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A
HISTORY
OF
EUROPEAN LITERATURE

IN THE
Middle Ages and Modern Times.

BY
J. R. MORELL.



LONDON:
T. J. ALLMAN, 463, OXFORD STREET.
1874.

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P R E F A C E

MAN, in his relation with the external world in which he is placed, presents a passive and also an active attitude. He acts on and is acted on by the world around him. But his actions are subject to and limited by the laws of time and space, and his acting is a shaping and modifying of elements already existing in the world of matter.

It is not so with the Creations of the Mind, of which the most important and enduring are recorded in Literature and in Art. A certain School of Criticism does indeed still endeavour to hold to the exploded theory, that *Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit prius in sensu*.^{*} This view, attempted to be revived in our day by positivism, has encountered a complete refutation in the present spiritualistic school of Ulrici and J. H. Fichte, who show that man's conceptions are subject to a Necessity of Thinking,[†] and do not result from the phenomena they classify.

But without pursuing the intellectual part of this question, the History of Literature and Art suffices to refute it. In many or most of the highest creations of our worlds of Literature and art we see an origination and not an imitation or even a combination. With the conceptions of his intellect and the pictures of his imagination man throws out new worlds, new spheres, new phases of being, in many cases a complete innovation and an entire progress on the actual and experimental.

Moreover, the same Necessity of Thinking that guarantees the reality of the world of matter without us, endorses the truth of the impressions man receives direct from the Thought-world and the region of the Ideal.

^{*} Nothing is in the intellect which was not before in the sense. (John Locke's axiom.)

[†] Denk nothwendigkeit.

Some of these conceptions and ideas of the mind are impressed and infused, and some are self-derived and thrown out by the activity of the mind. The former have given rise to the saying that the poet is inspired and a seer. The others—the self-derived—have led men to speak of his creative genius.

Both notions, like most proverbial statements universally current, are based on truth.

In the Ideal and Thought region man is to a large extent a free agent and there only. It is this that makes the Republic of Letters and the Kingdom of Art so attractive; there at least he has elbow-room and can breathe freely.

It is there that he exhibits the quasi-divine capacities and endowments of his nature, and shows in the ideal colouring he pours even over his imitations of the real, that there is far more in the intellect and in the imagination than what he received from his senses.

These remarks are chiefly made to show the sovereign dignity and interest attaching to the Creations of Literature and Art, and how greatly they transcend in value and permanence the mere mechanical contrivances and adaptations of matter that absorb the faculties of man in political history and in the development of experimental science.

The little volume now presented is only an attempt to give a précis of the History of Medieval and Modern Literature. The subject is too vast to be presented in any other form in so limited a compass.

It has been confined to Belles-lettres as the distinct province of Literature properly so-called, and it is hoped that a sufficient sketch of the development of this phase of human nature in the great historical nations has been given to make the book practically useful as a guide and for purposes of reference.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.—MATTER AND METHOD - - -	1
PART I.—GENERAL SURVEY OF LITERATURE	
CHAPTER	
I. A GENERAL SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL LITERATURE -	9
II. POETRY: THE GOTHIC-TEUTONIC AND SCANDINAVIAN NATIONS - - - - -	12
III. ANALYSIS OF THE "NIBELUNGEN LIED" - -	17
IV. THE NETHERLANDS AND ENGLAND - - -	21
V. GENERAL SURVEY OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES: SPAIN, FRANCE - - - - -	26
VI. ITALY: DANTE - - - - -	35
VII. SPAIN - - - - -	42
PART II.—MODERN TIMES (1500—1873).	
VIII. SURVEY - - - - -	44
IX. ITALY, TO TASSO - - - - -	46
X. ITALY, FROM TASSO - - - - -	54
XI. MODERN ITALIAN PROSE - - - - -	62
XII. SPAIN: POETRY, LYRICS - - - - -	65
XIII. THE SPANISH DRAMA: LOPE AND CALDERON - -	67
XIV. THE DRAMA AFTER CALDERON - - - - -	78
XV. PROSE IN SPAIN SINCE THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY: CERVANTES - - - - -	82
XVI. PORTUGAL - - - - -	90
XVII. OTHER PORTUGUESE WRITERS - - - - -	98
XVIII. FRANCE, TO BOILEAU: LYRICS - - - - -	104

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIX. LYRICS SINCE BOILEAU, AND THE "HENRIADE" -	109
XX. THE DRAMA IN FRANCE, TO VOLTAIRE -	116
XXI. THE DRAMA SINCE VOLTAIRE -	124
XXII. FRENCH PROSE, TO PASCAL -	129
XXIII. FRENCH PROSE, FROM PASCAL TO ROUSSEAU -	137
XXIV. FRENCH PROSE, FROM ROUSSEAU TO OUR DAY -	144
XXV. ENGLAND : POETRY IN THE ELIZABETHAN AGE, AND SUBSEQUENTLY -	149
XXVI. POETRY OF THE AGE OF THE COMMONWEALTH : MILTON—(THE EPIO) -	160
XXVII. POETRY OF THE AGE OF QUEEN ANNE -	166
XXVIII. THE DRAMA OF THE AGE OF QUEEN ANNE -	174
XXIX. ENGLISH POETRY SINCE QUEEN ANNE -	175
XXX. ENGLISH POETRY, FROM SHELLEY -	181
XXXI. PROSE SINCE QUEEN ANNE -	186
XXXII. GERMANY : POETRY, TO GÖTHE -	190
XXXIII. GÖTHE AND SCHILLER -	196
XXXIV. GERMAN PROSE -	200
XXXV. THE SCANDINAVIAN NATIONS : DENMARK AND SWE- DEN -	202
XXXVI. THE NETHERLANDS -	207
XXXVII. THE SCLAVONIC NATIONS : RUSSIA, POLAND -	210
APPENDIX -	215

HISTORY OF LITERATURE.

INTRODUCTION.

MATTER AND METHOD.

THE subject considered in the following pages is very important and very vast. It is important because, even in a higher degree than art, it is a reflection, though imperfect, of the powers of the immortal mind ; because, closely connected with art, it is an evidence of an originating and creative force in the mind, removing it to a higher and nobler sphere, altogether distinct from that of the souls of the lower animals, and representing a kind of shadow of the creative activity of God.

The subject of literature is vast, for it embraces many lands and tongues, it extends over a long period, and it presents us with the imaginative and intellectual activity of several faculties of the mind.

This being the case, it is necessary, within moderate limits, to endeavour to combine two points not easy to reconcile : the adequate treatment of a very important and a very vast subject in a very moderate compass.

It is evident that this end can only be attained by what is called method—a proper method—which first claims attention.

The historian of literature has to generalize—that is, to bring a number of facts and persons under general laws, affecting them all.

He has, further, to use selection ; for, with the immense amount of material presented to his hand, he would never arrive at a conclusion, or keep within his limits, without a system by which he rejects the unessential, retaining only the essential.

He has to classify, and in various ways :—

(1st.) According to the special powers of the mind more specially developed in each particular branch of literature, as imagination in poetry.

(2nd.) According to historical epochs, as ancient, mediæval and modern, with subdivisions.

(3rd.) Into families of languages, as those derived from the Latin, the Teutonic, the Slavonic, &c.

(4th.) According to separate political subdivisions into countries—such as England, France, Germany, Italy, &c.

Lastly, even according to reigns, or periods marked by certain reigns, as the Age of Elizabeth, of Louis Quatorze, &c.

Bearing in mind these general principles of method, as applied to the matter of the history of letters, the historian will therefore generalize or take a general survey of national efforts in the great branches of poetry and prose. Then he will select, and in using his material he will be guided by the special requirements of the subject and of his limits; and, further, he will classify under heads. But here again a certain freedom of treatment is necessary and useful, more particularly in not adhering too slavishly to the footsteps of others in forming an independent judgment, and avoiding that mechanical imitation which is among the special defects and characteristics of this age.

After this cursory view of the matter and method to which these pages are devoted, two considerations may be added, showing that the difficulty of condensing so much in a limited compass is not so great as it appears.

1. The history of ancient literature—that of Greece and Rome—does not enter into the present work.

2. Literatures which, though remarkable and interesting, have little bearing on, or connection with, modern European literature, are kept out of view. Thus the literatures of Asia can only be alluded to incidentally, for the study of Chinese dramas and Arabian fables does not form at present a part of the curriculum, already so extensive.

A kind of broad survey of the territory over which it is proposed to travel is here added. The great aeronauts of the present day are described as rising many thousand feet in the atmosphere whence they take a broad survey of large tracts of land, appearing mapped out with great regularity, while these same regions are traversed afterwards more slowly and methodically by the less aspiring railway train. Following this course, the present introduction will first attempt to rise above the great field of European literature since the breaking up of the Roman Empire, and after an inspection of its broadest features, prepare the way for a slower and more methodical study.

And even here it is essential to begin to use those principles of analysis which have been referred to before. For it will be necessary to classify literature according to the faculties of the *mind*, and to classify these branches so determined according to

the speech of the principal people of Europe. In considering the first point, it is requisite to enter very briefly on the ground of philosophy.

The repulsion that is felt for all that relates to philosophy results very much from the way in which it has been treated, especially in digests and text-books. Rightly treated it can never be dry, though it may be difficult; but difficulty applies to all high and deep researches, such as mathematics; and surely nothing can be more interesting than an analysis of the most noble and immortal faculties of man.

It is not proposed to treat of philosophy, but only to lift up for an instant the veil that covers its sublime features. Only a momentary glance can be given at the branch called psychology, or the science of the soul.

What has the science of ages taught men in relation to the faculties of the mind? It has made a classification. This classification has varied, has often varied, and has often dealt with hard names. It is preferable to give its general features with a simpler nomenclature. The mind has been found to exhibit three principal faculties or powers.

1. Observation, strongest in childhood, and combining with memory, which increases with growth.

2. Intellect, or the reason, which compares or combines the results of experience conveyed by consciousness and memory.

3. Imagination, which combines with observation and reason, and while it assists in finding out new facts and truths, gives man the power to create by throwing together his past experiences in a new form, or by purely original conceptions.

These three powers exhaust our popular analysis of the mind, when united to the moral and religious sense; and they have received a very appropriate labelling in German:—1st, *Anschauung*; 2nd, *Verstand* with *Vernunft*; 3rd, *Vorstellung*, or *Phantasie*.

This division has been given because, from a general preliminary survey of the field of literature, it is wished to take in as much as possible under a few broad features, and it is found that literature falls under one of these three heads.

With inspired truths and writings these pages have not to deal, as it is a subject raised high above criticism. But taking a survey of mere human literary efforts, they all come under one or more of these three great faculties.

In the rise and growth of literatures, as of persons, it will be seen that observation and memory, with imagination, come first, and reason afterwards. But imagination, like a lovely fairy,

never deserts man in life, nor does it leave him comfortless even in the hardest and most scientific age. Like hope, the words of Schiller apply to it :—

“Es reden und träumen die Menschen viel
 Von besseren künftigen Tagen;
 Nach einem glücklichen goldenen Ziel
 Sieht man sie rennen und jagen.
 . . . Die Hoffnung führt ihn ins Leben ein,
 Sie umflattert den fröhlichen Knaben;
 Den Jungling locket ihr Zauberschein,
 Sie wird mit dem Greise nicht begraben.”*

As may be supposed, this survey will deal chiefly with works of Anschauung and Phantasie, observation and imagination, or fact and fiction, though reason will be far from discarded. But a little consideration will show that most works of directly and strongly intellectual character, belong to the history of science, with which the present pages are not concerned. The previous reflections lead to the following practical results. Literary activity takes two forms :—

1. Belles Lettres.
2. Science.

The term Belles, applied to Letters, is used to show that imagination, the ornamental faculty, has a chief part in them, and it is with this class of works that the present pages have mostly to deal.

After this preamble, it is admissible at once to pass on to the subject under its second classification—*Language*.

I. The present survey embraces Europe and its Colonies, and Europe only since the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

(A) This Europe presents people subdued and influenced by the Roman arms and arts, and others unsubdued.

(a) Of the subdued, we notice the people of the whole of Italy, Gaul (or France), and Spain (the Peninsula).

