poet; a bright, pleasant, and earnest man

who wrote clear fluent verse in any style then reputable, but who was most apt at the telling of such moral stories as his public liked. Sometimes he was as prolix, and he always was as musical, as the old romancers who had been satirised by Chaucer in Sir Thopas; but he preferred to take his heroes and heroines out of the Martyrology, and he could write pleasantly to order for the library of any monastery the legend of its patron saint. Since he wrote so much (there are not less than 250 works bearing his name), and almost always as a story-teller, he found many readers, and his rhyming supplied some of the favourite tales of his time. He turned into smooth English verse the tales of Troy and Thebes. He elevated into an English poem that best of the Latin works of Boccaccio which tells and moralises tales of the mutations of affairs of men from Adam downward. These were his three chief works; but they were written in the reign of Henry VI. Lydgate wrote for Henry V. the "Life of our Lady;" he sang the tale of St. Alban, the English protomartyr, of his own St. Edmund, and of many a saint more. He could catch the strain of popular song, and satirize the licking up of money which leaves the poor man hopeless of justice in his *London Lickpenny*, whereof the measure is enlivened with the street-cries of his time. He could write morality in the old court allegorical style; he could kneel at the foot of the Cross and offer to his God the sacrifice of a true outburst of such song as there was in him. John Lydgate was not a poet of great genius, but he was a man with music in his life. He was full of a harmony of something more than words, not more diffuse than his age liked him to be, and, therefore, with good reason, popular and honoured among English readers in the fifteenth century.

8. **Thomas Occleve**, the other chief poet of the generation after Chaucer, was of the same age as Lydgate, and, like Lydgate, about thirty years old when Chaucer died. He was a Londoner, and knew Chaucer; evidently he refers to a personal relation between them when he speaks of himself as Chaucer's disciple. In his earlier years he lived in the Strand, at Chester's Inn, one of the buildings pulled down for the site of Somerset House. He says that his life was ill regulated in his youth, but says this in a poem designed for moral counsel to young men—*La Male Regle de T. Hoccleve*—of which the purpose doubtless led to a half-artistic exaggeration of self-censure. We know Occleve tolerably well through his chief poem, for the long original

introduction to his version of the *De Regimine Principum*, or "Governail of Princes" (ch. iv. § 43), consists wholly of moral reflections on the manners of his time, interspersed with references to his own position in a government office as clerk of the Privy Seal. He was married, had a household to provide for, and could not get his salary paid, or an annuity for life of twenty marks which had been nominally granted him. Therefore he took a melancholy morning walk and met an old man, who asked what was his trouble. Was it love, was it care of abundance, was it care of poverty, was it heresy?—and here six stanzas are given to a recollection of the burning of John Badby, at which Henry V., then prince, showed his humanity. When Badby was brought to the stake, and a barrel was prepared in which to burn him, the prince spoke to him kindly and urged recantation. Badby, remaining firm, was put into the barrel, and the burning fuel was heaped round it. The prince, moved by his cries of agony, caused the fuel to be cleared from about him, and again, when he was half dead, spoke to him, offering to procure pardon and even a pension. Badby still was firm; the prince, with some anger, ordered the fuel to be heaped round him again, and he was burned to ashes as a hopeless heretic. When the old man had preached upon the sin of heresy, Occleve answered that this was not his trouble. The old man was pleased, and urged next that his counsel was not to be despised for his poor habit; this text giving occasion for much moral satire on extravagance of costume in Henry V.'s time. Then the moralist turned from his poverty to his age, and found occasion to touch on the riotous excesses of the young. Finally he got from the poet a full account of the cause of his trouble. A lively dialogue followed on that, giving occasion, as that was taken throughout, for earnest words upon all evils of the time, from the self-seeking churchmen to the length of side sleeves. The old man's advice was that Occleve should write to the prince something in English, but "write to him no thing that sowneth to vice," and show himself to be a man who deserved payment of arrears of salary. In obedience to this counsel, he translated for Henry V. the book "De Regimine Principum," digested into practical counsel, not without reminder of the unpaid annuity, and towards the end with deprecation of the wars between the Kings of France and England, and an invocation of peace for the land. "Let Christian kings," he says, "war only on the enemies of Christ."

Were they the men accused of heresy? Occleve—earnest

and liberal in many things, and in this lighter poem, written in English and in Chaucer's stanza, seeking to find out the wrong and get it undone, with as much earnestness as Gower in his "Vox Clamantis," while he pointed to the corruption of the clergy—was, like Gower, an orthodox maintainer of Church doctrine. We find, therefore, that he assented to the new endeavour to save as it was thought many from the everlasting fire by giving some to be burnt publicly in this world.

9. In the second year of Henry V., in 1414, a new law passed against the Lollards, which ordained that they should forfeit all the lands they had in fee-simple, and all their goods and chattels, to the king. The same Act decreed that whatsoever they were that should read the Scriptures in their mother tongue, they should forfeit "land, catel, lif, and godes from their heyres for ever, and so be condempned for heretykes to God, enemies to the crowne, and most errant traitors to the lande."

On Christmas morning, in 1417, Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, a brave knight of unblemished life, who held the tenets of Wiclif, and had opened his doors at Cowling Castle to the persecuted teachers of the Lollards, was hung up by the middle in an iron chain upon a gallows in St. Giles's Fields, and burnt alive while thus suspended. The last words heard from him were praise of God, into whose hands he resigned his soul.

Chichele was then primate, violent as Arundel in vindictive dread of Lollard attacks on the Church temporalities. It was he who led his clergy when they urged the ready King Henry V., who was twenty-five years old and had a military genius, to follow his father's counsel, and divert attention of the people from domestic needs by foreign war. The war was based upon unjust claims of dominion over France; claims which the English primate and his party declared to be just and lawful.

Henry V., although essentially a soldier and intemperate in war, was temperate in life, well taught, and had respect for scholars. His ambassador in Spain in 1422 was **William Lindwood,** an Oxford divinity professor, who wrote the *Constitutions of the Archbishops of Canterbury, from Langton to Chichele.* Lindwood was made Bishop of St. Davids in 1434, and died in 1446. He had been preceded in his bishopric by an astronomer, named Rocleve, who had been among the friends of Henry V., and to whom the king gave that see. But most closely attached to Henry V. was the most famous English theologian of his day, **Thomas Netter,** of Saffron Walden, in

Essex, who was born in 1380, and educated at Oxford, where he was Doctor of Divinity, and publicly disputed against Wiclif's doctrines. He became a Carmelite in London, went to the Council of Pisa, in 1414 became Provincial of the Carmelites in England, and as such was a distinguished member of the Council of Constance (§ 3). Thomas Netter, of Walden, was regarded by the orthodox as prince of controversialists in the fifteenth century. The chief of his numerous works was a *Doctrinale*, which is a long and systematic theological assertion of Church doctrine against Wiclif heresies. He also put together *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*—Bundles of Master John Wiclif's tares with wheat—which contain the statute for the burning of heretics; the bull of John XXIII. against Wiclif's heresies; condemned opinions of Wiclif; sentence passed on him and on John Huss; accusations against Jerome of Prague; divers condemned errors of Lollards and others; the latest topic being the examination of William White, September 13th, 1428, at which Thomas of Walden was himself present, two years before his death. This theologian was Inquisitor-General in England for the punishing of heretics. He had business in Lithuania after the close of the Council of Constance, in 1418, and upon his return was made confessor to King Henry V.

10. In August, 1415, Henry had crossed to France. On the 25th of the following October he won the battle of Agincourt, and closed the victory with a barbarous massacre of prisoners. Two chroniclers of English history were present at the fight. One, John de Wavrin, fought on the French side, but two years later joined the French allies of England. He wrote afterwards a chronicle of English history from the earliest years, which he brought down to the year 1471. He is also probably the anonymous continuer (from 1443) of the chronicle of Monstrelet, who died in 1453. The other soldier of Agincourt who has left us a chronicle was an Englishman, **John Harding.** He was born in 1378; at the age of twelve was admitted into the house of Sir Henry Percy, known as Hotspur, and served as a volunteer under Percy in the battle of Homildon. After Percy's death John Harding followed the banner of Sir Robert Umfraville, who died in 1436, and became constable of one of his castles. John Harding, in and after the reign of Henry V., was much employed in procuring documents—some of them forgeries—in support of the claim on the kings of Scotland for homage to the kings of England. His English rhyming *Chronicle* was not written

until after the reign of Henry V. But Henry V. was King of England when a rhyming chronicle was written in English of the north, the *Oryginale Cronykil of Scotland*, by **Andrew of Wyntoun,** a regular canon of St. Andrew's, and prior of one of the five subordinated monasteries of St. Andrew's, that of St. Serf, in the island of Lochleven, once a religious house of the Culdees. Andrew of Wyntoun crowded into his nine books of ingenious eight-syllabled doggrel a great number of facts and traditions.

11. We had English verse also from **William of Nassington,** in Northamptonshire, a proctor in the Ecclesiastical Court of York, who translated into English rhyme a Latin metrical treatise on the Trinity and Unity, called *The Mirror of Life.* The translation was made before the year 1400. The original, in several thousand verses, was by John of Waldly, in Yorkshire, an Augustine Friar, provincial of his order in England, and active in controversy against Wiclif.

12. The chief Latin chronicler of the reign of Henry V. was **Thomas Walsingham,** precentor and chief copyist, or scriptorarius, in St. Albans Abbey, where in his time, by his advice, a new Scriptorium was built. He used records produced in the form of chronicle by preceding monks of St. Albans—**William Rishanger, John of Trokelowe, Henry of Blaneford, William Wyntershylle,**—in the formation of an English history, *Historia Anglicana*, which extends from 1272 to the end of the reign of Henry V., in 1422. He also compiled, about the year 1419, his *Ypodgima Neustriæ*, or "Demonstration of Events in Normandy," dedicated to Henry V. in compliment upon his recent conquests of Normandy; but the affairs of Normandy form only a small portion of the work.

13. We may now pass out of the reign of Henry V., who died at the end of August, 1422. When the penitential psalms were being read to him on his death-bed, the words "Thou shalt build the walls of Jerusalem" put into his head more fighting, and he said, "If I had finished the war in France, and established peace, I would have gone to Palestine to redeem the holy city from the Saracens."

He left an infant son, Henry VI. (1422—1461), King of England, and he named his brother Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, regent of England. Parliament gave chief power to the Duke of Bedford, who was made Regent of France, and the Duke of Gloucester was made President of the Council, as "Protector

of the Realm and Church of England," when Bedford was away in France. This Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, was the patron of **John Lydgate,** who died about 1460.

For him Lydgate wrote, in the reign of Henry VI., his *Falls of Princes*, a long poem in Chaucer's seven-lined stanza, founded upon Boccaccio's Latin prose work in nine books, "De Casibus Illustrium Virorum;" but Lydgate said that he followed Boccaccio through the version of a Frenchman, Laurent, that is Laurent de Premierfait, who translated also the "Decameron" for Jeanne, Queen of Navarre. Lydgate interspersed his work with occasional prologues and balades of his own, while he retold the stories, not as a mere rhyming translator, but as a man who had an honest gift of song and felt their poetry. There passes through the reader's mind a funeral pomp of men who have been carried high on Fortune's wheel, and then been bruised to death by its descending stroke. The poem warns the mighty to be humble, and the lowly to be well content.

The Storie of Thebes is told by Lydgate as another "Canterbury Tale." After a sickness he went in a black cope, "on palfrey slender, long, and lean," with rusty bridle, and his man before him carrying an empty pack, to the shrine at Canterbury, and by accident put up there at the inn where Chaucer's pilgrims were assembled. There he saw the host of the "Tabard," who thought him lean for a monk, prescribed nut-brown ale after supper, with anise, cummin, or coriander seed at bedtime. But the best medicine was cheerful company. So Dan John supped with the pilgrims, went home with them next day, and helped to amuse them with the story of the "Thebaid" of Statius, as it had been manipulated by the romancers of the Middle Ages.

Lydgate's *Troy Book* is a metrical version from a French translation of the "Historia Trojana" of Guido della Colonna, a Sicilian poet and lawyer of Messina, who came to England in 1287 with Edward I., when he returned from his war in Asia. Colonna's "Trojan History" was a version from the "Fall of Troy" ascribed to Dares (ch. iii. § 21).

14. The author of the "King's Quair," **James I.** of Scotland, went home to his Scotch throne not very long after the death of Henry V. His love was first crowned by marriage to Jane Beaufort with royal state; he was then allowed to proceed to his kingdom, and was crowned at Scone in May of the year 1424. He sought to maintain peace and order in his kingdom,

endeavoured to bring law and justice within reach of the poor, regulated weights and measures, established a survey of property with a view to justice in taxation, and made careful inquiry into titles. He tried to suppress with a strong hand the violence of faction. But the enlarged liberties of the people pressed on the feudal rights of the nobles. Many a rough-handed chief looked also with concern at the inquiry into titles. Sir Robert Graham, who had denounced the king as a tyrant for his encroachment on the nobles, at last broke in upon him with three hundred Highlanders, on the 20th of February, 1437, caught him unarmed, and killed him. He defended himself bravely, and his wife Jane, who sought to shelter him, was wounded in the struggle. He had written of her truly in the "King's Quair:"

> "And thus this floure . . .
> So hertly has unto my help attendit,
> That from the deth hir man sche has defendit."

There remained only a six year old son to be the king's successor.

Some writers ascribe to James I. of Scotland, and some to James IV., two humorous old Scottish poems describing the rough holiday life of the people. They are called *Peeblis to the Play* and *Christis Kirk of the Green*. If they were really by James I., he must have had a range of power that would place him first among the poets of his time.

15. The death of Charles VI. of France made the infant Henry VI. of England, by the Treaty of Troyes, sovereign of France; but this claim was resisted. Then followed contention, wasting life and honour; the patriotic inspiration, the success, and the disgrace to England of the burning of Jeanne d'Arc, after her abandonment and sale by men of her own country. Slowly the French ground was reconquered by the French, and England fell under the plague of civil war. In this contest between the rival lines of York and Lancaster first blood was drawn in the battle of St. Albans, on the 22nd of May, 1455; but after this there was, during four or five years, rest from the actual clash of arms, while strife continued for supremacy under the feeble rule of a king whose mind, weak through disease, swayed in its clearer hours towards a kindly piety.

16. During this interval **Reginald Pecock**, author of the most important English prose work written in the reign of Henry VI., was called to account for the free spirit shown not

in attack upon the higher clergy, but in defence of them. Reginald Pecock, probably a Welshman, was born towards the end of the fourteenth century, studied at Oriel College, Oxford, and was admitted to priest's orders in 1421. In 1431 John Lydgate's patron, the Protector, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, made Pecock Master of Whittington College, and Rector of St. Michael in Riola. For the next thirteen years he lived in London, taking active interest in the religious controversies that were still astir, and seeking by many tracts, written in English, to convince the Lollards. About 1440 he produced a *Donet*, or introduction to the chief truths of Christianity, in a dialogue between father and son. The second part was against the Lollards. A *Follower of Donet* appeared some years later. In 1444, Humphrey of Gloucester, a lover of books and patron of learning, made Pecock Bishop of St. Asaph. At the same time he became Doctor of Divinity. Bishop Pecock undertook to defend his order against popular aspersions, and in 1447 preached at Paul's Cross a sermon arguing that, although he often preached in his own diocese, bishops were free from the burden of preaching, because they had duties of a higher character; and that when they were non-resident they had good reason for being so. This sermon was the beginning of a course of offence against the Church, consisting mainly in a defence based upon arguments addressed to the reason. About the year 1449 Pecock was busy upon his chief work, *The Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy;* and in the same year he was raised from the Bishopric of St. Asaph to that of Chichester. His "Repressor," although wholly meant as a defence of the higher clergy against those who were called the Bible men, increased the hostility of his own party against him. He undertook to justify eleven, but did in fact restrict himself to six, of the practices for which the clergy incurred blame among the people: these were, the use of images; the going on pilgrimage; the holding of landed possessions by the clergy; the various ranks of the hierarchy; the framing of Church laws by papal and episcopal authority; and the institution of the religious orders. For discussion of the other five points he referred to other books of his, written or about to be written. Upon the topics it discussed the book was a repertory of fifteenth century argument. The offence was that the whole subject was argued out in homely English for discussion by the English people; for while Pecock exalted the pope's supremacy, he conceded to his

opponents that in Scripture was the only rule of faith, and urged that doctrine should be proved therefrom by reason. This, however, he did while opposing the demand of the Lollards—Puritans of the fifteenth century—for authority of Scripture in less important matters of usage, lay or clerical. There could be no real conflict between reason and Scripture, Pecock taught, and the clergy, he said, shall be condemned at the last day "if by clear wit they draw not men into consent of true faith otherwise than by fire, sword, and hangment; although I will not deny these second means to be lawful, provided the former be first used." A bishop who thought for himself after this fashion; denying to the Lollards that deductions from their reading of the Bible were infallible, denying also to his brethren of the hierarchy the right to claim an uninquiring faith in dogmas of the Church; opposed himself to the passions of the combatants on either side, and had no partisans. In 1457 a council was held at Westminster, in which all temporal lords refused to speak till Pecock had been expelled from it. The divines at this council appointed four-and-twenty doctors to examine Pecock's books. The books were reported against, Pecock was declared a sickly sheep, and called upon to abjure or be burnt. He had admitted the right of the Church thus to compel opinion, and he submitted. The executioner burnt, instead of the bishop, his works in three folios and eleven quartos, including a copy of that "Repressor" of his, a piece of natural fifteenth century English, which yet survives as one of the best and most considerable specimens of early prose among the treasures of our literature. After some months Bishop Pecock was deprived of his see, and secluded in the abbey of Thorney in Cambridgeshire, where he was confined to a private room within sight of an altar, was forbidden ever again to put pen to paper, and was to have access to no books but a breviary, a mass-book, a psalter, a legend, and a Bible. The doors of Thorney Abbey closed on him.

17. There is little more to record of our literature in the reign of Henry VI. Dame **Juliana Berners**, lady prioress of the nunnery of Sopwell, near St. Albans, who was living in 1460, wrote in English verse a *Book of Hunting*, and in English prose the *Art of Hawking* and the *Laws of Arms*.

18. **John Capgrave,** born in 1393, at Lynn in Norfolk, died in 1464 Provincial of the Austin Friars. He excelled all men of the reign of Henry VI. in the industry of a great erudition without genius. He was a hearty orthodox churchman,

who detested Wiclif and his followers, but as an Englishman sympathised with resistance to aggressions of the papal see upon his king's prerogative or the just rights of his countrymen. His chief works are a *Book of the Noble Henries*, dedicated to King Henry VI., and a *Chronicle of England*, dedicated to King Edward IV.

19. Throughout the reign of Henry VI., and on into the reign of Henry VII., extends, from 1422 to 1505, the large body of family and friendly correspondence known as the *Paston Letters.* Most of them are addressed to John Paston, Esq., of Norfolk, who died in 1466; to Sir John Paston, his son, who died in 1479; and to John Paston of Gelston, who died in 1503. They abound in interesting illustrations of our civil and social history during the Wars of the Roses.

20. A most valuable record of the Transition English of Norfolk in the year 1440 is the *Promptorium Parvulorum*, an English-Latin Dictionary, compiled by one of the Dominicans or Black Friars, of Bishop's Lynn. He was known as **Geoffrey the Grammarian**, and is believed to have been also the author of a Latin-English Dictionary, which he called the *Medulla Grammatices.* The Latin interpretations in the *Promptorium* enable us to define the meaning of many now obsolete words in books written before the Commonwealth.

21. **John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester**, whom Henry VI. made Lord Deputy of Ireland, and who afterwards was Lord High Constable and Lord High Treasurer, had scholarly tastes, and was translating *Cicero on Friendship* at the time when the first printers with movable types were establishing their art in Mayence. During the short interval of restored rule to Henry VI., breaking the reign of Edward IV., John Tiptoft was accused of cruelty in his Irish administration, and he was executed on Tower Hill in October, 1470.

Benedict Burgh, Archdeacon of Colchester, was then at work upon his translation of Cato's "Morals" into English stanzas, for the use of his pupil Lord Bourchier, son of the Earl of Essex. Benedict Burgh is said also to have finished a metrical version of the *De Regimine Principum*, which Lydgate had left incomplete. Burgh himself died in 1488.

22. **Thomas Chestre**, who wrote for the minstrels in the reign of Henry VI., Englished the *Lay of Sir Launfal;* but the most famous minstrel of this time was a Scottish rustic, blind from birth, known as Henry the Minstrel, or **Blind**

Harry, who obtained food and clothing by recitation of stories before men of the highest rank. He was one of an order of men who sang or chanted tales to the harp, in verses often of their own composing, enlivened with mimicry and action. Blind Harry, who understood Latin and French, produced a long poem on his nation's hero, *Wallace*, in or about the year 1461. He was the first who followed Chaucer in use of the heroic couplet; and he calls his poem a chronicle derived chiefly from the Latin of John Blair, who had been Wallace's school-fellow.

23. Of our literature during the reign of Edward IV. (1461—1483) there is only one thing more to be said that is not connected with the introduction of the art of printing with movable types into this country. Even when distracted by contending factions, England was advancing towards freedom. The laws of the country were not based like those of France upon the principle that the will of the monarch is law, but on the will of the people through their representatives. An English lawyer, **Sir John Fortescue**, born in Devonshire, and Chief Justice of the King's Bench from 1442 to 1460, fought at Towton, and fled with King Henry VI. to Scotland and Wales. The exiled king made him his nominal Lord Chancellor. The actual king confiscated his possessions as those of a traitor. As an exile in Lorraine with the queen and prince, he wrote, about the year 1463, for the use of the young prince, a Latin book in praise of the laws of England (*De Laudibus Legum Angliæ*) in dialogue between himself and the prince. It is a simple sketch of the first principles of law. He wrote afterwards in like spirit an English book on the *Difference between Absolute and Limited Monarchy*, his chief object being to show the superiority of a constitutional over a despotic government. After Henry VI. and the prince were dead, Sir John Fortescue acknowledged Edward IV.'s title to the crown, and thus he obtained in 1473 the reversal of his attainder. He is said to have lived to the age of ninety. The strength of constitutional feeling in this chief English lawyer of the fifteenth century may be inferred from his manner of dating the absolute regal dominion from Nimrod, who "first acquired to himself a kingdom, though he is not called a King in the Scripture, but a Mighty Hunter before the Lord. For," says Fortescue, "as a Hunter behaves towards Beasts, which are naturally wild and free; so did he oblige Mankind to be in servitude and to obey him." He went back even to the mythical

time for the free spirit of the English body politic. "The kingdom of England," he says, "had its original from Brut and the Trojans who attended him from Italy and Greece, and became a mixed kind of government, compounded of the regal and political." Going as far back as he could, he was unable to find or conceive an English people passively obedient to any one irresponsible master. The nation was advancing slowly in his days; there was social confusion, and intellectual life seemed to be numbed, while events of great moment were happening abroad. But if there was no guiding light of genius, there was the sense of God and duty in the people which enabled them to find their own way till the next guides came.

The rise in Florence of the Medici family; the Capture of Constantinople by the Turks; and the Invention of Printing, were, during the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV., the events abroad which had most influence upon the course of thought in England.

24. It had been to Florence that the pope elected by the Council of Constance (§ 3), Martin V., finding himself one of four, and unable to get immediate possession of his rights at Rome, betook himself in the year 1419. This was when Henry V. was King of England; and about the time when Occleve was writing his chief poems, and James I. of Scotland was writing the "King's Quair." For a year and a half a papal court was added to the pomps of the free city. The deposed pope, John XXIII., presently came to Florence, made his submission, and died there, leaving the founder of the great Medici family, Giovanni de' Medici, one of his four executors. At this time the wealth of trading Florence was augmented by the purchase of Leghorn and its port from Genoa. The free commonwealth was unrivalled in commercial prosperity. Its citizens were active in all quarters of the world. There was a treaty even with the Soldan of Babylon for currency within his realm of the coin of Florence. The strength thus gathered was soon to be absorbed and exhausted in the domination of the Medici; but the founder of that family, the rich banker Giovanni, made Gonfaloniere in 1421, owed his political rise to his goodwill towards the people. The war with Filippo Visconti, Duke of Milan, begun by Florence in 1423, was to check aggression upon the free cities of Tuscany. But the war began ill, and Florence might have fallen in the fight for liberty if Venice had not at last consented to alliance with her. Victory cost Florence three and

a half millions of florins; and the popular Giovanni de' Medici, who had been at the head of a peace party, obtained political supremacy by the invention and establishment of an equitable income-tax for payment of the public debts. The tax was half per cent. on incomes, as a forced loan to the Government at five per cent.; or a third part of the tax might be paid, with abandonment of right to interest and repayment. Money was worth much more than five per cent. to the traders of Florence; but the deductions allowed before charging for this income-tax secured to every one untaxed his house, his horse, and two hundred florins a year for each mouth in his household. Thus there was a protection against general discontent, and licence for irregular taxation. The half per cent., or decima, was soon taken as the mere unit of calculation, and forced loans of this or that number of decimas, for this or that new exigence of the State, might afterwards be raised at the discretion of the ruler. Such loans were raised now and then as often as twelve times a year, to feed the magnificence of one man at the expense of commerce which had given freedom and strength to the city, and which had sent up that strong shoot of artistic life whereof the later Medici consumed the fruit.

In 1429 Giovanni died, "enormously rich in treasure, but richer still in good repute," lord only of his counting-house. He had steadily rejected the advice of his son Cosmo that he should take advantage of his position in the city by placing himself at the head of the popular party against the weaker faction of the aristocracy, and so rise to political power.

When Cosmo became chief of his house he became chief also of the popular party, which he made a faction. It was faction against faction, chief against chief, and some began to ask themselves to which of the chiefs Florence would have to yield her independence. Cosmo's antagonists achieved his banishment, and thereby added to his strength. Venice welcomed him, Florence missed him. Friends and poor citizens suffered for want of access to the purse by which he made himself beloved. A signory favourable to the Medici was voted into office; the aristocratic faction failed in an attempt at armed resistance; and Cosmo was recalled, to enter Florence in great triumph as the father of his country. His first care was for the exile, fine, imprisonment, or death of the stronger men of the opposite side. Having weeded out enemies, or suspected enemies, he and his comrades strengthened new men into serviceable

friends, divided the goods of the outlawed, made new and convenient laws, suppressed elections of unfriendly magistrates, and took means, by bribing and by tampering with the purses from which names of magistrates were drawn, to confine to men of their own faction all offices in which power of life and death was vested. Power of life and death was given to the eight; chance of return was almost wholly cut off from the exiles. Thus the faction led by Cosmo was supreme. It has been said that to a remonstrance on the ruin caused to the city by so many deaths and fines and banishments of worthy citizens, Cosmo replied that a city ruined was better than a city lost, and that it cost only a few yards of red cloth to make more citizens worshipful. Twenty families, says one old historian, were banished by the Medici for every one that suffered with them. The exiled leader of the aristocratic faction invited the arms of the tyrant of Milan to an attack on Florence; and the city again fought manfully against foreign despotism while her liberties were sickening at home.

Then came the time when the fall of Constantinople was impending. Greek Christians, who sought aid from the nations of the West, made politic effort to heal the division upon points of ceremonial between the Eastern and the Western Churches. The Council of Basle, transferred to Ferrara, and again to Florence, brought together in Florence, in the year 1439, the Pope Eugenius IV. and the Patriarch Joseph of Constantinople, with many Greek bishops and scholars, and also the unfortunate Greek Emperor, John Palæologus. Talk of Plato thus first became familiar to the chiefs of Florentine society. The Eastern Church assented in five articles to Western opinion, and united itself to the Church of Rome. But as this act of union did not secure the desired end of saving Constantinople from the Turk, after the fall of the Eastern capital the two Churches fell back into their old state of schism. More came of the intellectual appetite of the rich merchants and bankers of Florence for commerce with men who had something new to traffic in—Greek manuscripts worth reading, and the skill to read them.

25. The Byzantine Empire had in 1425, by a treaty of the Emperor John Palæologus II., been reduced to Constantinople and its environs, with some outlying places. These were held subject to a yearly tribute, which transferred the larger part of their revenues to the Turk. The treaty was observed by

Sultan Amurath II. But his son Mohammed II., in the third year of his reign, began, at the age of about three-and-twenty, his career of conquest by overthrowing all that remained of the Roman Empire in the East. After fifty-eight days' siege, he took Constantinople by storm, on the 29th of May, in the year 1453. Five years later he made himself master of the Morea. Occupation of Greece by the Turks drove the Greek patriots and scholars into exile. They sought a livelihood in foreign capitals by teaching their old language, and diffusing knowledge of the treasures of its literature. Thus Greek became a part of European scholarship, and Plato lived again, to join the ranks of the reformers.

It was of a Spartan in Paris, who supported himself also by skill with his pen as a copyist, that John Reuchlin had learnt, before he sought more at Florence from Argyropoulos its first famous teacher there, Greek enough to surprise the patriot with speech in his own tongue from a German, and cause him to say, "Alas, Greece is already banished beyond the Alps." Argyropoulos, fugitive to Florence after the capture of Constantinople, had been welcomed by Cosmo de' Medici, appointed tutor to his sons Lorenzo and Pietro, and established as a professor of Greek, with pupils, among whom was Politian. Among other Greeks who came to Florence was the venerable George Gemisthus Pletho, whose long life had been spent in enthusiastic study of Plato, and who lectured upon him to the Italians, maintaining his philosophy as partisan of Plato against Aristotle. Cosmo de' Medici, his constant hearer, received his opinions. While he was steadily pursuing his design to become sovereign in Florence, the head of the great banking-house which spread its branches over Europe set a fashion for the collecting of Greek manuscripts, proceeded towards the establishment of a Platonic academy in Florence, and educated young Marsilio Ficino specially in Platonism, that he might become its head.