(b) Of the unsubdued, the Gothic-Teutonic (or German) race, and the Slavi.

(B) A provincial Latin usurped the place of the Celtic and other original tongues in the countries subdued by Rome. (*Lingua rustica*.)

(C) The unsubdued part of Europe retained its original and primitive tongues for many ages, uninfluenced, or almost so, by Roman and Latin.

(D) In the subdued Romanised Europe, there was a current written literature, consisting of what critics have called Low Latin, and what might be rendered as *Infima Latinitas*.

* See Appendix A.

(E) This produced, in the course of time, further deviations and corruptions.

(1) Hence the Romance languages.

(2) Their only literature in the primitive form is that of the Troubadours, and Trouvere romances in verse.

(F) In the Gothic-Teutonic an analogous movement is traced, but more purely original and national. It takes two courses, producing (ninth to twelfth century) :—

I. The earliest—the Icelandic—literature, the most brilliant literary feature of the Dark Ages, coruscating and shining in the Far North like the Aurora Borealis, or the volcanic fires of Mount Hecla.

II. The songs of the Minnesinger, or German Troubadours, and the Nibelungen Lied (twelfth to fourteenth century), treating much of the same matter as many of the Icelandic Sagas, the hero of the Nibelungen, Siegfried, being the same person as the Sigurd of Iceland.

We have so far advanced to the height of the Middle Ages, but here we must pause, and make a broad distinction.

α. Among the Romance-speaking nations, once subdued by the Romans, there is no language as yet formed really deserving the name, and given currency and character by a man and work of commanding genius.

β. Even in Germany, it cannot be said that the Alt Hoch Deutsch is established, though it is aiming at diffusion and universal adoption, and its grammatical forms are interesting and instructive. (The Gothic, its parent, is a very perfect tongue.)

γ. The Low German spoken by the Saxon ancestors of the modern English did indeed try to make a stand, and establish itself under the all-accomplished Alfred, but its appearance was passing and meteoric.

δ. Not so in Iceland, where a lasting, substantial literature is permanently fixed, presenting in the Eddas and Sagas models equal to those of classical Greece and Rome.

But the greatness of Iceland was confined to the Middle Ages, though the people who colonised it have made our modern greatness. For the Normans were of the same stock, and, combining with the Saxon forefathers of the English race, made that powerful nation which has ruled the seas for ages, and now has the chief share of influence on land, and whose literature, beginning with Chaucer under Edward III., embodies the best features of the Gothic and Romance, and makes the English tongue, in the opinion of Grimm, in some points the most valuable vehicle of *human thought ever invented*.

But it is inexpedient to stop in the Middle Ages. Advancing towards the Renaissance, Italy takes the lead in forming a modern language and a literature. To few men has it been given to make a language in the same degree as Dante. Chaucer did much to make English; Lessing had a large hand in forming modern German; but Dante turned his countrymen from writing Latin to a new tongue, derived from it, which he had a large share in founding.

Petrarch and Boccaccio complete the trio from whom Italian has issued, but their influence was subordinate.

(A) *Comparison of the Rise of Art and Language in Italy.*—Stiff stereotyped Byzantine forms precede Cimabue and Giotto. They may be seen in the Florence Gallery, and Campo Santo, of Pisa. These two painters strike out a new path, and found Italian art—gaunt, severe, stiff, angular, sublime, spiritual. Such is Dante. Shaking off the Latin leading strings, he strikes out a new, original path—severe, muscular, mystical, sublime. Descending the stream of art, the stiffness and angularity diminish. Forms become more graceful, though still highly spiritual and ideal, in Perugino. At length, in Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Titian, we have art at its zenith, uniting grand ideal conceptions with perfection of form and colouring. Literature in Italy follows much the same course. Petrarch softens Dante, and in Tasso appears the full harmony of Italian, with noble and high thoughts, though inferior in power. Again, as art has rather fallen off since Raphael's age, and is now quite inferior in Italy, so Italian literature has lost power and wealth in works of fiction since Tasso, though the drama has had its best writers latterly, especially Alfieri. It was said that in nations observation and fantasy precede reason; poetry and romance go before science. So in Italy. Its finest prose began with the decline of poetry, and science has had its best exponents latterly, especially in Volta, Galvani, and a host of men illustrious in the scientific world.

(B) It is necessary to dwell on Italy because its influence was great on England (whose tongue is half Teutonic, half Romance). From Chaucer downwards (Edward III.), a great share of Italian influence can be traced in English poetry and in English romance writers. Chaucer stands to English much as Dante to Italian; but he is not so great nor so original, though almost inimitable in his pictures of national life.

In the period intervening from Chaucer to Elizabeth, no marked names occur; but the language is preparing for Shakes-

peare; and in Spenser's "Faerie Queen" under Elizabeth we trace direct Italian influence in his highly musical verse.

Shakespeare shows strong evidence of his knowledge of Italian works; Ben Jonson, and others of his age, still more.

Yet in this Elizabethan age we must be just. Never was a freer outburst of national feeling in a national literature. It is Shakespeare's glory to be so universal and yet so English! and with our version of the Bible to have made our English tongue one of the most majestic in the world.

Even in England, poetry may be said to have fallen off since Elizabeth. The poets of the Restoration and Queen Anne, Pope, Dryden, are mostly imitators, and too Frenchy in style. The Eighteenth Century is not poetic. The Nineteenth has given us Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, with Scott in verse and prose. These mark a special æra in our poetry, great and beautiful, but mostly lacking simplicity, and showing the predominance of reason over fantasy in the older stage of a nation.

Here again prose works of Fiction occupy a special sphere, and with much good have reached almost an excess. (Our History writing is very perfect.) But in England, as in Italy, France, and Germany, science comes to the front as we descend in time; and since Newton England has a constellation of great names in science down to our day, Faraday, Herschell, and others.

(C) France comes up very late in literature. After the decline of the Romance and Troubadour, it shows nothing till the chroniclers, Froissart and others, under Francis I.

They present the chatty, sociable French spirit, and very loose grammar. Then come Montaigne with his garrulous learned essays, and Rabelais with his extravagances.

The French of that age was rough. Richelieu founds the Academy and *French*; though he stiffens French verse too much under rigid rules. But Richelieu prepares the way for the literature of Louis XIV.

The drama suddenly blazes forth in great splendour.

Racine is thought by a great critic superior to Milton and Virgil in perfection and harmony of verse. Corneille and Molière are almost equally admirable. Prose almost keeps pace with poetry in Pascal and Massillon; soon after in Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau prose comes to perfection, though poetry declines, for the "Henriade" of Voltaire is at best a failure, the poet wanting the highest inspiration of belief in the Ideal.

Modern France has done a good deal to revive poetry in Victor Hugo, Lamartine, and others, and its histories stand accredited,

though inferior to those of England; its memoirs are specially good, and its science, as elsewhere, comes to the front in Buffon, Cuvier, Jussieu, Laplace, and Lavoisier.

(D) Spain forms a region in prose, not confined to romances and verse, but rich in history and the criticism of chivalry in Don Quixote's prose, yet lacking science and philosophy. The romances are noble, and often admirable, and an excellent reflection of the serious, warlike, religious Spaniard engaged in constant wars with the Moors. Cervantes, in "Don Quixote," establishes Spanish prose, and does much to destroy the good with the bad in the spirit of chivalry.

Written Spanish history was good and remarkable at a time when the rest of Europe had none; the drama of Lope de Vega and Calderon though excessive and careless, has many good features; and modern Spanish lyrics are by no means bad.

(E) Portugal through Camoens gives us a noble epic in the "Lusiad;" but Spain has no later epic than "The Cid."

(F) German and Scandinavian literature (Gothic) are original, and different from the Romance. Indeed they have influenced the Romance literature. Chivalry is of Teutonic origin. The classical nations were not Ritterlich (chivalrous).

Alt Hoch Deutsch has little to show. Ulphilas' translation of the Bible is the earliest specimen in Gothic; for of the Runes little is known.

In the Norse, the Scandinavian Eddas present a Pagan cosmogony as grand as the Indian or Greek.

Mention has also been made of the Icelandic Sagas, a brilliant feature of the Middle Ages, and even more remarkable than the Nibelungen. After this there occur a certain number of mystical German writers little known; but the foundation of modern German is Luther's Bible.

In no tongue have so many Biblical terms been introduced as in German.

Following this is a period of decadence. The Thirty Years' War and other causes tended to barbarize Germany; and the scholars of the Seventeenth Century became too much a mere class of pedants, a race apart, hair-splitting about words, and much given to quibbles.

The great Leibnitz wrote either in Latin or French; Frederick the Great in French. Lessing inaugurated modern German literature, and from his time there is a stream so rich that no culture of the mind can be perfect without a study of German letters.

From Klopstock and Lessing we rise to Goethe and Schiller;

while in philosophy the great names of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and others, rival those of Plato and Aristotle in Greece. Latterly German literature has been much given to science, and has achieved great triumphs in this department. History has also been studied in the most fundamental manner; and Niebuhr, Schlosser, Mommsen, and Ranke stand forth among the first historians of the age.

Nor must a due mention be omitted of Danish, the daughter of the Icelandic, and which has burst forth into a bright bloom of literary life, chiefly in the present century.

Ohlenschläger and Andersen in Danish, and Tegner in Swedish, would confer lustre on any literature, in the same manner that Thorwaldsen marks an epoch in sculpture.

The Slavonic literatures (Russian and Polish) can only be treated very briefly. Germany, England, Denmark, and Sweden (to which may be added the Netherlands) constitute the Gothic-Teutonic; France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, the Romance nations of Europe: and these, with their colonies, form the proper field of the present survey.

GENERAL SURVEY OF LITERATURE.

CHAPTER I.

I. THE subject of these pages embraces chronologically two great divisions—(a) Mediæval Literature (from Charlemagne and Alfred to the 16th century); (b) Modern Literature (from the 16th century to our own times).

The immediate subject of the first part is Mediæval Literature. This Mediæval Literature is to be surveyed (1) generally, (2) individually.

A GENERAL SURVEY OF MEDIÆVAL LITERATURE.

Mediæval Literature must be classified (a) according to the faculties of observation, reason, and imagination; (b) under the head of families of languages—1, Teutonic and Scandinavian—2, Romance; (c) under the head of separate nations in each family.

Gothic- Teutonic.	{	Saxon	{ Anglo-Saxon,
			{ Low German.
	{	Alemannic—	High German.
		Scandinavian—	Icelandic, or Old Norsk.

Romance.	{	Provençal and Romance Tongues.	{	Old French,	Celtic.	{	Ossian's Gaelic songs, Kymric Triads.
				Italian, Spanish, Portuguese.			

It will be useful to begin with a general survey of the spirit of Mediæval thought and feeling.

(1.) The Middle Ages are the heroic age of modern Europe, as the period of the siege of Troy was to Greece and Rome; and, with certain differences, much resemblance may be traced between Hector, Achilles, Roland, and Richard of the Lion-heart. But, notwithstanding their rough, semi-barbarous nature the latter are refined by touches of Christian tenderness. Accordingly, the faculties of feeling and fancy predominate greatly over the reasoning faculty in the Middle Ages, and in their literature, of which the principal form is poetry. Epics and lyrics were the usual branches followed; the drama was unknown till the introduction of religious plays (mysteries); and prose writing was rare, except in Latin.

(2.) By degrees, however, prose narrative trenches on the ground of poetry, principally in Iceland and Spain, and latterly in France.

(3.) Scholastic philosophy rises by degrees, but science is in a depressed state.

(4.) The literature of the Middle Ages is chiefly poetic, in the form of heroic poems and romances, having a basis of truth, with a colouring of fiction. These heroic poems issued from two sources—(a) The original Pagan spirit of the Teutonic and Gothic North; (b) The infusion of Christian views, transforming and modifying that spirit.

(5.) This Germano-Christian influence, seen in the chivalrous spirit and poetry, gave birth to the Sagas, the songs of the Troubadours, to Romances, and to the European poetry of that age.

(6.) Italy was the last country in the order of time to be penetrated by that spirit, because Romanticism * was adverse to the classical spirit, which lived on in Italy in a degenerate form till a later date. Accordingly, Italian essays in the line of chivalrous poems have not been very successful.