John Argyropoulos worked at Aristotle; but the new teachers were generally Platonists, reading their Plato with the glosses of the mystical school of Neoplatonists, whose philosophy had been in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries at war with Christianity; but in this fifteenth century became indirectly an aid in the reformation of the Christian Church. To the corrupt society of Italy Platonism gave some grace of heathendom and many affectations. To men of the Teutonic or English race, and others who

went to Florence to learn Greek, the new study gave something more. Earnest minds that were battling with the strong animal nature of the Church passed, through the new study, to works of a heathen philosopher who saw a divine soul in the world towards which by heavenward aspiration souls of men could rise. "But if the company will be persuaded by me," wrote Plato, in the tenth book of the Republic, "considering the soul to be immortal and able to bear all evil and good, we shall always persevere in the road which leads upwards, and shall by all means follow justice with prudence; that so we may be friends to ourselves and to the gods, both while we remain here, and when we afterwards receive its rewards, like victors assembled together; and so both here and in that journey of a thousand years we shall be happy." The Neoplatonists had grafted extreme doctrines of purification and subjection of man's animal nature upon the teaching in Plato's "Phædo," that a soul given to fleshly pleasures takes taint of the flesh. They were connected by their faith with the divine essence, and upon many of the best minds of Europe the new study of Greek through such reading of Plato came as a new impulse to conflict with the sensuality which had become the scandal of the Church of Rome. Plato was thus associated among such men with the cause of progress; while Aristotle, of whose teaching the knowledge had been long since diffused by the Arabians through translation, supplied forms for conventional thought, and, eager pioneer as he had been, was made the idol of the schoolmen who stood on the ancient ways. The fall of Constantinople made Plato a power in Europe. So it was that those of the clergy who shrank from the quickened tendency among good scholars to attack their flesh-pots, gave currency to the proverb, "Beware of the Greeks, lest you be made a heretic."

26. It was at this time that the future influence of every wise thought was enlarged by the Invention of Printing. In the year of the battle of St. Albans, 1455, the Bible called the Mazarin Bible, because it was first found in the library of Cardinal Mazarin, was printed at Mayence by John Gutenberg. In the year of the condemnation of Reginald Pecock for declaring that all truth would bear the test of reason and inquiry, John Fust, or Faust, and Peter Schœffer printed a magnificent edition of the Psalter.

Stamping with ink from blocks on which letters had been carved in relief had already been tried when, in 1438, John

Gutenberg, of Mayence, first thought of the use of movable types to save the great labour of cutting a fresh block for every page. He had gone from Mayence to Strasburg as a block printer, become impoverished by a lawsuit, returned to Mayence, and worked at his press in partnership with a wealthy goldsmith, named John Faust, or Fust. After many experiments, so much success was obtained that, as before said, the printing of the Mazarin Bible was completed with movable type in 1455. The partnership was dissolved, and Gutenberg, unable to repay advances of money, made over his types to Faust, who at first printed copies of the Bible to imitate those sold as MSS., and gave for sixty crowns what copyists required five hundred for producing. Then he took into partnership his son-in-law, Peter Schœffer; and in the colophon to the Psalter produced by them in 1457, Faust and Schœffer boasted openly the power of their new art. In 1462 Mayence, which had been for some years a free imperial city, was taken and sacked by its archbishop, Adolphus. This event, by scattering the pupils and workmen of Faust and Schœffer, dispersed through Europe the knowledge of their art. It was carried from Mayence to Haarlem and Strasburg; from Haarlem to Rome, in 1466, by Sweynheym and Pannartz, the first users of Roman type. It reached Paris in 1469; Cologne in 1470; and England, through William Caxton, about 1475. There was no printer in Scotland until after the close of the fifteenth century.

27. **William Caxton,** born about 1421, in the Weald of Kent, was apprenticed to a wealthy London mercer. After his master's death, in 1441, he lived chiefly at Bruges, where he was Governor of the English merchants from 1462 till 1469. In 1464 he was employed as one of two commissioners for the settlement of a treaty of commerce with Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. That Philip was succeeded, in 1467, by his eldest son Charles, called the Bold, who in the following year, 1468, married Edward IV.'s sister Margaret. Caxton was then in Margaret's service, and received from her a yearly fee. On the 1st of March, 1469, he began a translation from Raoul le Fevre, of the *Recuyell of the Hystoryes of Troye*, a work suspended by him for two years, and then finished at Margaret's command. In October, 1470, when Warwick, the Kingmaker, was moving Henry VI. up from the Tower to the Palace of Westminster, Edward IV., paying his fur gown for his passage, came as a fugitive to Bruges, with seven or eight hundred hungry

followers. He was at Bruges five months, and then returned to become king again. Among the companions of Edward in this brief exile to the city in which Caxton served the king's sister, was his brother-in-law, **Anthony Woodville, Lord Rivers,** translator, from the French, of a book of *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers.* He submitted his translation to Caxton's criticism. Having achieved his own version of the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*—a work afterwards occupying 778 folio pages of print—Caxton became tired of making copies by hand, and made use of the types of Colard Mansion, a copyist and illuminator who had brought printing into Bruges.

Caxton himself was printer of his translation, also from the French, of a moral treatise, *The Game and Playe of the Chesse.* Of this there are two editions, the first said to have been finished on the last day of March, 1474. It is assumed to be the first book printed in this country. Perhaps it was; but there is no evidence that Caxton did not print it abroad. It is to the printed copy of the translation of "Les Dictes Moraux des Philosophes," as *The Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers,* by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, that Caxton first added, "imprynted by me, William Caxton, at Westmynstre;" and the date of it is 1477. A book of 1480 specifies the Abbey as the place where Caxton had his press. Resort to the Abbey scriptorium for copies of books had led to a settlement of copyists within the Abbey precincts. Among the "Paston Letters" is a book bill, dated 1468, from a copyist named W. Ebesham, who said that he was living at some expense in the Sanctuary, Westminster. Caxton's place of business was at a house called the Red Pale, in the Almonry, within the Abbey precincts, and he died there in 1491. Wynken de Worde, his immediate successor, dated some books from "Caxton's house at Westminster." It was in 1485 that Caxton printed the first edition of the *Morte Darthur* from a connected prose recital of the story of the chief Arthurian romances by **Sir Thomas Malory,** who says that he finished his work in the ninth year of Edward IV. (1470).

28. In those days Lorenzo de' Medici ruled Florence. Michael Angelo and Ariosto were both born in one year; and the year, 1474, was that in which Caxton completed the printing of his "Game and Play of Chess." Italian fine gentlemen had begun to affect far-fetched conceits and ingenuities of speech. Lorenzo himself, who set forth Platonism in his *Altercazione,*

was writing love sonnets and canzone in a style that would tell how the rays of love from the eyes of his lady penetrated through his eyes the shadow of his heart, like a ray of sun entering the dark beehive by its fissure; and how then, as the hive wakes, the bees fly, full of new cares, hither and thither in the forest, sip at flowers, fly out, return laden with odorous spoil, sting those who are seen idle, so the spirits stir in his heart, fly out to seek the light, &c. &c. But in these days Florence had other poets. Then it was that Luigi Pulci, born in 1432, cleverest of three verse-writing brothers, wrote in the fashionable strain of the flowing of the river Lora in the Apennines into the Severus, in his poem of "The Dryad of Love." The nymph Lora was loved by the satyr Severus. Diana changed him to a stag, then hunted him, and changed him into a river; but the loving nymph, changed also into a stream, ran to her union with him. Luigi Pulci wrote also in a far different vein. Spanish romance was influenced by Vasco de Lobeira, a Portuguese of Chaucer's time, who had been knighted on the battle-field by the King John to whom John of Gaunt married his daughter Philippa. Lobeira, who may have met Chaucer on the occasion of that marriage (ch. iv. § 39), died in 1403, and had written towards the close of the fourteenth century his "Amadis of Gaul," a long prose romance of original invention, which, about 1503, was turned into Spanish, and established in Spain a new form of knightly prose romance. "Amadis" itself had and deserved more popularity than most of its successors. But an earlier impulse from Spain quickened development in Italy of chivalrous romance, and caused Luigi Pulci to produce, in octave rhyme, a prelude of Italian Charlemagne poetry in the irreligious and half-mocking "Morgante Maggiore," of which the first canto has been translated into English by Lord Byron. Then it was also that in Florence the pastoral strain, of which Boccaccio, in his "Admetus," sounded the first note, was taken up by Agnolo of Monte Pulciano. Agnolo, called Politianus—Poliziano—was a marvellous young man of twenty when Caxton finished the printing of his "Game and Play of Chess." He was born in 1454, and had been educated at the expense of Cosmo de' Medici. He studied Greek under Andronicus of Thessalonica, Plato under Marsilius Ficinus, Aristotle under Argyropoulos; he became professor of Latin and Greek at Florence, and was sought as a teacher even by the pupils of Chalcondylas, for he was poet as well as scholar, and could put true life into his

teaching. He was but forty when he died, and among his poems he has left us the pastoral tale of Orpheus, his "Orfeo," in *terza rima*, the first pastoral in modern literature with a story in it. Niccolo da Correggio called his "Cefalo," in octave rhyme, recited at Ferrara in 1486, also a story—"Favola"—and in the following years others appeared as rustic comedies, eclogues, or pastoral eclogues. When long, they were divided into acts. And here we are at the source of the taste for pastoral poetry which we shall find after some years coming by way of France to England.

29. These were the days also of Christopher Columbus, born in Italy in 1445. He went to sea about the time when, in 1462, the printers of Mayence were first scattered; and was voyaging northward beyond Iceland, and southward to the coast of Guinea, while the printer's press was being first set up in sundry capitals of Europe.

The short reign of Edward V., in 1483, from April 9 to June 25, and the reign of Richard III. (1483—1485), yielded no work of any mark to English literature. But in 1483 Luther and Raffaelle were born.

During the early part of the reign of Henry VII. (1485—1509) the New World was discovered. Sebastian Cabot, born at Bristol, the son of a Venetian pilot, was but twenty years old when, on a voyage with his father and two brothers in the service of Henry VII., for the discovery and occupation of new lands, he first saw the mainland of America, in 1497. Columbus, in the service of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, had found for Spain in 1492 the West India Islands. On his third voyage in search of new lands and their wealth, in 1498, he saw the mainland of America, which had been seen by the Cabots in 1497, and which was named after Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine, who did not visit it till 1499. "Spain, that used to be called poor, is now the most wealthy of kingdoms," Columbus wrote; but in his old age he had for one ornament of his home the chains in which he had been sent home from Hispaniola by men weary of one who vexed them with restraints of honesty. "For seven years," he wrote to Ferdinand and Isabella, "was I at your royal court, where every one to whom the enterprise was mentioned treated it as ridiculous; but now there is not a man, down to the very tailors, who does not beg to be allowed to become a discoverer. There is reason to believe that they make the voyage only for plunder, and that they are permitted

to do so, to the great disparagement of my honour, and the detriment of the undertaking itself. It is right to give God his due, and to receive that which belongs to one's self. . . . I was twenty-eight years old when I came into your highnesses' service, and now I have not a hair upon me that is not grey; my body is infirm, and all that was left to me, as well as to my brothers, has been taken away and sold, even to the frock that I wore, to my great dishonour." So Columbus wrote from the Indies, in July, 1503, when absent on his fourth and last voyage to the New World, the voyage following that from which he had returned in chains. With a pure heart and noble mind he had served the greed of men; and to his death, in 1506, he still found Mammon an ungrateful master.

30. The influence of the capture of Constantinople, in 1453, upon the development of scholarship in Europe was evident in England during the last years of the fifteenth century. The study of Greek was introduced among us first at Oxford, by William Grocyn and Thomas Linacre.

William Grocyn, eldest of a group of English classical scholars, was born at Bristol in 1442, educated at Winchester School, and thence passed to New College. The relation between Winchester and New College remains as of old, for it was in connection with New College that the school had been founded, in 1387, by Bishop William Long—William of Wykeham. William Grocyn became, in 1479, rector of Newton Longville, in Buckinghamshire, and afterwards prebendary of Lincoln. He went to Italy, learnt Greek from Demetrius Chalcondylas and Politian (§ 28), and in 1491 settled at Exeter College, Oxford, as the first teacher of Greek. In 1490 he had exchanged his living for the Mastership of All Hallow's College at Maidstone, where he died in 1522. Grocyn differed from the common fashion as a Greek scholar in giving most of his time to the study not of Plato but of Aristotle, whom he began to translate. He left his papers and part of his property to Linacre, his executor, and William Lily.

Thomas Linacre, born at Canterbury, and about eighteen years younger than Grocyn, was educated at Canterbury and at Oxford, became fellow of All Souls in 1484, and early in the reign of Henry VII. was sent on a mission to the Court of Rome. He stayed by the way at Florence, and, like Grocyn, studied Greek under Demetrius Chalcondylas. After his return he became M.D. of Oxford, read lectures on physic, and taught

Greek and Latin. He was phvsician and tutor to Henry VII.'s son, Prince Arthur.

In the year 1500, Grocyn was fifty-eight years old, Linacre about forty. John Fisher, who became in 1504 Bishop of Rochester, was forty-one years old in the year 1500, John Colet was thirty-four, William Lily was over thirty, and Thomas More was a young man of twenty. These men were to be chief promoters of English scholarship at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Scholarship abroad had its best representative in Erasmus, who had come to England in 1497, when he was thirty years old. During 1496 he had been supporting himself in Paris by private teaching. His fame was in the future; and the fame of Oxford, as one of the few places in which Greek could then be learnt, had drawn him to the place. There he not only learnt Greek, but he also found Greek scholars who welcomed him to an enduring friendship.

31. In the year 1500 Michael Angelo was twenty-six years old, and Ariosto twenty-six; Raffaelle was seventeen, and Luther seventeen.

Lorenzo de' Medici had died in 1492 During the latter years of his rule, Matteo Maria Boiardo, Count of Scandiano and Governor of Reggio, wrote that poem of "Orlando Innamorato" (Orlando Enamoured) which is of most interest for its relation to the later work of Ariosto. Boiardo died, sixty years old, in 1494, leaving his poem unfinished in his own opinion, and by several cantos more than finished in the opinion of others. This poem dealt more seriously, if less cleverly, than Pulci's "Morgante" with the Charlemagne romance. Boiardo set up Charlemagne's nephew Roland, or Orlando, as true knight enamoured of a fascinating Angelica, who had been brought from the far East to sow dissension among the Christians with whom infidel hosts were contending. Boiardo was succeeded in his command of the fortress of Reggio by Ariosto the father, and in his conduct of the story of Orlando by Ariosto the son, who took up the tale where Boiardo ought to have dropped it, not where he actually did leave off.

32. During those earlier years of the reign of Henry VII., when in Florence Boiardo was giving a new point of departure to the metrical romance of chivalry, the poetical literature of this country was most vigorous in the north. Good poets were then living, who gave the best evidence of their power in the first years of the sixteenth century. John Skelton was about

forty, William Dunbar about forty, and Gavin Douglas about twenty-six years old, in the year 1500. Skelton, in England, and Dunbar, in Scotland, had begun to write before the close of the fifteenth century; but our only poet of mark who then closed his career was **Robert Henryson**, schoolmaster of Dunfermline. He lived to be old, and was among those named as dead in Dunbar's "Lament for the Makers," printed in 1508. The number of Scottish singers named in that piece by Dunbar bears witness to the diffused activity of thought in Scotland at the time when Robert Henryson "compiled into eloquent and ornamental metre" *The Morall Fables of Esope the Phrygian.* There are thirteen fables here versified, including one that has once or twice since taken a place of note in literature, the fable of the "Town and Country Mouse," or, as Henryson had it, the "Taill of the uponlandis Mous and the burges Mous." Another fable of "The Dog, the Wolf, and the Sheep" is treated as an exposure of the abuses in procedure of the ecclesiastical courts. Henryson wrote a prologue to the collection, and another to the fable of "The Lion and the Mouse," which represents himself wandering into a wood on a June morning, sleeping under a hawthorn, and visited in dream by "Maister Esope, poet laureate," who says that he is of gentle blood, and that his "natal land is Rome withouttin nay." Nay, the schoolmaster was asleep when he made Æsop a Roman poet; and asleep after the fashion of many English and other poets since the days of the "Romaunt of the Rose." He used also Chaucer's seven-lined stanza here and in his *Testament of Cresseid;* for this measure had become current among our poets as the English representative of octave rhyme. Henryson's "Testament of Cresseid" is a moral sequel to Chaucer's "Troilus and Cressida." Abandoned by Diomede, and become a leper among lepers, she saw Troilus pass on his way back from a brilliant attack upon the Greeks. As she looked at him, although he did not recognise her through her leprosy, yet her presence filled his mind with thought of the fair Cresseid, and in memory of her he threw a rich purse to the leper. Cresseid learnt, after he had passed, that this kind-hearted knight was Troilus; and then, lamenting her inconstancy, she uttered her last Testament and died. Henryson is the author also of our first pastoral poem, *Robene and Makyne*, a work that has much natural and simple beauty, and is not, like most of his writings, too diffuse. *The Bludy Serk* is a good example of the religious earnestness that under-

lies his work, and of the continuance of the old taste for allegory. A prince saved a princess from a dungeon into which she had been cast by a giant, and shut the giant up in his own prison-house. He restored the princess to her father, and then died of a wound received in the conflict, bequeathing to the lady the shirt stained with the blood shed for her, which she was to look at when approached by a new lover. The lady, it is explained, is the Soul of Man, God's daughter, and His handiwork; the giant, Lucifer; the champion, Christ. And, therefore—

"For His lufe that bocht us deir,
Think on the bludy serk."

The next men of whom we have to speak represent part of the larger life and energy of England under the Tudors.

33. Owen Tudor, a private Welsh gentleman in the service of Henry V.'s widow, Catherine of Valois, became her second husband. Tudor in Welsh (Tueddwr) means one who inclines, or has a bias. Owen was imprisoned in Newgate and Wallingford Castle for his inclination towards a royal widow; but Catherine abided by her second husband, and gave him three sons—Edmund, whom Henry VI. made Earl of Richmond; Jasper, Earl of Pembroke; and one who became a monk. Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, married (when she was but ten years old) Margaret, daughter and heiress of John, Duke of Somerset, whose father, John, Earl of Somerset, had been one of the children of John of Gaunt and Chaucer's sister-in-law, Catherine Swinford (ch. iv. § 22). Edmund Tudor died at the age of twenty-five, leaving his wife Margaret, Dowager Countess of Richmond, a young widow with one son, Henry. This was the Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, who became chief of the Lancastrian party, and king after the battle of Bosworth Field, in August, 1485, as Henry VII., then twenty-eight years old. In the following year King Henry married, as policy dictated, Elizabeth of York, eldest daughter of Edward IV.; but was a hard husband to her, incapable of love to any of the house of York. In the year 1500, when his own age was forty-three, Henry VII. and his wife had four children living, of six who had been born. Arthur, Prince of Wales, his eldest son, was then fourteen years old; Margaret, his eldest daughter, was eleven; Henry, his second son, nine; Mary, his second daughter, two years old.

The Stuart family retained the throne of Scotland. In that part of our country, during the whole fifteenth century, kings

were rebuked freely by the people. But while they suffered insult, and even death, at the hands of turbulent men whom they were unable to control, there was unswerving fidelity to the principle of monarchy, and even to the luckless house of Stuart. Its rule began in 1370, when Robert, the High Steward, so named from his court office, succeeded his cousin David as Robert II. His eldest son succeeded him in 1390. During the troubled reign of that Stuart the second, his son James became prisoner at the English court; but though a prisoner abroad, he was proclaimed king as James I. of Scotland, Stuart the third, in 1406. He earned fame as a poet, and sought, as a prince, to subject his rough lords to more law than they liked, and he was murdered (§ 6, 14). He was loved by the people, who avenged his death upon his murderers. His eldest son was but six years old at the time of the murder; but none disputed the throne with him, though rival chiefs were ready enough to seize him, and through him play king. That child, as James II., Stuart the fourth, lived to be thirty, when he was accidentally killed by a wedge blown out of the ring of a gun at the siege of Roxburgh. The son he left for successor was again a child but eight years old, yet his right of succession was respected, and in 1460 he became King James III., Stuart the fifth. He was abundantly afflicted by high-handed lords; his subjects did not relish his inclination towards artists and musicians, and thought him a coward. Finally, it was believed that he was ready to oppose his troublers by the inbringing of Englishmen, and the perpetual subjection of the realm. He was accused by the Estates; risen against by barons, with his own son at their head. His friends were routed in a skirmish at the Sauchie Burn, and he was treacherously stabbed during his flight by an unknown assassin. The son, who, being only sixteen years old, joined the confederates against his father, became in the same year, 1488, King James IV., Stuart the sixth. He had been king, then, for about twelve years in 1500.

34. **John Skelton** is the English poet of chief mark whose name is associated with the reign of Henry VII. He was born either in Cumberland or Norfolk, and not before the year 1460; educated at Cambridge, where he appears to have taken his degree of M.A. in 1484, and to have written a poem *On the Death of King Edward IV.* Like one of the old metrical tragedies of men fallen from high estate, it tells—the dead king speaking—how the days of power, of wealth wrung from the commonalty, of

costly works under a rule pleasing to some, to others displeasing, are at an end:

"Mercy I ask of my misdoing;
What availeth it, friends, to be my foe,
Sith I cannot resist nor amend your complaining?
Quid, ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio"

The last line, suggesting royal pomp asleep in dust, is the refrain to every stanza. In 1489 Skelton wrote, in Chaucer's stanza, an *Elegy upon the Death of the Earl of Northumberland*, who was killed by an insurgent populace in Yorkshire. In the following year, 1490, Caxton spoke of John Skelton, in the preface to his version from the French of a prose romance founded upon the "Æneid," as "Mayster John Skelton, late created poete laureate" in the University of Oxford. Caxton prayed that Skelton, who had translated Cicero's Letters and Diodorus Siculus and divers other works from Latin into English, would correct any mistakes he found. Of Skelton's translations, and of Skelton himself—then about thirty years old—Caxton wrote in the same preface to "The Boke of Eneydos, compyled by Vyrgyle," that he had translated from the Latin, "not in rude and olde langage, but in polysshed and ornate termes craftely, as he that hath redde Vyrgyle, Ovyde, Tullye, and all the other noble poets and oratours, to me unknowen. And also he hath redde the nine muses, and understande theyr musicalle scyences, and to whom of theym eche scyence is appropred. I suppose he hath dronken of Elycon's well."

The degree of poet laureate was then a recognised degree in grammar and rhetoric with versification. A wreath of laurel was presented to each new "poeta laureatus;" and if this graduated grammarian obtained also a licence to teach boys, he was publicly presented in the Convocation House with a rod and ferule. If he served a king, he might call himself the king's humble poet laureate; as John Kay, of whom no verse remains, was, as far as we know, first to do, in calling himself poet laureate to Edward IV. Before obtaining this degree the candidate would be required to write a hundred Latin verses on the glory of the University, or some other accepted subject.

John Skelton, poet laureate of Oxford in 1493, and also of Louvain, was admitted to the same title at Cambridge eleven years later. He had written a poem, now lost, on the creation of Prince Arthur, Henry VII.'s eldest son, as Prince of Wales, in 1489; and he wrote Latin verses, also lost, on the creation of the infant Prince Henry (afterwards King Henry VIII.) as Duke

of York, in 1494. Skelton was in favour with Henry VII., and also with that king's mother, Margaret Countess of Richmond, and of Derby by her second marriage. The Lady Margaret is remembered as a patroness of learning. In 1498 Skelton took holy orders, and at this time he was tutor to Prince Henry; Bernard André, another poet laureate, being tutor to Prince Arthur. As John Skelton himself afterwards wrote:

"The honor of Englond I lernyd to spelle
In dygnite roialle that doth excelle:
* * * * * * *
It plesyth that noble prince royálle
Me as hys master for to calle
In his lernyng primordialle."

He produced for his pupil a treatise, now lost, called the *Speculum Principis*, the Mirror of a Prince. At the end of the century, when Prince Henry was nine years old, Erasmus, in dedicating to the boy a Latin ode in "Praise of Britain, King Henry VII., and the royal children," congratulated him on being housed with Skelton, a special light and ornament of British literature ("unum Britannicarum literarum lumen et decus"), who could not only kindle his desire for study, but secure its consummation. In the ode itself Erasmus again spoke of Skelton as Prince Henry's guide to the sacred sources of learning.

35. **John Fisher,** a native of Yorkshire, a learned and religious man, born at Beverley in 1459, was, at the end of the fifteenth century, confessor to Margaret Countess of Richmond, and earnestly abetted her good disposition towards those engaged in the pursuit of knowledge.

36. In Scotland **William Dunbar** received in the year 1500 a pension of £10 Scots from James IV. Dunbar was born in Lothian about the year 1460. He studied at St. Andrew's, where he was one of the "determinantes," or Bachelors of Arts, at St. Salvator's College, in 1477, and took his degree in arts in 1479. He was a small man, jested at in playful controversy as a dwarf. For a time he was a Franciscan or Grey Friar, and preached in England and in Picardy. In 1491 he was one of an embassy to France, a lettered priest acting as secretary under the Earl of Bothwell. After this he was abroad for some years in the King of Scotland's service, and he probably had written, with other verse, his poem of the *Golden Terge* (first printed in 1508), when in 1500 he received his small pension of £10 Scots.

Thus Dunbar and Skelton were two men of ripened power, ready to take rank as our chief poets of the North and South at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

37. To the close of the fifteenth century belong also the earliest remaining traces of old English Ballad Literature. Wynken de Worde, born in Lorraine, came to England with Caxton; and after Caxton's death, in or about the year 1491, succeeded him in his printing-office, and styled himself printer to Margaret Countess of Richmond. He settled afterwards in Fleet Street, and lived until 1534. One of Wynken de Worde's earliest publications was a collection of *Robin Hood Ballads* into a continuous set called *A Lytel Geste of Robyn Hode.* In "The Vision of Piers Plowman," Robin Hood is named as one who was already, in the second half of the fourteenth century, a hero of popular song. Sloth there says:

> "I kan noght parfitly my Paternoster,
> As the priest it syngeth;
> But I kan rymes of Robyn Hood,
> And Randolph, Erl of Chestre."

We learn also from the "Paston Letters" that in Edward IV.'s time Robin Hood was a hero of one of the popular mummeries. So he remained. A sermon of Latimer's shows with much emphasis the popularity of country sports on a Robin Hood's Day in the time of Edward VI. There are manuscripts also of the ballads of *Robin Hood and the Potter* and *Robin Hood and the Monk*, not older than the last years of the fifteenth century.

The tradition is that Robin Hood was a name corrupted from that of Robert Fitzooth, reputed Earl of Huntingdon, who was born about the year 1160, in the reign of Henry II. After Robin had, in the wildness of youth, consumed his inheritance, he was outlawed for debt, lived in the woods on the king's game, and by his open defiance became an impersonation of the popular feeling against forest laws, which, under the Norman kings, were cruelly iniquitous. Among the woods of England Robin Hood is said to have chiefly frequented Sherwood in Nottinghamshire, Barnsdale in Yorkshire, and Plompton Park in Cumberland. His most trusty friends were, it is said, John Nailor, known as Little John; William Scadlock, called also Scathelock and Scarlet; George à Green Pinder (that is, pound-keeper), of Wakefield; and Much, a miller's son. But he gathered also, tradition says, a stout company of a hundred archers, equal to any four hundred who could be brought against them. The

ballads and tales that made Robin Hood representative of English popular feeling not only gave him courage and good-humour, and connected his name with the maintenance of archery for national defence, but also gave him Friar Tuck for chaplain, and blended in him religious feeling with resistance to oppression :

"A good maner then had Robyn
In londe where that he were,
Every daye ere he wolde dine
Three masses wolde he hear."

His religion took especially the form, once dear to the people, of that worship of the Virgin which softened the harsh temper of mediæval doctrine :

"Robyn loved our dere lady ;
For doute of dedely synne,
Wolde he never do company harme
That ony woman was ynne."

Maid Marian being added to his company, fidelity to her would express English domestic feeling ; while the same battle against corrupt luxury in the Church which had been represented for the educated courtier by Walter Map's Golias poetry (ch. iii. § 13), was rudely expressed to the people in Robin Hood's injunction to his men :

"These byshoppes and these archebyshoppes,
Ye shall them bete and bynde."

Robin Hood pitied the poor, and gave them part in the wealth stripped from those who lived in sensual excess. The chief representative of rich ecclesiastics in the Robin Hood ballads was the Abbot of St. Mary's at York ; and the oppressions of secular authority were especially defied in the person of the Sheriff of Nottingham. Robin Hood is said to have escaped all perils of his way of life, and to have been more than eighty years old when he went to his aunt, the prioress of Kirklees Nunnery, in Yorkshire, to be bled. She treacherously let him bleed to death. As he was thus dying, Robin bethought him of his bugle-horn, and "blew out weak blasts three." Little John came to his rescue, and asked leave to burn the nunnery, but Robin said :

"I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at my end shall it be."