(7.) It was fullest and earliest in Iceland, and latest in Spain—the former phase (the Icelandic) being as early as the 9th century; the latter (the Spanish) as late as the 15th century. It was also in these two phases that it showed its greatest beauty and perfection.

* The poetic spirit of the Christian Middle Ages.

(8.) The poetry of the Middle Ages revolves round three principal themes. The first relates to the adventures of Gothic, Frank, and Burgundian heroes, at the invasion of the Roman Empire by the Teutons. The second relates to the wars of Charlemagne, Roland, Roncesvalles, and the Moors. The third bears upon Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, Tristan and Lancelot. The Crusades brought in foreign, Eastern influences; and the Normans travestied Charlemagne into a kind of soft, debonnaire king, like the later Carolingians whom they knew best.

In the treatment of these subjects, it is necessary to distinguish three classes of compositions in the mediæval poetry. It takes the form either—(1) of Knightly Poems (*Rittergedichte*); or (2) of a *Minnegesang* (Romance); or (3) of an Allegory. Some poems combine the three kinds.

(9.) Before leaving this general survey of the Middle Age literature, it is proper to give a glance at its prose, developed, first, in history; second, in philosophy.

(A) Of history there is little at first, but in Spain occurs at an early period a mass of well-written histories, before the rest of Europe had effected much in this direction.

(B) Italy has nothing to show in pure Italian till Boccaccio, the other writers employing Latin.

(C) Histories begin late in France (with the *Chronicles of Froissart*) and in England (era of Henry VIII.), if we except the Anglo-Saxon efforts.

(D) In Germany, histories occur at this time, but chiefly written in Latin before the time of the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa (1152—1190). As many of the possessions of the German Emperors were situated in modern France and Italy, it was necessary to use Latin as a means of intercourse between Germany and the Romance-speaking tributaries of the German Empire. German-written histories begin in the 13th and 14th centuries.

(10.) PHILOSOPHY OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

The scholastic philosophy was too stiff and formal, slavishly following Aristotle, whose works had been introduced to the knowledge of Europe in a great measure by the Arabs. The system of Aristotle remained predominant till the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 enabled the West to shake off this yoke by sending a host of Platonising Greek teachers into Italy. Nevertheless, a certain Greek influence had penetrated into Germany before this time, under the Ottos.

(1) The independent thinkers of the Middle Ages are Duns Scotus, an Irishman or Scotchman; and (2) Abelard, a Frenchman. (3) Anselm was another, but in an inferior degree. John of Salisbury, in England, appears to have been a man of powerful intellect.

In matters of thought, much resemblance may be traced between Italy and Germany, and between England and France. Scandinavia and Spain are without philosophy or science, except in the case of the Moors or Arab invaders of the Peninsula, who translated and reproduced much in Greek thought. An essentially European philosophy and science centres in Germany, Italy, England, and France.

CHAPTER II.

POETRY.

THE GOTHIC-TEUTONIC, AND SCANDINAVIAN NATIONS.

THE only languages of the Middle Ages that have come down to modern times as living tongues, without undergoing any great modification, are—(1) Italian; (2) Spanish (with Portuguese).

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY OF MÆDÆVAL LITERATURE.

The mediæval and modern spirit, but particularly the former, being Teutonic, this history must begin with the Germans and Scandinavians. The most perfect specimens of the early Pagan Gothic-Teutonic are preserved in the Eddas of Iceland. The two Eddas—the older mostly poetry, the later prose—are wonderful compositions in the Old Norsk, or Old Icelandic, representing the creation, destruction, and renewal of all things.

Before a brief analysis is given of these interesting and venerable poems, some prefatory remarks are expedient on the part of the supernatural element coming into mediæval poetry from the Pagan North. It is a mistake to suppose that most of the wonderful parts of mediæval mythology emanate from Arabia or Persia, for they proceed chiefly from the Pagan North. From this source are derived those elves, mountain sprites, mermaids, giants, dwarfs, dragons, &c., figuring so largely in Spenser and Shakespeare, in Ariosto, in the Nibelungen Lied, the Eddas, and throughout early European poetry and romance. Many popular festivities and the names of the week-days are memorials of the Pagan North: thus May-day, and the names Wednesday

(Woden's day), Thursday (Thor's day), and Friday (Freya's day:—Woden, Thor, and Freya being divinities of the Pagan North.

The principal attention is claimed by the Eddas. (Older and Newer, Poetical and Prose, the later Edda being a kind of commentary on the Older Edda).

1. These epics were composed in the time between Harald Harfager, when the Northmen settled in Iceland, and the death of Snorro Sturleson and the decline of Icelandic freedom, from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries. In the latter pieces there exist allusions to Greek mythology and Christianity, imported from the South, showing they were composed at a more recent date. In the poetical parts of the older Edda breathes the genuine spirit of the Pagan North. Its plot has a grand unity, which makes it in this respect superior to the works of the Greeks, whose world of gods is lost in that of men.

The Edda has one end in view throughout to the last catastrophe, to which all its prophecies point. The whole poem is like one connected tragedy.

(a) In the beginning, the world is made out of the bones of a giant. Then come happier times. The holy ash tree, Yggdrasil, blossoms and thrives over the abyss. This ash is the tree of life, spreading its roots through all depths, and its branches throughout the universe. At this happy time many bold heroes and spirits of light overcome in battle the power of the giants, and the old powers of darkness. All is a connected, natural, and heroic poem down to the fall of the gods and asen (demigods), of Odin and his champions. As in the greater part of old poems, the essential point is the fall of a glorious hero-world. Accordingly, in battle a fatal end generally falls to the lot of the noblest, youngest, and most heroic; because Odin collects these heroes in his Walhalla, in order to have many champions in the future war against the hostile powers to whom he is ultimately to succumb. The general fall of Odin's heroic world is announced by that of Balder. Balder is the favourite of all the gods, the most glorious of heroes. His death is predestined. In vain Odin goes to the world below to save him. Hela only gives riddles for answers, like the Sphynx of the ancients. The solution is altogether tragical.

Then come the visions of the Edda, relating to the approaching twilight and night of the gods, to the impending destruction of the world of light, to the breaking forth of the spirit of darkness, and to the terrible, though temporary, victory of the evil power,

Loke. But afterwards is ushered in a new world of gods and heavenly glory with which the curtain drops.

The Norsk Sagas contain almost every description of narrative in prose. In the matter treated of it is difficult to say when fable ends and fact begins. There are Sagas of wonderful heroes, of magicians, of conquerors, fair women, &c. Of the heroic Sagas, the most noted are the Ynglinga, Fridthiof, Halfs, Rolf Kraka, and Ragnar Lodbrog Sagas.

One of the most singular of these Sagas* is that which describes the ghosts ejected by legal process. After a long series of prodigies, a fisher skiff is lost, with Thorodd, the master of the family, and his men. A solemn funeral feast is held at Froda; but, to the astonishment of the guests, Thorodd and his men come in dripping with water. Nor would they depart at the end of the feast, but they are joined by Thorer, and other ghosts of men who had died of pestilence. The next night the same thing happened, though in a different house. At length Kiartan, the host, compounded by giving the ghosts one fire in one room, and his own people another.

This occupation continued throughout Jol, or Christmas. Then came another pestilence, and many victims perished—eighteen dying, whilst five fled away, and only seven remained. Then Snorre, Kiartan's uncle, advised that judicial measures should be adopted. An inquest was held. A charge was formally addressed to the ghosts of molesting the mansion, and bringing disease upon the place. All formalities were duly observed, evidence was heard, and the verdict given. Thorer then rose, and said: "I have sat while it was lawful for me to do so." Thereupon the ghosts began to leave, and Thorodd, being asked to go, departed, saying: "We have no longer a peaceful dwelling, therefore will we flit." Thus were the goblins finally ejected.

(a) In the second great branch of the Gothic-Teutonic, the first specimen is the translation of the Bible into Gothic by Bishop Ulphilas (A.D. 360). This translation shows the Gothic to have been a well-sounding, regularly-formed, and inflected language.

(b) But it was rapidly modified by admixture with other tribes, especially with the Alemannic and Lombard in South Germany.

(c) Old German falls into two idioms—(1) Alemannic, in the South; (2) Saxon and Frankish, in North Germany (the Anglo-Saxon belonging to the second division).

(d) A valuable specimen of an East Frankish war song still

* The Eyrbyggja Saga.

exists, dating as far back as the ninth century, being the time of the wars of the Carolingian King Lewis with the Normans (814—840). It runs thus :

Blut schien in Wang
Kamp lustger Franken—
Blood shone in the cheek
Of Franks loving fight.

It proceeds :

Lied war gesungen,
Schlacht war begonnen—
The lay was sung,
The battle was begun.

It thus appears that even at that early date the Germans were much given to song and war songs ; and the old spirit comes out again in modern times in Körner, the young hero-poet of the War of Independence, who fell in battle at Dresden (1813) against Napoleon I. Again, the *Wacht am Rhein*, in the popular war against France (1870), and another popular war song much in vogue in the Prussian cavalry at that time, are instances of modern German military odes.

Morgenroth, Morgenroth,
Leuchtet uns zum fruhen Tod,
Gestern auf den stolzen Rossen;
Heute durch den Brust geschossen,
Morgen in das kühle Grab.

Heroic poetry was much employed in the Middle Ages even to describe peaceful themes, and bishops at that time not unfrequently used it. Thus, one of these quieter lays runs thus :—

Wir hörten von Helden oftmals singen,
Und wie sie feste Burgen brachen
Wie höhe Königreiche alle vergingen
Und wie sich liebe Kampgenossen schieden.

The poetry of the Middle Ages has been classified into *Rittergedichte*, *Minnegesang*, and *Allegory*. Of the earlier *Rittergedichte*, the *Nibelungen Lied*, whose theme is repeated in many Sagas, is the most perfect. The story of the Round Table and *Tristan*, in Wolfram von Eschenbach, presents us with the tender spirit of the *Minnelieder* and *Allegory*, also seen in the popular tale of *Reineke Fuchs*. But the most perfect allegory is the story of the *Graal* (a tradition of the holy cup of the last supper).

We must here notice a special and admirable feature of the *Minnelieder*—the union of heroism and gentleness. This appears again in the songs of our Richard *Cœur de Lion*, connected with

the romantic episode of Blondel, and his imprisonment, on his return from the Crusade, by the Duke of Austria in the castle of Dürrenstein.

Though the sentiment of friendship is noble in Achilles and Patroclus (*Iliad*, xxiii., &c.), there is no gentle spirit in classical poetry to bear comparison with that of the romances of chivalry.

The commencement of the period in which the German poetry in the Middle Ages flourished is marked by the reign of the Emperor Frederic I (twelfth century). Its bloom is already past in the fourteenth century. Prose usurps its place after Maximilian; then Germanic literature falls off till after the sixteenth century, when a new era begins.

The poetry of this flourishing period culminated in the *Nibelungen Lied*, which, taking up many of the earlier heroic episodes, shows, in its dramatic character and unity of plan, like Homer's *Iliad*, one master-hand.

The allusions in the *Nibelungen Lied* show that it was chiefly written in Austria. The time of its composition was about that of Leopold the Glorious. The author is probably Heinrich von Ofterdingen, born in Thuringia, but living in Austria.

The *Nibelungen Lied* consists of six books, divided into sections or rhapsodies, intended for song. They do not contain any allusion to the Crusades, the author keeping entirely to earlier sources. Although the *Nibelungen Lied* was only put in its present form in the beginning of the thirteenth century, it was made up entirely of the historical and heroic poems of the Gothic people, with which were united other tales related to them, derived from the Carlovingian collections.

The artistic and dramatic form of the epic, seen in Homer, is peculiar to the Greeks; but in the more natural, simple style of poetry, seen in the heroic poems of other nations, the first place belongs to the *Nibelungen Lied*, closely connected with, some think borrowed from, the *Eddas*. The special characteristics of this great poem are—

1. Unity of plan.
2. A succession of connected pictures, embracing great features, and leaving out all superfluous matter.
3. It combines life and power with softness.
4. Most heroic poems of all nations have many features in common, expressed with certain national differences. This is the case with the *Nibelungen*. In it we have the constantly-recurring theme of a departed heroic world, expressed in the death of a single favourite hero, the noblest, handsomest, and most victorious of all. He is destined to possess these advantages at

the price of an early death, in the bloom of youth. Then follows a great catastrophe, coupled with a semi-historical event, issuing from the national legends.

5. Here we have certain points of contact with the *Iliad*; but the catastrophe in the German poem is more tragical, sanguinary, and colossal, while the death of the young hero is described in more touching features than anything in Homer. The *Nibelungen* is fond of picturing the light and dark side of human life: the joyful and the sad. We see this in the very beginning of the poem:—

“ Von Freuden und Hochzeiten, von weinen und von klagen,
Von kühnen Helden Streiten, mögt Ihr nun Wunder hören sagen.”

6. It was unfortunate for the German language and culture of mind that the first dialects that were formed and used as vehicles of literature did not last long, and were soon superseded. The Gothic tongue became extinct with that people; and though Anglo-Saxon had an entire mass of literature at the time of Alfred—including not only poems, but even histories in prose and scientific works—it soon vanished under the influence of French-speaking Normans, till from the admixture arose quite a new tongue, the English language. Thus the German tongue was obliged to re-commence the process of formation three different times. This third formation began in the ninth century, with the regular structure of the Old High German (Alt Hoch Deutsch), which was formed of the Alemannic, taking up many foreign, and especially Romance, terms.

7. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Romance tongues were labouring to form themselves.

8. The *Minnegeſang* of Germany was developed by the Crusades, but not borrowed from the Provençal. It was not borrowed, for the Germans had these poems before the Provençal poetry, the *Minnegeſang* being in full force under Louis the Pious, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The poems of this class, *Minnelieder*, are all in rhyme, and intended for song. Were it not so, the use of rhyme in these compositions would seem extravagant.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS OF THE “*Nibelungen Lied*.”

THE “*Nibelungen*” falls into two parts, differing greatly from

each other ; the first consisting of fable, the second containing a fusion of history with fable.

The following is the substance of the first part :—

Siegfried goes forth from his father, Sigmund, to the Netherlands, where he injures the tools of a smith, and when upbraided by him Siegfried nearly kills him. Thereupon the smith sends Siegfried into a wood, where a dragon lives. He kills the dragon, and sets fire to the trees, and the melted dragon's fat smeared over him makes him proof against wounds in all parts but the shoulder.

Siegfried comes next to the court of King Gunther, at the city of Worms, and there he meets with a series of adventures with the Dwarf-King Egwald and the Giant Wolfram. After setting free the Princess Chriemhild, he is ultimately married to her, and eight years after he is killed by his brother-in-law, Hagen. Thereupon, he is avenged by his father, with an army in a war that costs the lives of many thousand heroes.

The second part of the "Nibelungen" consists of the expedition of Burgundians to Etzel's or Attila's court—this part being in portions much more historic and prosaic than the first part, though full of anachronisms. For example, Etzel or Attila died A.D. 452, and Pelegrin, 971, yet they are made contemporaries.

Mermaids, and such like mythical beings, have a large part in this poem.

As regards the construction of the poem, there is a certain unity in it. Chriemhild is another Helen. She is the beginning and end of the poem, which contains much of the old German feeling of sacrifice and heroism. Thus, when Hagen finds he cannot escape Chriemhild, and that all the Burgundians at her court must perish, he cuts off the head of Prince Ortlieb, and the hands of Werbel ; and Volker jumping up from under the table, they make a great slaughter of the Huns till the Burgundians are overpowered and slain. The character of Gernot is equally heroic. All is of giant size and proportion in this poem, and its mythology is essentially German.

The "Nibelungen Lied" was drawn up in its present form in Mittel Hoch Deutsch. It has grown up out of various parts, and has been reduced into a whole by a collector (whom some think to be Heinrich von Ofterdingen). Three circles of ideas run through it. 1. Siegfried and Brunhilde ; 2. The ruin of the Burgundians by the Huns. 3. Dietrich of Berne, that is, Theodoric of Verona, the Ostro-Gothic King. The last two circles have an historic basis. The first circle descends from early

legends of the German race. The earliest form of the poem is found in the "Völsunga Saga" and "Vilkina Saga" of Iceland.

The "Völsunga Saga" is the Norsk "Nibelungen Lied," containing the same story. The "Vilkina Saga" is more closely connected with the "Nibelungen," being composed by German prisoners in Denmark. But the "Vilkina" is not nearly equal to the "Völsunga Saga" in merit. Both Sagas are contained in the heroic songs of the second part of Sámund's Edda.

Carl Lachman, an eminent critic, showed that the "Nibelungen Lied" consisted of twenty cantos, each forming a connected whole, with a few interpolated verses.

As a specimen of the whole poem, we introduce the following verse :

"Er wuohs in Burgonden ein schöne Magedin
Daz in allen landen niht schoeners mohte sin.
Kriemhilt was si geheizen und was eine schoene wip ;
Dar umbe müssen degene vil verliessen den life ;"

The measure is marked thus (verses 1, 2, 3):—

(Verse 4.)

The principal of the Minnesänger are Walram von Gresten, Dietmar von Eist, Gottfried von Neiffen, Burkart von Hohenfels, Tannhauser, Ulrich von Lichtenstein, and Walther von der Vogelweide (died 1228).

Walther, who may be considered as the representative man of this class of poets, has much variety, knowledge of life, like the Troubadours, united with a real German spirit, and much dignity. He has great originality, and does not display, as so many of this class of poets, an ever-recurring transition from joy to sorrow. He places virtue above affection. His men and women have dignity and principle, and in his characters he reconciles what to common minds appears contradictory.

Moreover, when the Minnesang became perverted, he withdrew and condemned it. Another different and joyous phase of the Minnesang is found in the Bavarians and Austrians, Nithart and Tannhäuser. About this time chivalry begins to decay, and then a commoner spirit comes up ; in short, materialism prevails.

Pursuing the march of German poetry to the time of the invention of printing, we have to notice the incorporation of romance elements, derived from old French sources, and relating

to the legends of Arthur and the Round Table, Charlemagne, Troy, and Æneas, and other fairy tales and stories, partly from Latin collections. As specimens may be named the priest Conrad's heroic poem of Roland, the "*Æneid*" of H. von Veldeke (1186), and Wernher of Tegernsee's (1172) "*Life of the Virgin*," in three cantos. Other noted writers of this class are Gottfried von Strasburg, remarkable for the high moral tone and finished language and versification in his work, "*Tristan and Isolde*;" Strickere's "*Charlemagne's Expedition to Spain*," Conrad von Wurzburg's "*Trojan War*," Rudolph von Anse's or Ems's (1250) rhymed translation of the Old Testament &c.

We have fine rhymed chronicles from Joh. Enenkel, of Vienna (1250), and the Styrian Ottokar of Horneck (1309).

When, about the end of the thirteenth century, the nobility became impoverished and barbarized, the care of the national poetry fell into the hands of the more cultivated burgher class, and was promoted in Singing or Master Schools, by the corporations. The first of these was founded at Mayence (1300), originated by Heinrich von Meissen, called *Fräuenlob* (died 1318), who had a noted rival in the Rhine country, in the smith, Barthel Regenbogen. Similar associations are found at Strasburg, Augsburg, Ulm, Nürnberg, &c., and the Emperor, Charles IV., gave them a patent of freedom in 1378. The rhymes of these master singers are connected with the chivalrous poetry of Suabia, though inferior; nevertheless moral reflections are frequent in them, and they contributed largely in ennobling the life of the burgher class. The most noted of these *Meister Säger* are *Fräuenlob*, Heinrich von Mügeln (1369), the Austrian Peter Suchenwirt (died 1394), the Tyroler Oswald von Wolkenstein (died 1449). Peter von Dresden (died 1440), Philipp the Carthusian's "*Life of the Virgin Mary*" (1300), Johann von Frankenstein (1300), "*Messias*," &c.

The fifteenth century was very rich in popular legends and quaint didactic poems, with more modern forms given to old poems of chivalry, tales of adventure, and popular songs, of which *Til Eulenspiegel* (1483) is the principal. Noted poets of this date are Veit Weber (1476); above all, Heinrich von Alkmar, the probable author of "*Reineke Fuchs*," an admirable satire on a court corrupted by the quarrels of its servants. An early MS. of this work, which is perhaps of Dutch origin, is that of Gouda (1479).

The dramatic poetry of that age was developed out of the *Mysteries*, which gradually lost their religious character in many

works, such as the "Fastnachts Schwänken" of Hans Rosenplüt, of Nuremberg, and others of the barber Hans Folz (1470).

CHAPTER IV.

THE NETHERLANDS AND ENGLAND.

THE NETHERLANDS.

IN tracing the Germanic poetry of the Middle Ages we have next to consider the Netherlands, inhabited by the Dutch, a Low German people, related in origin, custom, and language with the other Low German tribes, and keeping pace with them in intellectual and general culture. As early as the thirteenth century the Netherlands attained to civil prosperity and a sense of independence, by industry and commercial activity. From that time the national Dutch language took a definite form and development. Its oldest documents consist of Patents, or privileges of towns, Chronicles, and especially imitations of poems of Romance origin. Among the oldest of these is *Partenopeus en Meliore*, composed by Clais Verbrechten, of Harlem (1215), imitated from a French writing. Jacob von Maerlant (born 1235, died 1300) is called the father of poetry in the Netherlands: a man of varied knowledge and fertile invention, who, besides many compositions in verse, wrote a rhymed chronicle, to the year 1291, on the plan of the historical mirror of Vincent of Beauvais, but not complete towards the end. At the same time, Jan van Helu composed the rhymed chronicle of Brabant, in three books, down to the year 1288, continued in a language of inferior purity by Niklas de Klerk, until 1350; and Melis Stoke (1305), a monk in the cloister of Egmont, wrote a highly-prized rhymed chronicle, extending from 694 to 1303.

To the fourteenth century belong Dietsche Doktrinal (1345)—distinguished for his clear, powerful language, who wrote several spiritual poems—and Klaes Willemz der Minnenloep—who composed, after the pattern of Provençal writers, several romances on the legends of Charlemagne and Arthur of the Round Table. At this time the northern provinces of the Netherlands, disturbed by many disputes and feuds, were inferior to the southern parts nearer Brabant in culture and literary life. The splendour and artistic taste of the Burgundian court added a further

superiority to the Belgian provinces in the fifteenth century. At an early date lay public speakers and reciters, *Bänkelsänger*, had gone about the land, and these were now supplanted by associations, like the *Meistersänger* of Germany, called *Rederyker*; the first of these associations being founded at *Dixminden* (1374) and *Antwerp* (1400), and soon others in the larger towns. These associations, though they did little for art and the purity of language, kept up intellectual life in the people, and prepared the way for public opinion to make itself felt in political and social matters. Religious mysteries and moralities of a more secular cast occur there, and an amusing satirical work of witty contents, *Reintje de Vos* (*Reineke Fuchs*) was produced about 1479. The Dutch schools did great things at this time for the furtherance of classical studies

ENGLAND.