He asked only to shoot an arrow from the window, that he might be buried where the arrow fell ; and so, says tradition, he

was buried on a height that overlooks the valley of the Calder, at the distance of a mighty bow-shot from Kirklees.

To the end of the fifteenth century belongs the charming dialogue-ballad of *The Nut Brown Maid*. She was a baron's daughter, and her love had been won by a suitor who came as "a squyer of lowe degree." Her faith was tried by her lover's feigning himself one who must die or fly as an outlaw to live by his bow like Robin Hood. As he urged the difficulties and dangers that must part them, in stanzas ending with the refrain, "For I must to the greenwood go, alone, a banished man," the Nut Brown Maid met every argument with faithful resolve to bear all and follow him, the stanzas in which she answered closing steadily with the refrain, "For in my mind, of all mankind, I love but you alone." When she had borne the trial of her faith, she learnt that "the squire of low degree" was neither squire nor banished man, but an earl's son, come to marry her and take her to Westmoreland, which was his heritage. The ballad ended with a moral like that attached by Petrarch and Chaucer to Boccaccio's tale of the "Patient Griselda" (ch. iv. § 46):

> "For sith men wolde that wymen sholde be meke to them eche on,
> Much more ought they to God obey, and serve but hym alone."

The ballads of *The Battle of Otterburn* and *Chevy Chase* do not remain to us in their first form. There is no copy of them written so early as the fifteenth century, to which doubtless they belong. The battle of Otterburn was fought on the 19th of August, 1388, between Scots under James Earl of Douglas, and English under the two sons of the Duke of Northumberland. It began with a sudden entering of England by the Earl of Douglas with 3,800 men, who advanced to Brancepeth, ravaging the country they passed through. In the warfare against English settlements in France, such a raid was called by the French allies of Scotland a *chevauchée*, and, by a common process, that name was corrupted into Chevy Chase. It lives yet among schoolboys as a "chivy." Now, since there are in Northumberland Cheviot Hills as well as an Otterburn, Chevy Chase was interpreted into the Hunting of the Cheviot. The old ballad of the "Battle of Otterburn," or "Chevy Chase"—the battle of the *chevauchée* which was its crowning incident—was therefore recast as *The Hunting of the Cheviot*, always with some confused sense of identity between one incident and the other. The battle of Otterburn is an incident minutely described

by Froissart; but there is no record whatever of any similar battle that arose out of a Hunting on the Cheviots. The author of the ballad of the "Hunting" was, in fact, quite right when he said:

"This was the Hontynge of the Cheviot;
That tear began this spurn:
Old men that knowen the grownde well yenough
Call it the Battell of Otterburn."

The ballad literature to which these poems belong came into strong life in Europe during the thirteenth, and especially the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the thirteenth century Spain uttered through national ballads the soul of freedom in her struggle against the Moors. Our English ballads are akin to those which also among the Scandinavians became a familiar social amusement of the people. They were recited by one of a company with animation and with varying expression, while the rest kept time, often with joined hands forming a circle, advancing, retiring, balancing, sometimes remaining still, and, by various movements and gestures, followed changes of emotion in the story. Not only in Spain did the people keep time by dance movement to the measure of the ballad, for even to this day one may see, in the Faroe Islands, how winter evenings of the North were cheered with ballad recitations, during which, according to the old northern fashion, gestures and movements of the listeners expressed emotions of the story as the people danced to their old ballads and songs. From this manner of enjoying them the ballads took their name. *Ballare* is a Middle Latin word, meaning to incline to this side and that, with which the Italians associate their name for dancing, and we the word "ball" for the name of a dancing party. The *balade* of Southern Europe (ch. iv. § 25), a wholly different production, which is not in the least remarkable for life and energy, took its name from the same word for another reason. It inclines to this side and that, in see-saw with a single pair of rhymes. There is some reason to think that educated gentlewomen were often the unknown writers of the ballads of England and the North of Europe.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE YEAR 1500 TO THE YEAR 1558.

1. OF the reign of Henry VII. (1485—1509), the last nine years have now to be accounted for. They were a time of rest from the feud between the English crown and Scottish people. Perkin Warbeck was, in 1495, a visitor at the court of James IV. of Scotland, and he was there married to a lady of the royal family. James made some attempts to maintain his guest's quarrel with England, but they came to little; and Henry VII. worked for a reversal of the policy that made an enemy of Scotland. Scotland, during the English civil wars free from attack, had increased in prosperity and power. Henry VII.'s England needed peace at home; and in 1502, Margaret Tudor, Henry's daughter, aged thirteen, was affianced to King James IV. of Scotland, then aged thirty. The princess entered Edinburgh a year later, marriage took place on the 8th of August, 1503, and was celebrated by **William Dunbar** (ch. v. § 36), in his poem of *The Thistle and the Rose*, not without the home-speaking which usually passed between a Scottish subject and his sovereign. For Dame Nature says to "the thistle keepit with a bush of spears:"

> "And sen thou art a king, be thou discreet:
> Herb without virtue hald not of sic price
> As herb of virtue and of odour sweet;
> And let no nettle vile and full of vice
> Her fellow to the guidly flour de lis,
> Nor let no wild weed full of churlishness
> Compare her to the lilie's nobleness."

James IV. of Scotland, to whom such counsel was given, was a handsome man with uncut hair and beard, liberal, active in war or chase, familiar with his people, brave to rashness, well read, and of good address. He could speak Latin, French, German, Flemish, Italian, Spanish, Gaelic, and broad Scotch. He was attentive to priests, and gave by his life good reason for Dunbar's especial warning in "The Thistie and the Rose" of the Thistle's solemn trust to

> "Hold no other flow'r in sic deuty
> As the fresh rose, of colour red and white;
> For gif thou does, hurt is thine honesty."

Through this weak side of his nature he is said to have been

cajoled in his youth by those who led him to unite with them against his father.

Dunbar's poem of "The Thrissil and the Rois," upon the marriage of James IV. of Scotland to Margaret Tudor, is a court poem in Chaucer's stanza, planned to a form that had already become traditional in Chaucer's time (ch. iv. § 13, 16, 20). When he was in bed on a May morning, Aurora looked in at his window, with a pale green face, and on her hand a lark, whose song bade lovers wake from slumber. Fresh May stood then before his bed, and bade the sluggard rise and write something in her honour. Why should he rise, he asked, for few birds sang, and May brought only cold and wind that caused him to forbear walking among her boughs? She smiled, and yet bade him rise to keep his promise that he would describe "the rose of most pleasaunce." So she departed into a fair garden; and it seemed to him that he went hastily after her, among the flowers, under the bright sunrise, where the birds sang for comfort of the light. They sang Hail to the May, Hail to the Morning, Hail to Princess Nature before whom birds, beasts, flowers, and herbs were about to appear, "as they had wont in May from year to year," and pay due reverence. First of the beasts came the Lion, whom Dunbar's description pleasantly associated with the lion on the arms of Scotland. Nature, while crowning him, gave him a lesson in just rule. A like lesson she gave to the Eagle, when she crowned him King of Birds; and, as we have seen, to the Thistle, who personified King James of Scotland, when she "saw him keepit with a bush of spears," crowned him with ruby, and bade him defend all others in the field. Then came the poet's welcome of the Tudor Margaret, when Nature glorified her as the Rose, the freshest Queen of Flowers; and the poem closed with a song of hail and welcome to her from the merle, the lark, the nightingale, and from the common voice of the small birds, who, by their shrill chorus, woke the poet from his dream.

2. In this poem, as in "The Golden Terge," Dunbar was a follower of Chaucer, constructing his own work on a time-honoured model. The "Thistle and the Rose" was written in 1503; *The Golden Terge* was first printed by Chepman and Myllar, in 1508, when the printing-press was new to Scotland, Printing did not begin in Edinburgh till about thirty years after Caxton brought it to London. The art is said to have been taken to Scotland by the priests who fled thither from persecu-

tion in the Low Countries. But the first patent for establishing a press in Scotland was granted, in 1507, by James IV., to Walter Chepman, a merchant, and Andrew Myllar, a working printer. Poems of Dunbar were among the first works of their printing. "The Golden Terge" is in stanzas of nine ten-syllabled lines, forming a peculiar measure allied to that of the balade, each stanza having a musical cadence of two rhymes thus interlaced—a a b a a a b b a b. This poem also begins with the conventional May morning. The poet rose with the sun, saw the dew on the flowers, heard the songs of the birds, while a brook rushed, over pebbles and little waterfalls, among the bushes. The sound of the stream and song of the birds caused him to sleep on the flowers. In dream he then saw the river, over which there came swiftly towards him a sail, white as blossom, on a mast of gold, bright as the sun. A hundred ladies in green kirtles landed from the ship. Among them were Nature and Queen Venus, Aurora, Flora, and many more. May walked up and down in the garden between her sisters April and June, and Nature gave her a rich, painted gown. The ladies saluted Flora, and sang of love. Cupid and Mars, Saturn, Mercury, and other gods were there, also playing and singing, all arrayed in green. The poet crept through the leaves to draw nearer, was spied by love's queen, and arrested. Then the ladies let fall their green mantles, and were armed against him with bows, but looked too pleasant to be terrible. Dame Beauty came against him, followed by the damsels Fair Having, Fine Portraiture, Pleasaunce, and Lusty Cheer. Then came Reason in plate and mail, as Mars armipotent, with the Golden Targe, or shield, to be his defender. Youth, Innocence, and other maids did no harm to the shield of Reason. Sweet Womanhood, with all her good company, Nurture and Loveliness, Patience, Good Fame and Steadfastness, Benign Look, Mild Cheer, Soberness, and others, found their darts powerless against the Golden Targe. High Degree failed also; Estate and Dignity, Riches, and others, loosed against him in vain a cloud of arrows. Venus then brought in allegorical recruits, and rearranged her forces. But Reason, with the Shield of Gold, sustained the shock, till Presence threw a powder in his eyes that blinded him. Then Reason was jested at, and banished into the greenwood. The poet was wounded nearly to the death, and in a moment was Dame Beauty's prisoner. Fair Calling smiled upon him; Cherishing fed him with fair words; Danger came to him

and delivered him to Heaviness. But then the wind began to blow, and all, flying to the ship, departed. As they went they fired guns, by which the poet was awakened to the renewed sense of the fresh May morning. This kind of invention is as old as "The Romaunt of the Rose" (ch. iii. § 36), but Dunbar took it from Chaucer. Though Chaucer had been dead a hundred years, no poet had yet succeeded to his throne. The land was still "full filled with his songs." Gower and Lydgate were still named after him in courtly verse as the two other chief poets of the past; but of Chaucer men thought as Dunbar wrote in one of the closing stanzas of his "Golden Terge:"

"O reverend Chaucer! rose of rhetoris all;
As in our tongue ane flower imperial,
That raise in Britain ever who reads richt,
Thou bears of makars the triúmph riall;
Thy fresh enamellit termes celical
This matter could illuminat have full bricht:
Was thou nocht of our English all the licht,
Surmounting every tongue terrestrial
Als far as Mayes morrow does midnicht."

3. "The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy" and Dunbar's "Lament for the Makars" were also first printed in 1508. The genius of Dunbar is, of course, most evident where he is least an imitator. In "The Thistle and the Rose" and "Golden Terge" he is gracefully conventional; in all his other poetry he is himself; he utters thoughts of his own life, and illustrates the life of his own time.

Dunbar's *Lament for the Makars*, or Poets (ποιητής—maker), was written in 1507, when he lay dangerously ill. It is in musical four-lined stanzas, each ending with the refrain, "Timor mortis conturbat me" (The fear of death disquiets me). Warm with religious feeling and a sense of human fellowship, speaking high thought in homely phrase, with a true poet's blending of pathos and good-humour, it bows to the supremacy of death while Dunbar joins lament with kindly memories of poets who have died before him.

"And he has now ta'en last of aw
Gude gentle Stobo, and Quintine Schaw,
Of whom all wichtis has pitie:
Timor mortis conturbat me.

"Gude Maister Walter Kennedy
In point of deid lies verily;
Great ruth it were that so suld be:
Timor mortis conturbat me.

"Sen he has all my brether ta'en
He will not let me live alane;
Un forse I maun his next prey be:
Timor mortis conturbat me.

"Sen for the death remeid is none,
Best is that we for death dispone,
After our death that live may we:
Timor mortis conturbat me."

The "Good Master Walter Kennedy," to whom Dunbar has here given a kindly stanza, was his playfellow, for the amusement of lookers-on, at the *Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy*. This metrical scolding-match belongs to a form of literature descended from the "tenson" or "jeu parti" of early Provençal poetry. The tenson was a song in dialogue of contention which found its way into European literature from wit-combats of the Arabs on nice points of love and philosophy. But the fifteenth century advanced by many ways to a rough heartiness in dealing with realities of life. Thus, in a flyting, which takes its name from our old name for contention, "flít," the two poets, who, if they had lived some centuries earlier, would, through a tenson, have been attacking and defending castles in the air, were down upon earth belabouring each other with the pen as heartily as if they had come into the tilt-yard, and the pens were lances with which they were engaged, each in the playful endeavour to knock down his friend.

Walter Kennedy, who joined in flyting with Dunbar, was the sixth son of Gilbert, first Baron Kennedy. He acquired, in 1504, the lairdship of Glentig; and it seems to have been between this date and 1508 that Dunbar wrote the greater part of his share in the rough whimsical scolding-match.

With the vigorous homeliness a certain coarseness was then often associated—coarseness which was not immorality, but consisted in plain utterance of truths belonging to the grosser side of life. This was common in Dunbar's humorous poetry. It was used with noble purpose in his *Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins*, written in 1507, a piece in which new life was given to the old forms of allegorical poetry by the genius of a master. On the festival night before Lent, Dunbar saw heaven and hell, in a trance; and it seemed to him that Mahoun called for a dance among the fiends. As the Seven Deadly Sins joined in the dancing, the allegorical description of each one became vivid with intensity of life, and was realised to the imaginations of the people by a profound earnestness expressed with playful

humour. This poem was followed by one purely humorous, which described another of the sports called for by Mahoun, *The Joust between the Tailor and the Soutar* (shoemaker). And this, again, was followed by an ironical *Amends to the Tailors and Soutars*, with the refrain, "Tailors and soutars, blest be ye!" which was but a new form of flyting. You tailors and soutars can shape anew a misfashioned man, cover with crafts a broken back, mend ill-made feet—

"In erd ye kyth sic miracles here
In heaven ye sall be sancts full clear,
Though ye be knaves in this countrie:
Tailors and soutars, blest be ye!"

Humour abounded, but it was the humour of a man essentially earnest. No poet from Chaucer till his own time equalled Dunbar in the range of genius. He could pass from broad jest to a pathos truer for its homeliness; he had a play of fancy reaching to the nobler heights of thought, a delicacy joined with a terse vigour of expression in short poems that put the grace of God into their worldly wisdom.

4. **Gavin Douglas** was another Scottish poet who wrote during the last nine years of the reign of Henry VII.; and, like Dunbar, lived on into the days when Henry VIII. was King of England. Gavin Douglas was born about the year 1474, son of that Archibald Earl of Angus who was known as Bell-the-Cat. He took holy orders, and became, in the year 1509, the last year of the reign of Henry VII., rector of Hawche (Prestonkirk). He had written the longest of his original poems probably in 1501, when he was about twenty-seven years old. It was called *The Palace of Honour*, and was, in the measure of "The Golden Terge," a court poem dedicated to James IV., an allegory imitated in the usual way from poems that remained in fashion. On a May morning the poet entered a garden, swooned, and dreamt of a procession of Minerva and her court, Diana and her followers, Venus and all her train, with the court of the Muses, to the Palace of Honour. The palace was built on a high slippery rock with many paths, and but one leading to the summit. After much detail, classical and allegorical, after seeing the Muses cull flowers of rhetoric, Gavin Douglas awoke, wrote a lay in praise of Honour, and dedicated his poem to the king. Steady maintenance of right and duty, which runs through the literature of our country, is here no doubt. We find it also in Gavin Douglas's better poem of

King Hart, an allegory of life, the heart personified as Man; but the gathering energies of the nation have not yet raised up the thinkers who shall cast into new forms the thoughts of a new day.

5. In England **John Skelton** (ch. v. § 34) may have produced during the latter years of the reign of Henry VII. his *Bowge of Court*. It was an allegorical court poem against court follies and vices. Bowge is the French *bouche* (the mouth); and bowge of court was the old technical name for the right to feed at a king's table. Skelton here told, in Chaucer's stanza, how in autumn he thought of the craft of old poets who

> "Under as coverte termës as could be
> Can touche a trouth, and cloke it subtylly
> With fresshe utteraunce full sentencyously."

Weary with much thinking, he slept at the port of Harwich in mine host's house called "Power's Keye;" and it seemed to him that he saw sail into harbour a goodly ship, which cast anchor, and was boarded by traders who found royal merchandise in her. The poet also went on board, where he found no acquaintance, and there was much noise, until one commanded all to hold their peace, and said that the ship was the "Bowge of Court," owned by the Dame Saunce-pere (Peerless); that her merchandise was called Favour, and who would have it must pay dear. Then there was a press to see the fair lady, who sat enthroned. Danger was her chief gentlewoman, and taunted the poet for being over-bold in pressing forward. Danger asked him his name, and he said it was Dread. Why did he come? Forsooth, to buy some of her ware. Danger then looked on him disdainfully; but another gentlewoman, named Desire, came to him and said, "Brother, be bold. Press forward, and speak without any dread. Who spares to speak will spare to speed." He was without friends, he said, and poor. Desire gave him a jewel called "bonne aventure." With that he could thrive; but, above all things, he must be careful to make a friend of Fortune, by whom the ship was steered. Merchants then thronged, suing to Fortune for her friendship. What would they have? "And we asked favóur, and favour she us gave." Thus ended the prologue. Then Dread told how the sail was up, and Fortune ruled the helm. Favour they had; but under honey oft lies bitter gall. There were seven subtle persons in the ship:

"The first was Favell, full of flatery,
With fables false that well coude fayne a tale;
The seconde was Suspecte, which that dayly
Mysdempte eche man, with face deedly and pale;
And Harry Hafter, that well coude picke a male;
With other foure of theyr affynite,
Dysdayne, Ryotte, Dyssymuler, Subtylte."

Harry Hafter in that stanza derives his name from the old English *hæftan* (to lay fast hold of anything). These seven sins of the court had for their friend Fortune, who often danced with them; but they had no love for the new-comer, Dread. Favell cloaked his ill-will with sugared speech. Dread thanked him, and was then addressed in turn by the other vices, each in his own fashion; and at last Dread, the poet, was about to jump out of the ship to avoid being slain, when he awoke, "caught penne and ynke, and wrote this lytyll boke."

But Skelton's fame does not rest upon good thought put into this conventional disguise. He felt with the people; and in the reign of Henry VIII. we shall find him speaking with them, and for them, by putting bold words of his own upon the life of his own day into a form of verse borrowed from nobody. This form of verse, which has been called Skeltonical, appeared in the delicately playful *Boke of Phyllyp Sparowe*, the lament of a simple-hearted maid, Jane Scrope, one of the young ladies who were being educated by the Black Nuns at Carow, near Norwich, for Philip, her pet sparrow, killed by a cat. The lament ended with a Latin epitaph to the bird, and it was followed by dainty commendations of its mistress. This poem, suggested no doubt by the sparrow of Catullus, was written by Skelton before the end of 1508, for it is included among follies at the end of Barclay's "Ship of Fools."

6. **Alexander Barclay,** born north of the Tweed, about the year 1476, was of Oriel College, Oxford. After leaving college he travelled abroad, and then became one of the priests of the college of St. Mary Ottery, in Devonshire. He was afterwards a Benedictine monk of Ely, then among the Franciscans of Canterbury. In 1546 he obtained the livings of Baddow Magna, in Essex, and of Wokey, in Somersetshire; and he had also the living of All Saints, in Lombard Street, when he died, an old man, at Croydon, in 1552. He translated from some of the best authors of the Continent; and the most famous of his translations was that of Sebastian Brandt's "Narrenschiff," done into Chaucer's stanza, with an occasional variation, and pub-

lished in 1508, with some additional home-thrusts of his own, as Barclay's *Ship of Fools.* Sebastian Brandt, born at Strasburg, in 1458, and educated at Basle, became syndic of his native town, and was in 1508 a living writer. He died in 1520. His "Narrenschiff," supposed to have been first published in 1494, though the Latin version of it, "Navis Stultifera," appeared in 1488, led the march of sixteenth century satire in Germany. Brandt called his book "The Ship of Fools" because no cart or coach was big enough to hold them all. The ship once ready, there was a great thronging for berths in her; but nobody was admitted who had sense enough to call himself a fool. Whoever set up for a wit was welcome. One hundred and thirteen several forms of folly were at last entered, with Brandt himself for their leader, as the Bookish Fool, who had many books, and was continually buying others, which he neither read nor understood. Various forms of human folly, among misers and spendthrifts, labourers, gamblers, beggars, huntsmen, cooks, &c., were passed in good-humoured satirical review, with incidental bits of counsel upon the training of children and other subjects. The book was rhymed with homely vigour, and many a proverbial phrase in the Alsatian dialect; it had, therefore, wide currency as a picture of manners, and a wholesome satire on the follies of the day. It went through many editions, was translated into French in 1497; and, while still in the first flush of its fame, was also in 1508 translated into English as the "Ship of Fools" by Alexander Barclay, then signing himself priest and chaplain in the College of St. Mary Ottery. Alexander Barclay's other writings were produced after the death of Henry VII.

7. Another English poet of the reign of Henry VII. was **Stephen Hawes**, a Suffolk man. Like Barclay, he was educated at Oxford, and then travelled. He was well read in the poets of England, France, and Italy, could repeat much of the verse of Lydgate, whom he called especially his master, and, perhaps for his good knowledge of French, was made by Henry VII. groom of the privy chamber. Like Alexander Barclay, Stephen Hawes was a poet without independent genius, a clever man who took delight in literature, and was active with his pen. In 1500 his *Temple of Glass*, an imitation of Chaucer's "House of Fame," was printed by Wynken de Worde. His chief work, first printed by Wynken de Worde in 1517, was finished in 1506, and dedicated to King Henry VII. as "*The Pastime of Pleasure, or, the History of Graund Amoure and La*

Bel Pucell: containing the Knowledge of the Seven Sciences and the Course of Man's Life in this World. Invented by Stephen Hawes, groom of King Henry VII. his chamber" it is an allegory of the old form, chiefly in Chaucer's stanza. Graund Amoure passed through the fair meadow of youth, and then came to the choice between two highways of life, the way of Contemplation—that was life in a religious order—and the way of Active Life. He took the way of Active Life, met Fame with her two greyhounds, Grace and Governaunce, who told him of La Bel Pucell. In her Hawes represented the true aim of life, only attainable through many labours. Then he first visited the Tower of Doctrine, and was introduced to her seven daughters. These were the seven sciences, arranged of old into three, Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, forming what was called the "Trivium;" and four, Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, Astronomy, which formed the "Quadrivium." When, in his introduction to these seven daughters of Doctrine, Graund Amoure had advanced to Music, he found her playing on an organ in her tower, and it was then that he first saw his ideal, La Bel Pucell. He told his love to her, and danced with her to sweet harmony. This means that the youth who has advanced far enough in the pursuit of knowledge to have ears for the grand harmonies of life is for a time brought face to face with the bright ideal to be sought through years of forward battle. La Bel Pucell went to her distant home; and Graund Amoure, after receiving counsel from Geometry and Astronomy, proceeded to the Castle of Chivalry, prayed in the Temple of Mars, within which was Fortune at her wheel, and on his way to the Temple of Venus met Godfrey Gobilive, who spoke ill of women. This part is in couplets. They went to the Temple of Venus; but Godfrey was overtaken by a lady named Correction, with a knotted whip, who said that he was False Report, escaped in disguise from his prison in the Tower of Chastity. To that tower the lady Correction introduced Graund Amoure. As the adventurer proceeded on his way he fought a giant with three heads, named Falsehood, Imagination, Perjury, and cut his heads off with the sword Claraprudence. Then he proceeded through other adventures, which carried on the allegory of steadfast endeavour till Graund Amoure saw the stately palace of La Bel Pucell upon an island beyond a stormy ocean. After the water had been crossed, there was still to be quelled a monster against which Graund Amoure could only defend himself by

anointing his sword with the ointment of Pallas. The last victory achieved, Graund Amoure was received into the palace by Peace, Mercy, Justice, Reason, Grace, and Memory; and he was married next morning to La Bel Pucell by Lex Ecclesiæ (Law of the Church). After his happy years with her, Old Age came one day into Graund Amoure's chamber, and struck him on the breast; Policy and Avarice came next. Graund Amoure became eager to heap up riches. Death warned him that these must be left. After the warning, Contrition and Conscience came to him before he died. Mercy and Charity then buried him. Fame wrote his epitaph. Time and Eternity pronounced the final exhortation of the poem.

Among the other books by Stephen Hawes was a *Conversion of Swearers*, printed in 1509. He wrote also in verse, *A Joyful Meditation of All England*, on the Coronation of King Henry VIII.

8. The chroniclers of English history who wrote in the latter part of the reign of Henry VII. were Robert Fabyan, a Londoner; Polydore Vergil, an Italian; and Bernard André, a Frenchman.

Robert Fabyan, son of John Fabyan, of a respectable Essex family, was born in London, and apprenticed to a draper; he became a member of the Draper's Company, Alderman of the Ward of Farringdon Without, and, in 1493, served in the office of sheriff. In September, 1496, in the mayoralty of Sir Henry Colet, Robert Fabyan was chosen, with the Recorder and certain commoners, to ride to the king "for redress of the new impositions raised and levied upon English cloths in the archduke's land," namely, the newly-appointed Philip's charge of a florin for every piece of English cloth imported into the Low Countries; a charge withdrawn in July, 1497. Soon afterwards Fabyan was an assessor upon London wards of the fifteenth granted to Henry VII. for his Scottish war. In 1502, Fabyan resigned his alderman's gown to avoid the expense of taking the mayoralty, for, although opulent, he had a large family. His wife, with four sons and two daughters, from a family of ten boys and six girls, survived him. He died in 1512.

Robert Fabyan was a good French and Latin scholar; and, in using monkish chronicles as material for his own compilation of history, was a devout adopter of the censures of all kings who were enemies to religious places. Of Becket he spoke as a

"glorious martyr" and a "blessed saint;" of Henry II. as a "hammer of Holy Church;" but he was not credulous of miracles and marvels. His *Concordance of Histories*, afterwards called "New Chronicles of England and France, in Two Parts," opened with a prologue in Chaucer's stanza, which represented its author as one who prepared material for the skilled artist or historian who should come after him to perfect what he had rudely shaped. The prologue ended with an invocation to the Virgin for help, and the seven parts of the chronicle, which brought the history from Brut to the year 1504, ended with seven metrical epilogues, entitled the "Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin." The chronicle itself was in prose, with translation into English verse of any Latin verses that were cited. A notable example of this was Fabyan's English version of the Latin verses said to have been made by Edward II. in his imprisonment.

Polydore Vergil, born at Urbino, had won fame in Italy before he came to England for Peter's Pence, and was here made Archdeacon of Wells. He returned to Italy, and died there in 1555. Among his works, all written in Latin, is an English Chronicle, in twenty-seven books, begun by him in the latter years of Henry VII., and finished in the earlier years of the reign of Henry VIII.

Bernard André, born at Toulouse, was an Austin Friar, who was present at Henry VII.'s entry into London after Bosworth Field. Soon afterwards André, who was blind, styled himself Henry VII.'s poet laureate. In 1496 he was made tutor to Arthur, Prince of Wales. John Skelton, also poet laureate, was, as we have seen, tutor to Prince Henry. André had retired from court, and was receiving some small Church preferments, when, in 1500, he began to work at his Latin "Life of Henry VII.," finished in 1502, with a preface in which he undertook to write every year for the king. He seems to have written, in pursuance of this promise, yearly accounts of the chief events of his time; but for the reign of Henry VII. only two of these are extant. André lived on into the reign of Henry VIII., and there remain accounts by him of two years of that reign, 1515 and 1521, the last date at which he is known to have been living. This blind French poet and historiographer, naturalised in England, although no genius, had much repute in his own day.

9. The representatives of the new energy of English scholar-

ship, Grocyn, Linacre, Lily, Colet (ch. v. § 30), lived through the reign of Henry VII. into that of Henry VIII.

John Fisher (ch. v. § 35), by his influence with Margaret Countess of Richmond, obtained the establishment of Lady Margaret Divinity Professorships in both universities. He became Doctor of Divinity in 1501. In 1502 he was the Lady Margaret's First Divinity Professor at Cambridge. In 1504 he was made Bishop of Rochester. Through his influence Christ's College, Cambridge, was founded by the Lady Margaret, and completed under his care in 1505. He procured in the same way the foundation of St. John's College, finished in 1515. Between 1505 and 1508, Bishop Fisher was the head of Queen's College. He invited Erasmus to Cambridge, offered him an appointment as Lady Margaret's Divinity Professor, and supported him in the endeavour to teach at Cambridge the Greek he had learnt at Oxford. Erasmus persevered only for a few months in the endeavour to form a Greek class. Failing with Chrysolora's Grammar, he tried Theodore Gaza's, and then left the labour to be continued by Dr. Richard Croke. Even at Oxford the new study of Greek was fighting its way slowly against strong opposition of two parties : idlers who called themselves Trojans, and who under leaders whom they called Priam and Hector battled with the Greeks ; and the timidly religious men who cried, "Beware of the Greeks, lest you be made a heretic." There was called forth, indeed, a royal declaration that no student of Greek should be molested ; and there was open rebuke of some court preachers who made bold, in the king's presence, to denounce Greek in their sermons.