The first effect of the Anglo-Saxon invasion of England (449) was to destroy a great part of the culture introduced by Rome. It was Christianity that was the principal instrument of civilisation, introduced by St. Augustine (592) and the Benedictines from Rome, and by St. Patrick (492) and St. Columba in Ireland and Scotland (597). The zeal of the latter missionaries and their propagandist schools extended even as far as Germany (in the seventh century). Christianity was widely diffused among the Anglo-Saxons by the agency of Theodore of Tarsus (699). His adherents and followers established numerous important abbeys and bishoprics, provided with schools and libraries, at Canterbury, Wearmouth, Cambridge, Malmesbury, Croyland, and especially at York, whose excellence is proved by the reputation of the pupils issuing from them, such as Venerable Bede, Boniface, Alcuin, John Scotus Erigena. The more cultivated ecclesiastics had a large share in the full bloom of Anglo-Saxon letters under Alfred (871-901); and their influence continued, though diminished, even under Danish rule (1013). The Norman dynasty pressed with heavy hand on the Church and the nobles, but in doing so it helped to develop and strengthen a distinct national character. While the French tongue prevailed at court, in the law courts, and public transactions, a modified Saxon was diffused among the more popular circles; educational establishments were improved; and the intercourse with France helped to further this end, and to awaken a taste for art. The Plantagenet kings (1154) experienced a check to their caprices and despotism in the Church and the nobles (1215, 1265, 1297), and were obliged

to admit constitutional forms. Meanwhile the national tongue obtained supremacy; learning, but especially philosophy and mathematics, were cultivated in the convents; a spirit of free inquiry was expressed in Latin verses; and sound penetration and shrewd knowledge of mankind found utterance in certain historical works. Notwithstanding the civil wars and the severe contest with France, a more critical, observing, and reflecting spirit became more general in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the national literature began to show signs of life. (T. Leland (died 1552) "*de scriptor Brit.*," ed. A. Hall, Oxf., 1709; Th. Tanner, "*Bibl. Brit. Hibern.*," Lond., 1748, F.; G. Mackenzie's "*Lives and Chars. of the most Eminent Writers of the Scottish Nation*," Edinb., 1708, J. Bouterwek; Th. Warton's "*Hist. of English Poetry*," Lond., 1775, with notes, L., 1824; A. Ritson's "*Bibliographia Poetica*, a catalogue of English poets of the twelfth to the sixteenth cent.," London, 1802).

In the Anglo-Saxon language, ecclesiastical devotional works and national warlike legends were written in rhyme after the seventh century, many of which have been preserved. King Alfred was very active as an author, translator, and encourager of literary effort in Anglo-Saxon, his influence extending to the eleventh century.—See Joh. Foselinus, of Canterbury (1570), in Rob. de Avesbury "*Hist. Eduardi III.*," ed. Th. Hearne, Oxf., 1720; G. Hiccsii "*Linguarum vet. septentrionalium Thesaurus gramm. crit et archæologicus*," Oxf., 1705; Josias Conybeare's "*Illustration of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*," Lond., 1826.

The ancient popular languages were preserved in Ireland and Scotland. Heroic songs were composed in the Scotch Highlands in the Gaelic tongue, and handed down by oral tradition to modern times, giving a dismal and terrible view of human affairs (T. Smith's "*Gaelic Antiquities*," Edin., 1780, 4). The most noted of these great bards or singers was Ossian, a solemn, melancholy spirit, who, looking back into the misty past, revelled in the intercourse with departed souls, and in describing the deeds and sufferings of his father, Fingal, and the struggle of his country against mighty strangers (Normans, probably about 850). His songs were imitated in English, or travestied, by J. Macpherson (1762) ("*Poems*," Lond., 1765; 1723.)

England had a court literature in Old French, while the people retained the use of the Anglo-Saxon tongue. The approximation of the two tongues began directly the violent and capricious

rule of the Norman conquerors was broken (1150); but a century more was required to effect the union, in which Anglo-Saxon exercised the dominant influence. A transformation of Anglo-Saxon is apparent in *Lavaman*, or *Layamon* (translation of the "*Brut*," 1180), which is seen more in the novelty of inflections and terminations than in the admixture of French elements. In this respect the change of Anglo-Saxon followed the same course as that of Latin, passing into modern Romance languages in the south-west of Europe. A still more marked transformation of Anglo-Saxon is seen in the "*Land of Cockayne*" (1300). North French in the epic romance, and in its songs, is to be considered as a source of national poetry in the south of England. On the other hand, it shows a powerful influence in the north of England, in the popular ballads propagated by wandering minstrels, harpers, &c., who adopted the superior rhythmic forms of the Provençal Troubadours, and gave a lyric-epic colouring to their songs. We have many charming remains of these ballads, remarkable for their captivating simplicity and quaintness, mixed with deep pathos. They are of the twelfth and following centuries. (Th. Percy's "*Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*," London, 1775, 1812; T. Ritson's "*Select Collections of English Songs*," London, 1783—ed. 1813; "*Ancient English Romance*," London, 1812; G. Ellis's "*Specimens of the Early English Poets*," London, 1790, 8—1801; and "*Specimens of Romances of the Fourteenth Century*," London, 1805.)

Among works of the thirteenth century, we have to notice not only the ballads and songs, but Robert of Gloucester's "*Rhymed Chronicle*," in Alexandrines, (1275), ed. Th. Hearne, Oxford, 1724; London, 1810. Peter Langtorff's "*Rhymed Chronicles down to 1338*," translated from French into English by Robert Mannyng, or of Brunne, ed. Th. Hearne, Oxford, 1725; London, 1810. Of this date also are various chivalric and epic ballads, as "*Piers Ploughman*," the "*Rhymeless Visions of the Oxford ecclesiastic*," Robert Langland (1362), with a commentary and glossary by Whitaker, London, 1813; and John Gower's (born 1323, died 1402) "*Confession of the Loving*," three vols., the first French, the second Latin, the third English, London, 1545.

This brings us to Geoffrey Chaucer, the veritable founder of the English, as Dante of the Italian, language.

Chaucer came up in a great age—the period of our greatest national triumphs under Edward III.; he shared in public events, going as envoy on several embassies abroad, and was connected with John of Gaunt and the court circle through his

wife. His life was chequered, but on the whole easy, and he appears to have enjoyed a University training, and had sufficient acquaintance with the best models to qualify him to be the master of early English style.

English was then becoming a substantial language, though in a transition stage, and was just a fit vehicle for his genius. This was displayed in various kinds of poetry and verse, and even in prose, which showed the influence of Italian poetry and literature, derived from Chaucer's travels abroad and contact with Italians. All his writings bear traces of imitation, but he never writes without adding some humorous scenes and beauties of his own. To the earlier period of his life belong "The Flower and the Leaf," and "The Court of Love;" to a later stage his "Dreme" and "The Bath of the Duchess;" still later come "The Knight's Tale," "Troilus and Cressida," lastly "The Legende of Good Women," and "The Canterbury Tales." His earlier poems have often exquisite beauties, and his love of nature breathes through almost every line. Indeed, it is this that makes Chaucer so genuinely English, and so dear to every English heart. "The Canterbury Tales" are his masterpiece, and almost unparalleled in poetry for power of portrait painting. The qualities of Chaucer in this poem are gaiety—sometimes so abundant as to furnish an entire comedy—sly banter, lively irony, popular farce, broad jokes, pathos, presenting tricked innkeepers, accidents, robberies, the ridiculous, and, by their side, noble pictures of chivalry, then a train of grotesque Flemish figures, carpenters, friars, sompnours, and various trades—all aspects of life. Positive English good sense abounds, allied with the romantic spirit of the age of chivalry. In Chaucer, as in Van Eyck, character stands out in relief, and the grave spirit of inquiry appears stirring the age of Wycliffe.

He is better than Boccaccio, and foreshadows Shakespere in hitting off character. Some of his portraits are living, to wit the franklin, the miller, the merchant. In the tragic and pathetic, his *Griselda* points to *King Lear* and *Othello*.

About the same epoch appeared John Lydgate (died 1446), a Benedictine of fertile invention, whose best work was his "Fall of Princes," but who also composed secular songs, ballads, legends, translations (see Ritson's "Bibliogr.," p. 66). Another author, who appeared a little later, Thomas Occleve (died 1454), composed tales and translations, including "Jonathas, or Fortunatus," besides several allegories, didactic poems, and rhymed chronicles.

As early as the thirteenth century, mysteries and miracles

prepared the way for the drama; these mysteries obtained a kind of artistic form in the fourteenth century. Moralities were imported about the same time from France (see Thomas Hawkin's "Origin of the English Drama," Oxford, 1773, 3. 8). Prose was at this time rough in the travels of John Mandeville (died 1371), and unformed in Chaucer, who did much to perfect this branch of literature.

Scotland's close connection with England (1050—1291) explains the agreement of their two languages, and the simultaneous development of literature in both countries, and which in Scotland showed considerable resources in the ballads and songs of the thirteenth century. Among the more noted Scottish poets we may enumerate: John Barbour, of Aberdeen (born 1316, died 1396), who celebrated the heroic episodes of King Robert Bruce liberating his country from English oppression (1306—1321) ("The Bruce," with notes and a glossary by J. Pinkerton, London, 1790, 3. 8. Compare Irving, 1, S. 253); the blind minstrel, Harry (1461), who celebrated the heroic life of William Wallace ("The Acts of Wallace," Perth, 1790, 3. 12); Andrew Wintoun (died 1420), who wrote a "Scotch Chronicle," nine books, published by D. Macpherson, Edinburgh, 1795, and King James I. (born 1393, king 1424, murdered 1438), author of excellent songs ("Poetical Remains," published by W. Tytler, Edinburgh, 1783).*

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL SURVEY OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES.

SPAIN. FRANCE.

THE German Minnelieder differ from the Provençal in the character of thought and feeling. They are remarkable for tenderness and gentleness.

Next to the Teutonic the romance mediæval poetry has to be considered.

Of all the romance tongues, the Provençal, or language of

* J. Sibbald, "Chronicle of Scottish Poetry," London, 1804. D. Irving, "Lives of the Scottish Poets," Edward II., London, 1810. W. Scott, "Minstrelsy of the Scotch Border." London, 1803. "Songs and Scotch Anecdotes" (of the fourteenth century), modernized by Allan Cunningham, London, 1825.

the Troubadours, was the most fully developed with the least admixture of foreign elements. But the Provençal was spoken and written in countries many of which were under German sway; and German influence is largely represented in the Troubadours.

Spanish and Italian were developed next in chronological order, the French language last.

The most flourishing time of the Provençal poetry, in Provence, is marked by the sway of Count Berenger, who held that country as a feudal tenure, under the German Emperor, Frederic Barbarossa. The north and west of France were under English rule, and here the Norman influence is felt, in the development of knightly poetry.

The first noted work in early French is the "Roman de la Rose." But it exhibits the language in a very imperfect state. In the fourteenth century a good many chivalrous poems were composed, but they show that French was not then equally developed with Italian and Spanish.

It is probable that the terrible wars under the Plantagenets, and during the struggle of the houses of York and Lancaster, kept back France and England in literature.

We have already seen that France began to shine towards the close of the Middle Ages in her Chronicles, preparing the way for Memoirs. Even under St. Louis we have valuable "Memoirs" of the Sieur de Joinville, his faithful companion.

Spain stands prominent at an early date, among the nations of Europe, in its great historic and heroic poem of "The Cid," which is worth a whole library of ordinary poems. If not composed in the eleventh century, it breathes the spirit of that era, and of a period earlier than the Crusades. It expresses the true-hearted old Castilian spirit, and was composed soon after the events it describes. It unites, as so many epics, a tragic with a comic side. This feature adds interest to the work, by showing that, while the hero is so superior to most mortals, he has still the weaknesses of man.

Of this class is the story of the "Cid" giving a chest full of stones to a Jewish usurer, making him think the contents very precious, in order to get from him money for the war against the Moors. Another story describes how, after death, when the body of the hero (the Cid) was exposed to view, lying in state, a Jew ventured to pull his beard, whereupon the Cid's terrible sword, a span in length, darted of its own accord out of the sheath.

A special feature of the ballad poems of Spain, which is as rich as England in that class of composition, is, that they are in a grandly epic form.

The knightly poetry of Spain had reached maturity, in the fourteenth century, later than that of most other European countries, but it shows itself at that time very perfect and very national. Villena and Santillana are its representatives in that age.

This kind of poetry was more cultivated in Spain by the knights and nobles than by the learned.

No Arabian element occurs in its older form, but after the fall of Granada, some of the most touching of all poems are those of the Abencerages, converted Moors, whose quarrel with the Zegrís led to the fall of Granada. These Moorish poems are proud effusions, only too full of deep pathos and tenderness.