10. We pass now to the reign of Henry VIII. (1509—1547). When Henry came to the throne, in 1509, a handsome youth of eighteen, well educated and self-willed, Martin Luther was a young man of six-and-twenty, and it was the year of Calvin's birth.

John Colet, born in 1466, was the son of Sir Henry Colet, a wealthy city knight, who was twice Lord Mayor of London. Dame Christian, his mother, had eleven sons and eleven daughters, of whom John was the sole survivor. She lived with him during the last nine years of his life, after her husband's death in 1510 ; and, says Erasmus, "being come to her ninetieth year, looked so smooth, and was so cheerful, that you would think she had never shed a tear ; and, if I mistake not, she survived her son, Dean Colet. Now that which supplied a

woman with so much fortitude was not learning, but piety to God." John Colet had seven years' training at Magdalene College, Oxford; then studied in Paris, and then went to Italy and learnt Greek. While absent from England he was receiving Church preferment, for his family had interest. After his return he went to Oxford, and there gave free lectures on St. Paul's Epistles. In 1504 he became Doctor of Divinity, and in 1505 Dean of St. Paul's. Inquiry into Scripture was then made by him part of the Cathedral service; he preached generally in exposition of St. Paul's Epistles, his favourite study. He was handsome, earnest, eloquent, outspoken against corrupt lives of the clergy, against the confessional, image worship, belief in purgatory, and thoughtless repetitions of fixed quantities of prayer. The Bishop of London would have brought him into trouble as a heretic if he had not been protected by Archbishop Warham. Among Colet's works were a treatise on the Sacraments of the Church, and two treatises on the Hierarchies of Dionysius, of which the latter have been published from the MS. in the library of St. Paul's School. Other works of his—comments on St. Paul—remain in manuscript at Oxford. He died in September, 1519. Dean Colet spent his ecclesiastical income on his household and in hospitality; his large private fortune he spent in the foundation of St. Paul's School. The foundation of this school was begun by him in 1510, the year in which his father's death gave him, at the age of forty-four, a large inheritance. He appointed his friend William Lily, an excellent Greek scholar, to be the first head master.

11. **William Lily,** born at Odiham, Hants, in 1468, was about two years younger than Colet, and had also been educated at Magdalene College, Oxford. After taking his first degree, Lily went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It was on his way back that he studied Greek at Rhodes, and afterwards at Rome. He had been head master of St. Paul's School for twelve years, when he died of the plague. His most famous book was the *Latin Grammar*, produced for the use of the new school, and familiar to boys of many English schools for many generations. It was first published in 1513. The preface to the book was written by Thomas Wolsey, not yet cardinal, but in the year of its publication Dean of York. The English "Rudiments" were written by Dean Colet, who wanted confidence in his own Latinity. The English Syntax and the rules in Latin verse for genders, beginning "Propria quæ maribus,"

and for past tenses and supines, beginning "As in præsenti," were by William Lily. The Latin Syntax was chiefly the work of Erasmus; and the great currency of the book was the work of Henry VIII., who established its orthodoxy by declaring it penal publicly to teach any other.

12. **Thomas Linacre** (ch. v. § 30), who survived his friends Grocyn and Lily little more than a year, died in 1524, and was buried in St. Paul's. He also produced an Elementary Latin Grammar, which was written in English for the use of the Princess Mary, and was preparatory to his more important work in Latin, "De Emendata Structura Latini Sermonis Libri VI." As a physician he founded not only three lectureships on physic, two at Oxford and one at Cambridge, but he was chief founder also of the Royal College of Physicians, which held its first meetings at Linacre's house, and for which he obtained a charter in 1518. Linacre took orders, and obtained prebends in Wells, York, and Westminster, also the rectories of Mersham, Hawkhurst, Holsworthy, and Wigan.

13. **Sir Thomas More** was another of the Oxford scholars active during the earlier part of the reign of Henry VIII. Born in 1478, he was thirty-six years younger than Grocyn, about eighteen younger than Linacre, and twelve younger than Lily and Colet. Thomas More was the son of Sir John More, knight, a justice of the King's Bench, who was three times married, though he used to say that marriage was like dipping the hand into a bag where there are twenty snakes and an eel—it was twenty to one that you did not get the eel. Thomas More's birthplace and early home being Milk Street, in the City of London, he was sent to St. Anthony's, in Threadneedle Street, then chief in repute among the London schools. More next entered the household of Cardinal John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor.

Morton had been one of the foremost of Oxford scholars when William Grocyn was a child. He was Doctor of Laws and Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1446. He practised law, and obtained many Church benefices; was Master of the Rolls in 1472, Bishop of Ely in 1479—the same Bishop of Ely of whom the Protector Richard, about to seize the crown, said:

> "My lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,
> I saw good strawberries in your garden there;
> I do beseech you send for some of them;"

an hour before he sent him to the Tower. When afterwards

released, and transferred to the custody of the Duke of Buckingham, Morton helped to organise the insurrection which cost Buckingham his head; and, being himself safe in Flanders, was thenceforth busy as a negotiator on the side that triumphed at Bosworth Field. Thus Morton became the trusted friend of Henry VII., who at the beginning of his reign made him, in 1486, Archbishop of Canterbury, and nine months afterwards Lord Chancellor of England. In 1489 Morton obtained a bull from Pope Innocent VIII. authorising him, as visitor, to exercise authority within the monasteries; in which, the bull said, there were many who, giving themselves over to a reprobate mind, and having laid aside the fear of God, were leading a wanton and dissolute life, to the destruction of their own souls and the dishonour of religion. While upholding the sovereignty of the archbishop in spiritual things, Morton, as Henry VII.'s chief adviser, maintained in temporal affairs the absolute sovereignty of the king. He greatly enriched himself, but was liberal with his wealth. He helped the king, more narrowly avaricious, to draw money, by benevolences or otherwise, from his subjects; and he shared the king's unpopularity. Morton was a vigorous old man of between seventy and eighty, whose life was blended with the history of half a century, when young Thomas More was placed in his household, and found him a generous patron and appreciative friend. A son of one of lower rank was often received of old into a great man's house. He wore there his lord's livery, but had it of more costly materials than were used for the footmen, and was the immediate attendant of his patron, who was expected to give him a start in life when he came of age. When at Christmas time a Latin play was acted, young Thomas More could step in at will among the players, and extemporise a comic part. "Whoever liveth to try it," Morton would say, "shall see this child here waiting at table prove a notable and rare man." Dean Colet used to say, "There is but one wit in England, and that is young Thomas More." About the year 1497 the archbishop sent the youth to Oxford, where he was entered to Canterbury College, now included in Christ Church. There he learned Greek of Linacre and Grocyn. In 1499 he removed thence to London, and proceeded to study law at Lincoln's Inn. In 1500 Archbishop Morton died.

While studying law, More, who was earnestly religious, tried on himself for a time the experiment of monastic discipline,

wore a hair shirt, took a log for a pillow, whipped himself on Fridays. At the age of twenty-one he entered Parliament, and soon after he had been called to the bar he was made an Under-Sheriff of London. In 1503 he opposed in the House of Commons Henry VII.'s proposal for a subsidy on account of the marriage portion of his daughter Margaret; and he opposed with so much energy that the House refused to grant it. One went and told the king that a beardless boy had disappointed all his expectations. During the last years, therefore, of Henry VII., More was under the displeasure of the king, and had thoughts of leaving the country. But in the first years of the reign of Henry VIII. he was rising to large practice in the law courts, where it is said he refused to plead in cases which he thought unjust, and took no fees from widows, orphans, or the poor. He would have preferred marrying the second daughter of John Colt, of New Hall, in Essex, but chose her elder sister, that he might not subject her to the discredit of being passed over. In 1513, Thomas More, then Under-Sheriff of London, is said to have written his *History of the Life and Death of King Edward V., and of the Usurpation of Richard III.*, first printed in 1557, from a MS. in his writing. The book seems to contain the knowledge and opinions of More's patron, Morton, who, as an active politician in the times described, was in peril of his own life from Richard III. When, in describing the death of Edward IV., and reporting his last words to the by-standers, it is said, "He laid him down on his right side with his face toward them," Morton, an eye-witness, rather than More, who was then a five-year-old child, seems to be speaking. Sir George Buck, in a eulogy of Richard III. published in 1646, says that Morton "wrote a book in Latin against King Richard, which came afterwards into the hands of Mr. More, some time his servant;" and adds a note that "the book was lately in the hands of Mr. Roper, of Eltham, as Sir Thomas Hoby, who saw it, told me." There is some reason, then, to think that More's MS. may have been a translation of his patron's Latin history, and therefore a contemporary record, though ascribed to More by the son-in-law who first printed it, twenty-two years after More's death. The work which comes down to us in Latin and in English, if wholly More's, is mainly based on information given to him by his patron Morton.

14. In the year 1513, when More's "History of Edward V. and Richard III." is said to have been written, Henry VIII.

was launching against France a war of which the details were managed by Thomas Wolsey. Wolsey, the son of a well-to-do butcher of Ipswich, was five years younger than Dean Colet, seven years older than More, and twenty years older than King Henry VIII. From Ipswich Grammar School he went to Magdalene College, Oxford, and there took his B.A. degree so early that he was called the Boy Bachelor. He became Fellow of Magdalene, then master of Magdalene School, where three sons of the Marquis of Dorset were among his pupils. When the sons went home for their Christmas holidays the master was invited with them, and he was so much liked that, in 1500, the marquis gave him the rectory of Lymington, in Somersetshire. Wolsey then obtained the post of chaplain to Henry Dean, Morton's successor in the Archbishopric of Canterbury, the prelate who in November, 1501, married the Princess Katherine of Aragon to young Arthur, Prince of Wales, four months before the boy's death. Henry VIII. married her in 1509, about six weeks after his accession. Dr. Dean was archbishop only for two years, and died in February, 1503, not long after Wolsey had become his chaplain. Wolsey next became one of the chaplains to an old knight, Sir John Nephant, governor of Calais, and managed all his affairs for him so well that when Sir John was, at his own request, called home, he specially commended Wolsey to the notice of the king, and procured for him the post of a court chaplain. Then Wolsey made friends at court, obtained employment on a foreign service, and performed his duty with a rare despatch. The king rewarded him, in 1508, with the deanery of Lincoln. After the accession of Henry VIII., Wolsey obtained the living of Torrington, in Devon, was made also Registrar of the Garter, Canon of Windsor, Dean of York. Dr. Fox, Bishop of Winchester, was Secretary of State and Lord Privy Seal. To him Wolsey in part owed his advancement. Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, was Lord Treasurer, and had more of the new king's confidence than the Bishop of Winchester thought good for his own interests. Therefore Dr. Fox sought to advance Wolsey, as a creature of his own, in the king's personal favour; and, to place him in closer relations with the king, obtained for him the post of Royal Almoner. From that point Wolsey's rise was rapid. He made his society delightful, knew how to win the king to his own counsels, and never flinched from work. In 1512 Henry made an inglorious attempt against France. Ten thousand

Englishmen intended for attack upon Guienne went to Spain, under the Marquis of Dorset, became insubordinate, and returned to England in defiance of the king's commands. Wolsey, the royal almoner, took charge of the victualling of the forces, and laboured indefatigably at the preparation for an attack upon France in 1513, the next year, which should not fail. Henry was leagued against France with Pope Leo X. and the Emperor Maximilian. He crossed to France in the summer of 1513, and the campaign satisfied him, since he won the Battle of the Spurs, took Terouenne and also Tournay, of which place he gave to Wolsey the rich bishopric. Before Henry returned to England, in November of that year, James IV. of Scotland had been slain at Flodden. Wolsey had been in France with the king, counselling and aiding with his great administrative power. Soon after their return the king made his friend Bishop of Lincoln. Before the end of the year 1514 the see of York fell vacant, and Wolsey was made Archbishop of York. Lavish gifts of the king followed rapidly. Wolsey obtained administration of the see of Bath and Wells, the temporalities of the Abbey of St. Albans; soon afterwards in succession there were added to his archbishopric the bishoprics of Durham and Winchester. He had the revenues of a sovereign, lived pompously, and favoured learning. From 1515 to 1523 no parliament was summoned; Henry and Wolsey held absolute rule. In November, 1515, Wolsey formally received, in Westminster Abbey, from Leo X., the rank of cardinal, which had been granted in September. Dean Colet preached the installation sermon. Towards the close of December, in the same year, Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, after a vain struggle against usurpations of his power by the strong rival archbishop, yielded to him the office of Lord Chancellor. It was in these days that Thomas More, not knighted yet, wrote his "Utopia."

15. In May, 1515, More had been joined in a commission with Cuthbert Tunstal and others, to confer with the ambassadors of Charles V., then only Archduke of Austria, upon a renewal of alliance. Tunstal, a rising churchman, then held several preferments, and was chancellor to Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury. He was made in that year, 1515, Archdeacon of Chester, and in May, 1516, Master of the Rolls. In the same year, 1516, he was again sent with More on an embassy to Brussels, and lived there under the same roof with Erasmus, who was indebted much to the generous friendship of Archbishop

Warham, and something to the help of English friends, among whom was More, for the leisure which enabled him to produce, in 1516, his New Testament. On the first embassy More was absent more than six months, and during that time he established friendship with Peter Giles (Latinised, Ægidius), a scholarly and courteous young man, who was secretary to the municipality of Antwerp.

More's *Utopia* is in two parts, of which the second, describing the place (Οὐτόπος—or Nusquama, as he called it sometimes in his letters—"Nowhere"), was probably written in the latter part of 1515; the first part, introductory, early in 1516. The book was first printed at Louvain, late in 1516, under the editorship of Erasmus, Peter Giles, and other of More's friends in Flanders. It was then revised by More, and printed by Frobenius, at Basle, in November, 1518. It was reprinted at Paris and Vienna, but was not printed in England during More's lifetime. Its first publication in this country was in the English translation made in Edward VI.'s reign (1551) by Ralph Robinson. The name of the book has given an adjective to our language—we call an impracticable scheme Utopian. Yet, under the veil of a playful fiction, the talk is intensely earnest, and abounds in practical suggestion. It is the work of a scholarly and witty Englishman, who attacks in his own way the chief political and social evils of his time. Having commended the book in a witty letter to his friend Giles, More tells in the first part how he was sent into Flanders with Cuthbert Tunstal, "whom the king's majesty of late, to the great rejoicing of all men, did prefer to the office of Master of the Rolls;" how the commissioners of Charles met them at Bruges, and presently returned to Brussels for instructions; and how More then went to Antwerp, where he found a pleasure in the society of Peter Giles, which soothed his desire to see again his wife and children, from whom he had been four months away. One day, when he came from the service in Antwerp Cathedral, More fables that he saw his friend Giles talking to "a certain stranger, a man well stricken in age, with a black sunburnt face, a long beard, and a cloak cast homely about his shoulders," whom More judged to be a mariner. Peter Giles introduced him to his friend as Raphael Hythloday (the name, from the Greek ὕθλος and δάιος, means "knowing in trifles"), a man learned in Latin and profound in Greek, a Portuguese wholly given to philosophy, who left his patrimony to his brethen, and, desiring to

know far countries, went with Amerigo Vespucci in the three last of the voyages of which an account had been printed in 1507. From the last voyage he did not return with Vespucci, but got leave to be one of the twenty-four men left in Gulike. Then he travelled on until having reached Calicut he found there one of the ships of his own country to take him home. So it was that in the course of travel Raphael Hythloday had visited the island of Utopia, unknown to other men; had dwelt there for five years, and had become familiar with its customs. More's book, which expresses much of the new energy of independent thought, was thus associated with the fresh discovery of the New World. The Cabots had reached the continent in 1497, on the coast of Labrador. Columbus reached it in 1498, near the Island of Trinidad, off the northern coast of South America. The Florentine, Amerigo Vespucci, made his first expedition in 1499, under command of Ojeda; his second in 1500. His third and fourth voyages were made in 1501 and 1503 in Portuguese ships in the service of King Emanuel of Portugal. In 1505 he returned into the service of Spain, but made no more voyages; he prepared charts, and prescribed routes for voyages of other men to the New World. The fame of Amerigo's description of his voyages caused a German geographer to call the newly-founded continent, after his name, America. He died three or four years before Thomas More wrote his "Utopia."

After the greeting in the street, Raphael Hythloday and Peter Giles went with More to his house; "and there," says More, "in my garden, upon a bench covered with green torves, we sat down talking together." The talk was of the customs among men, and of the government of princes. Why would not Hythloday give his experience as counsellor of some great prince, since "from the prince, as from a perpetual well-spring, cometh among the people the flood of all that is good or evil?" Thomas More had withheld himself from such service; and he put two reasons for doing so into the mouth of Hythloday. First, that "most princes have more delight in war (the knowledge of which I neither have nor desire) than in the good feats of peace; and employ much more study how by right or wrong to enlarge their dominions than how well and peaceably to rule and govern that they have already." Secondly, because "every king's counsellor is so wise in his own eyes that he will not allow another man's counsel, if it be not shameful, flattering assent." More had in mind the supreme counsels of Wolsey, abetting Henry VIII.'s

war policy, and doing little to secure peace and well-being for the English people. Had Hythloday ever been in England, he was asked. Yes, for a few months, not long after the insurrection of the Western Englishmen (in 1496), "which by their own miserable and pitiful slaughter was suppressed and ended." He was then much beholden to Cardinal Morton; and here More put into Raphael's mouth eulogy of Morton, with an account of discourse at his table which set forth some of those social miseries, the amending of which would better become a prince than foreign war. Some one at Morton's table praised the strict execution of justice which showed felons hanging usually by twenty at a time upon one gallows. Hythloday said he argued that death was too great a penalty for theft. Those cannot be kept from stealing who have no other way whereby to live. "Therefore in this point not you only, but also the most part of the world, be like evil schoolmasters, which be readier to beat than to teach their scholars." There were the broken soldiers who came from the wars maimed and lame. There were the crowds of idle retainers nourished in the households of great men, these were thrust out of doors, capable of nothing, when their masters died, or they fell sick. In France there was what More thought the worse plague of a standing army, then a new invention, for which war must be found "to the end they may ever have practised soldiers and cunning man-slayers." A thousand times more regard ought to be had, said Hythloday, to needs of peace than to the needs of war. Then there was the destruction of tillage and increase of pastures for the sheep of the rich abbots. "They inclose all into pastures; they throw down houses, they pluck down towns, and leave nothing standing but only the church to be made a sheep-house." Thus husbandmen were thrust out of their own; thus victual had grown dear. Many were forced into idleness, yet the sheep suffered from murrain, and the price of wool had risen. "Let not so many be brought up in idleness; let husbandry and tillage be restored; let cloth-working be renewed, that there may be honest labours for this idle sort to pass their time in profitably, which hitherto either poverty hath caused to be thieves, or else now be either vagabonds or idle serving men, and shortly will be thieves. For by suffering your youth wantonly and viciously to be brought up, and to be infected even from their tender age by little and little with vice, then a' God's name to be punished when they commit

the same faults after being come to man's estate, which from their youth they were ever like to do,—in this point, I pray you, what other thing do you than make thieves and then punish them?" Such passages indicate the spirit and the purpose of the book concerning which Erasmus wrote to a friend, in 1517, that he should send for More's "Utopia" if he had not read it, and "wished to see the true source of all political evils." And to More Erasmus wrote of his book, "A burgomaster of Antwerp is so pleased with it he knows it all by heart." When Raphael Hythloday's talk in the garden had excited curiosity by its frequent reference to the way things were done in Utopia, he was persuaded to give an account of that wonderful island. His description forms the second part of the little book. It is designedly fantastic in suggestion of details, the work of a scholar who had read Plato's "Republic" and had his fancy quickened after reading Plutarch's account of Spartan life under Lycurgus. But never was there in any old English version of "The Governail of Princes" (ch. iv. § 43) a more direct upholding of the duty of a king in his relation to the country governed than in Thomas More's "Utopia." Beneath the veil of an ideal communism, into which there has been worked some witty extravagance, there lies a noble English argument. Sometimes More puts the case as of France when he means England. Sometimes there is ironical praise of the good faith of Christian kings, saving the book from censure as a political attack upon the policy of Henry VIII. Thus protected, More could declare boldly that it were best for the king "to content himself with his own kingdom, to make much of it, to enrich it, and to make it as flourishing as he could, to endeavour himself to love his subjects, and again to be beloved by them, willingly to live with them, peaceably to govern them, and with other kingdoms not to meddle, seeing that which he hath already is even enough for him, yea, and more than he can well turn him to." But Hythloday added, "'This mine advice, Master More, how think you it would be heard and taken?' 'So, God help me, not very thankfully, quod I.'" The prince's office, in More's "Utopia," "continueth all his lifetime, unless he be deposed or put down for suspicion of tyranny." In the chapter on the Religions in Utopia, More wrote of King Utopus, who conquered the country because it was distracted with quarrels about religion, that "first of all he made a decree that it should be lawful for every man to favour and follow what religion he would, and that he

might do the best he could to bring others to his opinion, so that he did it peaceably, gently, quietly, and soberly, without hasty and contentious rebuking and inveighing against each other. If he could not by fair and gentle speech induce them unto his opinion, yet he should use no kind of violence, and refrain from displeasant and seditious words. To him that would vehemently and fervently in this cause strive and contend was decreed banishment and bondage. This law did King Utopus make, not only for the maintenance of peace, which he saw through continual contention and mortal hatred utterly extinguished, but also because he thought this decree would work for the furtherance of religion."

16. More wrote when the days were at hand that would have yielded many bondsmen had Utopus given laws to Europe. The invention of printing had caused a wide *DIFFUSION OF THE BIBLE* in the received Latin version, known as the Vulgate. Eighty editions of it were printed between the years 1462 and 1500. The new impulse given to scholarship was felt by the great scholars of the Church. In 1502, Ximenez, then Primate of Spain and founder of the University of Alcala, projected an edition of the Scriptures known from Complutum, the Latin name of Alcala, its place of publication, as the *Complutensian Polyglot.* He proposed to correct the received version of the books of the Old Testament by the Hebrew text, and those of the New Testament by the Greek text. "Every theologian," he said, "should also be able to drink of that water which springeth up to eternal life at the fountain-head itself. This is the reason why we have ordered the Bible to be printed in the original language with different translations. . . . To accomplish this task we have been obliged to have recourse to the knowledge of the most able philologists, and to make researches in every direction for the best and most ancient Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Our object is to revive the hitherto dormant study of the Sacred Scriptures." This work was prepared at the university of Alcala by some of the best scholars of Spain, who worked under his direction, and were maintained by his liberality. Leo X. became pope in March, 1513, and the printing of the first part of the Polyglot (dedicated to him), the New Testament, was completed in folio in January, 1514. There were letters and prefaces of St. Jerome and others; there was a short Greek grammar on a single leaf, and there was a short lexicon: but although money had lavishly been spent in procuring manuscripts for the

determination of the text. there was no description of them, there were no specific references to their authority, no various readings. In the whole of the New Testament folio there were only four critical remarks upon the text. The second of the six folio volumes was ready in May, 1514, and served as an Introduction to the Old Testament, containing a Hebrew-Chaldee lexicon, a Hebrew grammar, and other aids. The other four volumes gave the books of the Old Testament in five forms, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Hebrew, the Chaldee text, or Targum of Onkelos, and a Latin version of the Targum. The publication was completed in July, 1517, only four months before the death of its promoter. The pope's permission for the publication of the work did not appear till March, 1520, and another year elapsed before any one of the six hundred copies printed was allowed to pass the Spanish frontier.

The year of the publication of Utopia, 1516, was also the year in which *Erasmus* turned study of Greek to account by publishing his *New Testament* with the Greek text revised from collation of MSS., a Latin version, which corrected mis-translations in the Vulgate, and appended notes to explain changes of reading In the Introduction to this work Erasmus said that the Scriptures addressed all, adapted themselves even to the understanding of children, and that it were well if they could be read by all people in all languages ; that none could reasonably be cut off from a blessing as much meant for all as baptism and the other sacraments. The common mechanic is a true theologian when his hopes look heavenward, he blesses those who curse him, loves the good, is patient with the evil, comforts the mourner, and sees death only as the passage to immortal life. If princes practised this religion, if priests taught it instead of their stock erudition out of Aristotle and Averroes, there would be fewer wars among the nations of Christendom, less private wrath and litigation, less worship of wealth. "Christ," added Erasmus, "says, He who loves me, keeps my commandments. If we be true Christians, and really believe that Christ can give us more than the philosophers and kings can give, we cannot become too familiar with the New Testament." This new edition of it was received with interest by many who soon afterwards were in strong opposition to the claims of the reformers. It was revised, and several times re-printed, while Erasmus followed up his work by the issue of Latin *Paraphrases* of the books of the New Testament, which

expanded here and there for the sake of interpretation, and put into a fresh and flowing Latin style, the sense of the text, so as to bring it home at once to the less learned, and even to the learned give sometimes a livelier perception of its meaning. The first Paraphrase was of the Epistle to the Romans, and was first published in 1518. In 1519 followed the Epistle to the Corinthians. The demand for more caused Erasmus to paraphrase other epistles. At the beginning of 1522 appeared his Paraphrase of Matthew's Gospel, dedicated to Charles V. That of John's Gospel followed, with a dedication to Ferdinand I. In 1523 the Paraphrase of Luke's Gospel was published. It was dedicated to Henry VIII.; and the Paraphrase of Mark's Gospel, published in 1524, was inscribed to Francis I. In these dedications of the Gospel of Peace to the chief authors of discord there was something akin to the spirit of More's Utopia.

17. It was but a year after the publication of Utopia and of Erasmus's New Testament when, on the 31st of October, 1517, *Martin Luther* began his career as a reformer by affixing his Ninety-five Theses against Indulgences to the church door at Wittenberg. He was then a pious, preaching monk, a Doctor and Professor of Divinity in the University of Wittenberg, aged thirty-four, desiring to be faithful alike to his Church and to his conscience. Leo X., to meet the expenses of the Roman Court, and for the completion of St. Peter's at Rome, raised money by an indiscriminate sale of indulgences. His commissary, John Tetzel, had told the people that when one dropped a penny into the box for a soul in purgatory, so soon as the money chinked in the chest the soul flew up to heaven. Luther opposed: Tetzel replied. Luther dutifully submitted his propositions to Pope Leo X. The papal legate, Caietan, foiled by Luther's firm placing of Scripture above the pope, when he had thought to bring the poor monk to reason, said, "I will not speak to the beast again; he has deep eyes, and his head is full of speculation." Leo X. forced Luther into open opposition to the see of Rome by issuing, in November, 1518, a bull declaring the pope's power to issue indulgences which will avail not only the living but also the dead who are in purgatory. Luther still held by his Church, but appealed from the pope to a General Council. Thus the first movements in the public career of Luther corresponded in time with the work of Erasmus upon the New Testament.

When the outcry against Luther became violent, Erasmus

urged moderation; and, as he said in May, 1519, endeavoured to carry himself as evenly as he could with all parties, that he might more effectually serve the interests of learning and religion.

In June, 1520, Leo X. published a bull formally condemning as heretical forty-one propositions collected from Luther's writings. The pope gave the heretic sixty days within which he was to recant if he would not suffer punishment for heresy. The breach then was complete. Luther denounced "the execrable bull of Antichrist," and wholly separated himself from communion with the Church of Rome. He had denied, he said, Divine Right in the papacy, but now he knew it to be the kingdom of Babylon. In October, 1520, Charles V. was crowned emperor. At the Diet of Worms, held in the beginning of 1521, the pope's bull was about to be confirmed against Luther in his absence, when the Elector of Saxony and other of his friends urged that he should not be condemned unheard. He was summoned, and went boldly, saying that if he knew there were as many devils at Worms as tiles upon the houses, he would go. It is said by a Romanist biographer, Audin, that when, in April 1521, on his way to the Diet of Worms, where he maintained his cause before the assembled cardinals, bishops, and princes of Germany, as the towers of Worms came in sight, Luther stood up in his carriage and first chanted his famous hymn, "Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott" (A mighty stronghold is our God), which Audin called the "Marseillaise of the Reformation."

18. **William Tyndal** was of about Luther's age, born probably in 1484, at Stinchcomb, or North Nibley, Gloucestershire. He was educated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, graduated at Oxford, was then for some years at Cambridge, and, about 1519, became tutor in the family of a Gloucestershire gentleman, Sir John Walsh, of Little Sodbury. He translated into English the Enchiridion of Erasmus, which argues that Christian life is a warfare against evil, sustained rather by obeying Christ than by faith in scholastic dogmas. As the controvery about Luther gathered strength, Tyndal supported Luther's cause so earnestly that he was cited before the Chancellor of the Diocese of Worcester, and warned. In dispute afterwards with a Worcestershire divine, he said, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."

About 1523—the year in which Lord Berners published his