France, shaken during long years by the military hordes of Germany (486), became the seat of a Frank monarchy, under Chlodwig or Clovis. Alongside this Frank monarchy were established a Burgundian kingdom on the Rhine, and a Visigothic in the south. In both, much of Roman civilisation had been preserved, while the northern parts of France became quite barbarized, and fell into an utterly uncultured condition. Charlemagne (768—814), the restorer and founder of civil order and spiritual culture, surrounded himself with distinguished men and learned foreigners, especially Italians, and entrusted a great part of his noble undertaking to the Briton, Alcuin (793); schools were improved after the pattern of that of Tours, other institutions remodelled at Ferrières, Rheims, Paris, &c.; supplies of books were multiplied, the art of writing ennobled; the exchange of views among the learned, the example of the court and the great, and a good system of legislation raised great hopes for the future.

But these expectations were defeated by the weakness and divisions of Charlemagne's successors; though a number of improved writers reappeared in the ninth century—the poet Bernowin of Clermont, Drepanius Florus, Milo and his pupil Hugobald, Abbo of Fleury; the historians and theologians, Druthmar, Angelom, Freulf, Servat, Lupus, Hincmar, &c.; and the naturalists, Agobard and Dungal.

The chaotic state produced by the dissensions and rivalries of adverse and ambitious pretenders was mitigated on the advent of the Capetian dynasty (987), and the courts of Burgundy and Normandy were improved by a more active exercise of thought,

a more chivalrous and artistic spirit operating on the people. The Benedictines of Cluny, the Carthusians were actively engaged in literary efforts—merit by the industry with which they copied. Collections of books were enriched at Fleury, Gambray, the schools of Chartres, Bec, Laubes, &c., by a certain notoriety, and children's schools were founded in the eleventh century at Soissons (900), &c.

distinguished for individual merits, or the knowledge of deeper thinking power, or manifold progress in science, were, in the tenth century—Rémy of Auxerre, Scotus Erigena, Heriger of Laubes, Gerbert; in the eleventh century—Lanfranc, Sigebert of Gembloux, and

with the twelfth century, several steps were taken in civil life and the administration of States. Schools were instituted at Rheims, Laon, Poitiers, Le Mans, Chartres, at Paris (St. Victor and St. Geneviève), at St. Denis, Marmoutier, St. Rémy; and many religious institutions were devoted to increase the number of

the most conspicuous writers of this age may be named the Latin poet, Marbod, Hildebert of Tours, Bernard of Chartres, Phil. Gualter. To these may be added others with the classical spirit—Abelard, Hugo and Richard de St. Bernard of Clairvaux, John of Salisbury, Petrus Abaelardus and others. There were also historians of the Crusades, of the Norman princes, and chroniclers of separate cities, churches, and convents. A flourishing period of national life of France had begun. The thirteenth century rendered illustrious by the appearance of the excellent St. Louis (died 1270), author of an equitable system of legislation (1254), by the splendour of the Paris University, the principal centre of scholastic philosophy, and by Vincentius of Beauvais, besides many other thinkers of penetrating mind, and of fruitful activity in national literature.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were less conducive to the promotion of intellectual life; the wars with England (1339-1453) were accompanied by sad disorder and destruction, and the papal authority, striving after unlimited power, brought only one disadvantage to literature. Nevertheless, the intellectual life that had been aroused was not quenched; the use of the

national language in literature became more frequent; royal annals were written down at the Abbey of St. Denis (1300); memoirs bearing a strong stamp of nationality were introduced by Joinville, Froissart, Monstrelet, and Commines; Pierre d'Ailly was usefully employed on mathematical studies, and he, with Jean Charlier de Gerson, used his influence to good purpose in combating the unprofitable exaggerations of scholasticism. The road was already marked out leading to a nobler development of mind.*

The French language was formed at an early date (500—700), from a mixture of the *lingua romana rustica* with the German, in the provincial dialects; and as these prevailed generally, the use of the Latin became lost in popular life (before and about 900). This language became divided (987?), with well-marked distinctness, into two principal dialects, the Walloon in the north, the Provençal in the south; while the present French tongue issued from an intermediate dialect, spoken on the banks of the Seine. The broad distinction between the southern and northern dialect was expressed by the words denoting affirmation in both; thus the southern dialect was styled *langue d'oc*, and the northern, *langue d'oui*. But, notwithstanding certain diversities, the essential relation of these two dialects was long admitted, as appears from the *Descort*, or Complaint of Rambaud de Vagueiras (died 1207), in which a Provençal strophe is followed first by an Italian, then by a French, thirdly by a Gascon, fourthly by a Catalanian, and so on. The northern idiom, adopting more elements from the German foreigners, was introduced to public life at an earlier date, through the favour of the Church (Mouson, 913). Spiritual songs and legends existed in Old French as early as the eleventh century, and sermons were

* *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, par les Religieux Bénédictins de la Congr. de St. Maure. (A. Rivet, born 1683, died 1749, and others.) Paris. 1733.

G. Henry—*Hist. de la Langue Fr.* (1811); Raynouard—*Grammaire de la Langue des Troubadours* (P., 1816—8); and *Grammaire Comparée de la L. de Fr., avec les autres L. de l'Europe Latine* (P. 1821, 8); A. W. Schlezell—*Observations sur la Langue et la Litt. Provençales* (P. 1818, 8); Adrian Grundzuge—*Zu enier Prov. Gramm.* (Frankf. 1835, 8); Millot—*Hist. des Troubadours* (P. 1773, 3, 82); Raynouard—*Des Troubadours et des Cours d'Amour* (Paris, 1817, 8), and *Choix des Poésies Originales des Troubadours* (Paris, 1818); Rochegurde—*Le Parnasse Occitanien et Gloss.* (Toulouse, 1819, 8); F. Diez—*Die Poésie der Troubadour* (Zwickau, 1826, 8).

Les Poètes Français suivant l'ordre Chronolog. depuis le XII. Siècle jusqu'à Malherbe, &c., par M. R. Anguier (P., 1824).

preached in the vernacular by Norbert in Belgium (1119), and Vital at Rheims (1120).

The Provençal, living especially in Languedoc, rich in vowels, malleable and euphonious, the most genuine daughter of romance, affiliated with the Catalan, and showing a marked individuality even in the oldest linguistic specimens (842—860), arrived first at a ripe artistic development. The region or home of the Provençal poetry embraces the whole of France south of the Loire, and its influence extended thence to Northern France, Spain, Italy, and England. This district of France, to a great extent subject to the sway of a gentler administration, had retained many traces of ancient culture; the cities enjoyed certain municipal privileges, and considerable prosperity; the magnates lived joyously and splendidly, not unfrequently exceeding the bounds of prosperity in their habits of life. Merry-making minstrels, *jongleurs*, armed with guitar and mandolin, and often excelling in bodily exercises, wandered through the land. The ancient practice requiring every festive occasion to be attended with song, gave rise to the corporation of the Troubadours (before 1100), and to the gayer science, which continued to flourish in youthful vigour till the middle of the thirteenth century. This lively poetry declined with the Albigensian wars, which were promoted by some of these bards (1209), and became extinct when, after the family of the Berengers died out (1249), the house of Anjou became notorious for its violence. In consequence of these events, the Troubadours sought shelter at foreign courts, chiefly in Catalonia. The Troubadours, often rich in adventurous peculiarities, were distinguished by a freer tone, a depreciation of Church tradition, and in some cases by licentious humour. Their songs were devoted to a representation of the life of nature, to the emotions of love, and to considerations relating to passing events. They present euphonious rhyme, and are remarkably inventive and diversified in their measure, their strophes and the changes of rhyme stubbornly retained from their partiality for assonance. Among their different kinds of poems we have—tonzones, contests and questions in strophes of four syllables; sirventes, in praise or blame of public events of the time; sonnets, accompanied by music and ballads, enlivened by dancing. Besides pastourelles and legends, they had also borrowed fables and novels from the Arabs.

Of the Provençal authors there are many (above 300), including many nobles; but only a few of them are known, such as—

William, Ninth Count of Poitou (died 1122); Giraud le Roux, Toulouse (1150), a writer conspicuous for a tender loving spirit and for a tone of pathetic complaint in his verses; Jauffre de Rudel (died 1162), contemporary of the humoristic versifier Bertrand du Born; Rambaut of Orange (1173); Gavaudan le Vieux (1189); Raoul de Coucy (died 1191); Richard I. of England, Cœur de Lion (died 1199); his friend Blondel, associated with the romantic legend of Richard's imprisonment in Austria; Arnaude Daniele, author of several romances; Pierre Cardinal, a bitter enemy of the Popes; Vambaud de Vaqueiras (died 1207), a warlike Troubadour; the turbulent Bishop Foulques (died 1231); Pierre Raymond (1230); and out of France—Aimeric Peguilain in Castille (1240), Guillem Figuera in Lombardy (1240), and the Genoese Lanfranc Cigala.

An attempt was made to revive the *Jeux Floréaux* at Toulouse (1323, 1355, 1484), but it met with no great success. In 1500, Clement Isaure was a successful reproducer of this class of poetry.

The formation of the North French language and literature is closely connected with the Provençal, as is perceptible in its lyrical, satirical, and allegorical poems, and in its romantic narratives; yet it has followed a march of its own, and has exercised a distinct influence on after times. It has been already remarked that it issued first from ecclesiastical activity (sermons, spiritual canticles, and legends of the eleventh and twelfth centuries), and consists partly in translations (in the eleventh century the books of the Maccabees and Haimo's epistles and gospels; in the twelfth the distichs of Everard, Mauritius' sermons, &c.). In the thirteenth these translations from the Latin became so frequent that they were forbidden at the Dominican Chapter (1242); while the fourteenth is especially rich in translations from the Bible and the classical authors. A great part of the copiousness and maturer form of the modern French vocabulary is to be traced to this source. The courts of the Norman dukes and knights became special centres of intellectual culture after the twelfth century; these Normans adopted French manners and the French tongue, owing to their close connection with the mother country, while they influenced throughout Western Europe the whole of their class—the gentlemen—by their chivalrous bearing. The *trouvères*, including many nobles and ecclesiastics, formed a compact corporation, and exercised a wholesome influence by their convivial tastes, and by stimulating the imagination of their listeners by the representation of lordly adventures, which met with a general

acceptance in the thirteenth century. A special ingredient of the *Trouvère* literature consists in the so-called romances, issuing from the pride of race, a proneness to the marvellous, and a love of the heroic reminiscences of the past. These romances gave a vivid portraiture of courtly manners, of the vicissitudes of a race governed by strong passions, and, though partly in rhyme, began at an early date to assume the form of prose. These compositions contain very little historic truth, which is crushed out by the preponderance of the inventive spirit, by capricious intermixture of fact and fiction, and by the taste for allegoric and mystic adornment.

The general scene of all these romances is laid in Britain, which gave much more than it received in this matter. France, and more particularly the East surrounding Palestine, viewed through a nimbus of poetry, were also the great fields of adventure for *Trouvère* romance.

Of the romance writers laying their scene in Great Britain we have to notice (1150) Godfrey Gaymar's "History of the Saxon Kings," in French, octo-syllabic verses; and Robert Wace, or Gasse, an English ecclesiastic, educated at Caen (born 1112, died 1184), who wrote "*Brut d'Angleterre*," continued in the "*Roman de Rou*" (1160), in four parts, of 16,592 verses, of which the first and fourth are in verses of eight syllables, while the second and third parts are in Alexandrines (published by Fr. Pluquet, Paris, 1827, 2, 8). This period marks the commencement of the legendary cyclus of Arthur and the Round Table, hitherto portrayed in Latin, but henceforth in the vernacular. The central feature of these legends is the conquest of the saint Graal, with which the fables about the Round Table were interwoven.

The most active writers engaged in describing the chivalrous world of the Normans were—(1165) Luces de Gast, who translated Tristan; the indefatigable Rusticien de Pise (before 1189), who gave a translation of the *Brut*; and Gautier Map (died 1210), translator of Lancelot. Most of the romances belonging to the cyclus of Arthur, including *Perceforest*, were represented in French rhyme by Chrétien de Troyes (1190), Godfrey de Ligny, and others; afterwards in prose. The legends of Alexander the Great, coupled with the British, were treated in Alexandrines (1200) by Lambert li Cors, Alex. de Bernay, and Thomas de Kent.

The most fertile source of these romances is found in the legendary cyclus of Charlemagne, which was also the most

popular theme. To it belong Huon de Villeneuve (1200), Regi de Montauban, Adenez (1270), Ogier the Dane, Huon of 1 deaux, the dwarf Oberon, &c. The most recent theme for legend is the story of Amadis, originating in Portugal and Spain, laying all historical basis (four books—Salamanca, 1510; in French 1546; German, 1572—increased by continuations to twenty-four books). This story had a very numerous progeny, industriously circulated in Spain, France, and Italy, and much read since the fourteenth century. (See Duten's "Tables Généalogiques des Héros de Romans," London, 1796; "Biblioth. Univ. des Romans," Paris, 1775, folio.) Among the histories of national origin in France, the amorous story of "Aucassin and Nicolette" deserves special notice (1250), being written partly in verse, partly in prose, and conspicuous for superior execution. A number of gay, sprightly, and sometimes licentious fables and stories of Eastern origin reached Northern France through the Provençal (Melusine, of Jean d'Arras, 1383), and were thence diffused over Italy, Germany, and England. Their number was considerably increased by frequent intercourse with the East (1250), and they are useful as an illustration of the history of ethics. ("Fabliaux et Contes du xii. et xiii. Siècle," Paris, 1779, collected by Legrand d'Aussy; "Barbazan Fables et Contes des xii.-xv. Siècle," Paris, 1756, 1808; "Nouvelles Recherches de Fables," publ. par Méon, Paris, 1823.) One of the oldest specimens of the allegorising and satirical portraits of manners is the story of Reginard (Rénart), of the Carolingian period, and circulated after the tenth century, represented in 2,000 verses by Perros or Pierre de St. Clot (1233), continued and altered by many hands: "Le Roman du Renart," publ. par D. M. Méon, Paris, 1825; of this class are also the satirists, Le Reclus de Moliens (born 1154), Guiot de Provins (born 1200); the allegorists, Helinandat Froimond (died 1223), Henry d'Andely (1240), and the allegorising didactic poets, Omons (1265) and Gautier de Metz.

The most noted work of the age is the "Romance of the Rose," in 22,000 rhymes of eleven syllables, begun by Guillaume de Lorris (before 1240), terminated by Jean Clopinel de Méung (1280), who is also known by his free poetical treatment of Vegetius on equestrian training: "Le Roman de la Rose, corr. par Méon," Paris, 1814. Guillaume de Guilleville (about 1358), wrote "pilgrimages" in imitation of Dante. The lyric *Trouvères* were related to the Provençal Troubadours, including Thibault IV., King of Navarre (died 1253), Poésies, "publ. par De la Rava-

lière," Paris, 1742; Fr. Gasses Bruler and Marie de France (born 1205); "Poésies," published by J. B. de Roquefort, Paris, 1829.

Towards the end of the fourteenth century the language obtained a more settled form, and was enriched by several translations. Among the works in rhyme the first place is occupied by lengthy allegories and representations. The most estimated are the Pastourelles and Rondeaux of Jean Froissart, the historian, of Valenciennes (died 1401). Other writers of this class were Christine de Pisan (1415): "Songs, Hist. de Troye, Trésor de la Cité des Dames;" Charles d'Orléans (died 1466), "Poésies," Grenoble, 1805; Louis de Beauvau, "Le Pas d'Armes de la Bergère" (1449), "publ. par G. A. Crapelet," Paris, 1828; and a number of writers of sentimental ditties and drink songs, especially in the fifteenth century.

This was also the time of the formation of French prose. It was attempted chiefly in romances, and the tone of memoir writing was given by Ville-Hardouin (1203), while it was carried out by Joinville, Froissart, Monstrelet, and Commines, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Translations were multiplied; works were written by ecclesiastics on religious matters, by knights on hunting and tournaments, and by burghers on domestic and industrial life.

The first steps towards dramatic poetry were made in public mysteries (1161, 1224); religious corporations being employed in the representation gave a tone of solemnity and a regular form to these mysteries (1380, 1402). Secular pieces were brought up at the same time with them in the writers of the Basoche, and a sodality was formed to act these, constituting the nucleus of the future French stage. The first comedy in repute (P. Patelin, Paris, 1490) is said to have been composed by P. Blanchet (1480).

CHAPTER VI.

ITALY. DANTE.

ITALIAN literature in the Middle Ages is special, and specially important. It forms a bridge to modern literature, having a great share in its development and in the promotion of science, in the same way that modern art issued out of Italy. Its influence on England was great, as Chaucer may be said to have issued from the Italian spirit.

Italian literature in that age has two elements: first, the allegorical, connecting it with the philosophy and spirit of the Middle Ages, in Dante. The second element is the antique, a term used to express the effect produced on Italian literature by classical models, particularly exemplified in Petrarch and Boccaccio, both of whom deserved the name of scholars. The spirit and romance of chivalry did not take much in Italy. Petrarch, though he wrote immortal Minnelieder or romances in verse, thought it rather derogatory to do so, and prized much more highly a Latin poem, *Scipio*, now almost unknown.

Boccaccio in his prose novels endeavours to give the light Provençal literature an ornate, serious, classical clothing, which does not exactly suit the spirit of the Troubadours.

DANTE.

Homer stands apart, and his personality is involved in mystery, yet the "Iliad" is the work of one hand, and is in some respects unrivalled. Virgil is largely an imitator, and though wondrously picturesque and even touching, is inferior to Homer. Dante, though partly an imitator, has some magnificent touches, derived from Christian purity and tenderness, and not derived from Pagan sources. In sublimity he exceeds Virgil, and perhaps even Homer. Milton shares in these excellences of Dante, but he is considered by many critics to be slightly pedantic, and his Satan has been represented as too heroic.

Dante Allighieri (born at Florence, 1265, died September, 1321) was a statesman of very active character, a scholar of deep and varied learning, an epic poet of the first order.

He dwelt long in banishment at Verona, still longer at Ravenna, and wherever he was, he diffused a spirit of science and poetry; operating on posterity through many admirable writings, but especially through his "*Divina Comedia*," an epic and allegorical poem in one hundred cantos, and in what is called *Terze Rime*.

The language of Dante is peculiar and beautiful. Many of the scientific opinions occurring in it are derived from Pagan sources, and interwoven with Christian ideas, especially with the doctrine of regeneration. An attempt is made in the poem to give some solution, aided by reason and revelation, to the mysterious problems of human life. Hell opens up the criminality of human nature, in many degrees; purgatory symbolizes the purification of the diseased soul, by the grace of God, by

means of repentance and suffering ; paradise discloses heavenly beatitude to the religious feeling. The substance of the poem is a compound creation, derived from classical antiquity, from the scholastic philosophy and from history.

The pure ideal is not the region in which he moves, but the term to which the work of the artist tends. Dante, like all true art, combines the real and the ideal. Many errors have been held in relation to him ; thus some have thought his great work to be only a chronicle, others regard him as nothing but a metaphysician. To the realist all his symbols are facts ; to the idealist all his facts are symbols.

Three persons take a principal part in the poem—Virgil, Dante, and Beatrice.

1. Dante is the most prominent person of these three. He represents himself as having gone wrong in life, from following false images of good, and as being on the point of falling. He is saved by the study of moral philosophy and religion. The “*Divina Comedia*” is in reality a purification of Dante. Hence proceed all the allusions to his life in the poem ; for example, his exile, which is predicted to him in the epic, by Farinata, whom he sees in hell ; and by Malespina, whom he meets in purgatory. Hence also the savage ardour Dante expresses against Filippo Argenti and Corso Donati, and the hopes he utters of coming back to Florence.

But in the course of the poem, the individual (Dante) gradually merges into humanity, and the poet considers man in relation to the idea of good. Lost in hell, better in purgatory, he is recovered in paradise. The “*Divina Comedia*” is a mystical purification of man.

2. Virgil was depicted in the traditions of the Middle Ages as a great sage. He is painted by Dante, both as a real personage and also as a symbol of human wisdom. He tells his history truly :—

“Uomo gia fui
E li parenti miei furon lombardi,
E Mantovani per patria ambedui,
Nacque sub Julio ancorche fosse tardi,” &c.*

For the light of faith, Virgil refers Dante to Beatrice :—

“Da indi in la t’aspetta pure
Beatrice ; ch’e opra di Fede.”
 (“*Purgatorio*,” canto xviii.)

* See Appendix B.

3. Beatrice is the prime mover of the entire action of the poem. Beatrice, descending from heaven, moves Virgil to go and help Dante, lost in a forest. Beatrice receives him purified in the earthly paradise, and Beatrice raises him, from sphere to sphere, to the empyrean.

Arrived at the end of purgatory, a wall of fire stops the poet ; he is not powerful enough to go on ; then he is admonished by the Latin poet thus :—

“Fra Beatrice e te e questo muro,”

and Dante rushes into the flames.

Beatrice is in fact the beginning and the end of the action of the poem. She is a brilliant illustration of the spirit of the poet, passing from the real to the ideal.

Beatrice was a real person (not a mere symbol), admired and loved by him, in early life. She died early, and by her influence she raised Dante from a vulgar sphere, and made him a great poet. After her death, when Dante was prone to vice, she is represented in the poem as descending, weeping from heaven, and she begs Virgil to correct him. In the second canto of the first canzone, Virgil, who is speaking, introduces her thus :—

“Io era color che son sospesi,
E donna mi chiamo' beata e bella,
. . . Luceran gli occhi suoi piu che la stilla,
E cominciommi a dir soave e piana,
Con angelica voce in sua favella.”

Beatrice addresses Virgil thus :—

“Or muovi e con la tua parola ornata,
E concio ché mestieri al suo compare,
L'adjuta si ch'io ne sia consolata,
L' son Beatrice che ti faccio andare,
Vengo di loco ove tornar-dis io,
Amor mi mosse che mi fa parlare.”

Then Virgil, taken with her divine beauty, sings her praises :—

“O donna di virtu, sola per cui,
L'umana specie eccede ogni contento.”

Again :—

“In te misericordia, in te pietate,” &c.

Up to this part of the poem, Beatrice is a woman, though most noble. But as Dante proceeds along the banks of Lethe, dazzled with many sights, such as the Christian virtues, the cardinal virtues, the Evangelists, &c., he beholds, at the invocation of Solomon, a woman dressed in a white veil, descend in a car drawn by angels, crowned with laurel, in a red dress, and looking at Dante, she says:—

“Guarda mi ben, ben son, ben son Beatrice.”

Then she blames him, after he has confessed his sins. She leads him over the water; at the request of the angels, she unveils amidst leaves and flowers, and as they sing a heavenly melody, Dante sees her surrounded by the virtues and the spirits of the blessed.

All the dresses and objects are here symbolical, and Beatrice herself becomes very allegorical. She becomes eventually the most ideal person of the whole poem; yet he never forgets her, the virtuous and tender Florentine girl.

Nothing can be more beautiful than his imagery, representing her blessedness in heaven, surrounded by angels, under a nimbus of flowers, in luminous ether, with divine melody around her; her eyes shedding a most vivid light, under the white veil on the green banks of the stream she surpasses her early, earthly beauty.

When she speaks of divine things, her countenance is radiant, and her eyes cause the planets to burn brighter. The glory of heaven is pictured by the poet as a smile of paradise, and when he reaches the highest theme, words fail him.

Lost in this contemplation Beatrice disappears, and when he sees her again, it is afar off. She turns and looks at him, and smiles—

“Poi si torno all’ eterna fontana.”

She is the former Beatrice still, but raised to be a citizen of heaven—to such an ideal that she symbolizes moral and civil greatness.

To such a height did this sublime poet wish to raise the dear child, as a reward for the sweet and holy affections she placed in his heart. She being dead, he retained ever the most beautiful and pious image of her in his mind.

The visions obtained by Dante of the earthly paradise are from the Mount of Purification, antipodally opposed to Mounts

Zion and Moriah. These visions are among the most remarkable of his eight days' experience, given in the six last cantos of his "Purgatorio."

In these visions, much is comprehensible, much a riddle, all most rich in matter. This happened in 1300—1266 years after Christ, in Dante's thirty-fifth year, at the full moon, in the spring (*la luna tonda*, "Inferno," xxi. 113—14; xx. 127; I. 38, &c.)—on the 5th of April, or the Jewish Passover—in the morning.

First the poet is lost in a wood, and goes into the infernal world ("Inferno," ii. 1; iii. 1). By April 6th, his descent into hell was finished, in the centre of the earth. Thence the wanderer came forth on the other side of the earth ("Inferno," xxxiv. 139). At that moment the morning of April 7th was dawning, while in the Eastern hemisphere evening already prevailed.

Now the traveller is already on the promontory (purgatory). April 7th he passes through its vestibule. Good Friday and Saturday (April 8th and 9th) the poet passes through the circles of purgatory. He wakes early Easter morning (xxii. 109—111). After this, a warning dream occurs, in which Leah and Rachel appear, the former dancing, the latter sitting; but no explanation is given of this apparition. Easter Sunday is April 10th. By this time the seven wounds of sin have disappeared from the forehead of Dante, for he has passed through seven purifications.

And now his guide, Virgil, pronounces him weaned from tutelage, and gives him the two swords, the magisterial and the episcopal, implying command over himself. To him are also given the imperial crown and the bishop's crown, and Virgil says—

"Perch'io te sopra, te coronó e mitrio'."

These words conclude canto xxvii. of the "Purgatorio."

After this, though Virgil does not depart, he is silent.

Nothing can be more beautiful than the meeting of Dante and Beatrice in Heaven—

"Guardaci ben : ben son, ben son Beatrice.

Come degnasti d'accendere al monte ?

Non sapei tu, che qui e l'uomo felice ?"

(73—75.)

He cannot answer.

"Gli occhi mi cadder giu nel chiaro fonte ;

Ma veggendo mi in esso, i trassi a l'erba.

Tanta vergogna mi gravò la fronte."

Nothing is more sublimely dramatic than the representation of the poet falling senseless on the river bank before Virgil and Beatrice, from a sense of his own unworthiness. Beatrice draws Dante from the river of Lethe—

“Si dolcemente,
Ch’io nol so rimembrar, non ch’io lo scriva.”*

The numbers and dresses of the poem are throughout typical and symbolical.

There have been four great epic poets—Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton; to whom some writers would perhaps add a fifth, *Tasso*.

Francesco Petrarca, of Arezzo (born 1304, died July 18, 1374), was a most zealous promoter of the study of ancient classical literature, receiving culture and development of mind by his travels to Provence and his studies at Bologna. He showed a free and original power of thought, and an indefatigable activity, writing many rhythmical and prose works in the Latin language, of which his letters and historical writings have the greatest value. His immortal renown has resulted from his Italian canzoni, sonnets, allegorising trionfi, and other artistic representations of a lyrical nature, displaying deep and tender feeling, and which are considered as masterpieces of expression and versification, and therefore have found many commentators.†

Giovanni Boccaccio, of Certaldo, near Florence (born 1313, died December 21st, 1375), was a man enriched with varied knowledge, testified by his historical writings in Latin, full of useful information, considering the age when they were written. His mind was clear and penetrating, and he had a rich fund of fancy, adding valuable contributions to Italian literature. His poems are not so remarkable for special superiority as his prose works, romances, the *Labirinto d’amore detto il Corbaccio*, the Life of Dante, and his Commentary on the First Sixteen Cantos of the Comedia, besides his letters. Above all, Boccaccio has risen to fame by his “Decamerone,” of 100 novelli, related in masterly style, and in a very perfect language, full of quaint witticisms and of sharp criticisms on civil and especially on religious life in his day, with a large admixture of licence.

* So sweetly that I do not remember it so as to write it.

† “Rime,” critical edition, by A. Marsand, Padua, 1819. Compare G. B. Baldetti, del Petrarca e delle sue opere libri iv., Florence, 1797.

CHAPTER VII.

SPAIN.

VISI-GOTHIC Spain had lost its literary culture in the sixth century; the clergy sank into ignorance, and Isidore, Bishop of Seville, who sent forth some good disciples, was quite a solitary exception in the seventh century. Under Arabian sway (712), Arabian art and literature flourished in full activity (860), favoured by the Ommiads, showing a special splendour in the courtly residences of Cordova, Seville, and Granada, and reacting even on the Christian clergy and people. The Visigoths, penetrated by the power of faith and love of country, advanced combating from the northern parts of the peninsula, and at length (1210), obtained a decided superiority, retained a spirit earnestly religious, and transmitted a high sense of chivalrous honour, sacrifice, and suffering to the States founded by their achievements. This gave birth to a peculiar and individual national life, whose glory was revealed in the national literature after the thirteenth century, while scientific life was almost entirely confined to the clergy, and was restricted to theology and scholastic philosophy.

The Spanish language, issuing from an admixture of the *lingua romana rustica*, and many fundamental tones derived from primitive Iberian, and from the adoption of Germanic elements, is related to the Provençal, through the Catalan and Limousin, and is closely connected with the Gallician and Portuguese. It gives evidence also of the adoption of many Arabic terms. The transition from the use of the language in common life (sixth century) to its employment in poetical forms occurred in northern and central Spain almost simultaneously (about the end of the eleventh century), and rather later in the south and in Portugal.

The Limousin and Catalan poetry were fused with the Provençal, and when the latter became extinct they lasted till the fifteenth century—a fact testified by the writings of Peter III. of Aragon (died 1285), Frederic King of Sicily (died 1326), Enrique de Villena (died 1434), Ausias March at Valencia (died 1450), and Juan Martorell (1453).

Castilian poetry was the offspring of the national character, preserving an independent, chivalrous feeling, and breathing much power and depth of emotion.

Its oldest work is the "Rhymed Chronicle (1130, copied 1207) of the Acts of Cid el Campeador" (died 1099), by Sanchez, translated into German by Herder, 1805. Many other poets celebrated the deeds of this great national hero and of others, and Gonzales de Berceo wrote the "Adventures of Alexander the Great" in Alexandrines. King Alphonso the Wise (born 1221, died 1284) raised the Castilian language to be the accepted medium of intercourse in public affairs, and used his influence to promote the national poetry. The principal literary productions of the fourteenth century were romances and lyrics, but this era also marks the introduction of historical and didactic prose. Moreover, allegory found considerable patronage in the fourteenth century, many foreign productions, including especially Dante, exciting the spirit of imitation.

Among the more noted writers of this time may be named: Prince Juan Manuel (died 1362), author of simple romances, and of the prose novel, "El Conde Lucanor;" Pedro Lopez de Ayala (born 1332, died 1407); Rimado de Palacio, chronicle and translation of Livy; Juan de Mena (born 1412, died 1456), "El Laberinto;" Inigo Lopez de Mendoza (born 1398, died 1458), "Doctrinal de Privados," "Proverbios," and "Memorial;" and Fernan Perez de Guzman, an excellent prose writer, who wrote "Sentencias." Among the lyric poets may be noticed, Rodrigo del Padron, Gomez, and Jorge Manrique, and a fiery, fertile writer, Juan de la Enzina (1500). The mysteries, which led to the drama, received (1412) a nobler form from an allegorizing writer, Enrique de Villena. Mingo Rebulgo (1450) and Celestina (before 1500) gave the tone to comedy. Portuguese lyric poetry was closely associated with the Spanish in the fifteenth century. Italian models were imitated, but Portugal's rhymed chronicles have small value.

PART II.

MODERN TIMES (1500—1873).

CHAPTER VIII.

SURVEY.

THE literature of modern times may be considered as confined to Europe and America. It is conspicuous for the wealth of matter and speciality of form, and directed by a powerful longing for truth and beauty, testified by the aim of the numerous transformations and political revolutions, and resulting from a greater and more general sympathy in the welfare of humanity. The spirit of modern literature may be generalized as the product of accumulated experiences, of the increasing intercourse of nations, of the progress of industry and commerce, of the rise of the middle classes, and of the recognition of the rights of the people generated by Christianity. The results of these facts are seen in the diffusion and strengthening of a general consciousness or public opinion, having a just estimate of the worth and dignity of the human race expressed in the publications of the day.

Three facts express the beginning of this new era, which had been prepared by the movements of the preceding centuries. The first is the discovery of the new world (October 12, 1492), telling strongly on civil life and the administration of states, already roused to the sense of new wants and enjoyments, and to new efforts in the life of industry and trade. The discovery of Columbus has had a great effect in extending the horizon of experience, in rooting out old prejudices, in awakening the power of observation, and in rousing a lively sympathy between the cultivated and uncultivated classes. The next great fact, is the study of ancient classical literature, exercising intellectual activity by constant and profitable familiarity with the laws of language, clearing up difficult matters by a comparison of the past with

the present, generating a brighter and less dependent state of mind, setting free the fancy and thought from the quibbles of a rigid scholasticism, showing the contrast of repulsive barbarism and the attractive beauty of form, producing general results of culture that have never been thwarted, and never can be set aside except in a state of society which seems now removed from the field of possibility.

Another great fact was what is styled the Reformation, by Ulrich Zuingli (1512) and Martin Luther (1517), resulting in part from the effort of a more mature understanding to use its own independent powers, and in some degree the effect of the endeavour to break away from political unity, and to develop individually the special characteristics of the different European nationalities. Thus, though a certain division and antagonism of characters and interests were produced, and were strengthened by the Reformation, its general effect was not without utility, even in the case of its opponents, by the creation of a healthy spirit of national competition ; though this advantage was balanced by the loss of a sense of common unity in Christendom, expressed in the Crusades. Another result of the Reformation was the prominence given to political and social questions and the establishment of general toleration, leading undoubtedly in most cases to indifference in matters of religion.

It must be added that the first results of the Reformation do not seem to have been favourable to learning or art. The old exclusive and intolerant spirit of the Middle Ages breathes forth even in the reformed churches. The Thirty Years' War in Germany was a real calamity for the progress of culture and letters. But the tendency given to the human mind could not be checked by any collisions. Scientific inquiry broke forth with greater effulgence than before, after Francis Bacon introduced induction and led the way for a host of ardent and profound inquirers such as Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, Spinoza, Pascal, Newton, and Leibnitz. The observations and researches of these great men gave splendour and furtherance to the independent use of the reasoning powers and directed inquiry to the attainment of substantial results.

The sixteenth century was in some senses a heroic age in the field and in letters. The struggles in the Netherlands, the controversies of the council of Trent, the opposition to the Armada, the civil wars in France, the powerful antagonism of the Jesuit order, gave birth to gigantic efforts of literary prowess.

In the midst of all these contests, a public opinion was slowly

forming in Europe, and the result of the struggle was to lead the literary classes to a kind of satiety of controversy and a general spirit of flippant mockery and incredulity in England under Charles II. down to the age of Queen Anne, and in France under the Regent of Orleans (at the beginning of the eighteenth century).

ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY AND NATIONAL LITERATURES.

The more lively activity of national mind, and a more refined national culture, find their expression in the national literatures, at first in south-west Europe, and afterwards in the east and north. In order to form a just estimate of these modern literatures, it is necessary to take into consideration their individuality; their degree of dependence on foreign models; their connection with the past, with science, with the fine arts, and their influence on the different classes of the people. Each nation has followed a course of development different from that of others. This speciality of national character is seen in the nature of practical productions; the present speaks more forcibly in prose, especially perceptible in the tone of entertainment and instruction, particularly in works of eloquence and the artistic structure of history, the fruit of greater publicity in political life. On all sides material progress and efforts after a higher individuality are discernible, though the ideal element is somewhat depreciated.

CHAPTER IX.

ITALY, TO TASSO.

ITALY, the mother and the pattern of modern European culture and art, had reached a high pitch of intellectual life about the end of the fifteenth century, which, from the nature of certain eternal laws of the human mind, could not be maintained for a long continuance. The Franco-Spanish wars (1494-1559) left destruction, impoverishment, and barbarism as their legacy; political independence was lost; internal dissensions produced enervation, developed since more hurtfully by an insidious and immoral State policy. The multitude became remarkable for roughness and obtuseness; while the ruling caste, and those intellectually gifted, were chiefly conspicuous for sophistry and over refinement, for effrontery in their spirit of mockery, and for a tendency to libertinage. Literature sank with the falling of civil independence and industrial prosperity.

A hypocritical character of mind was generated, coupling the levity of unbelief with an external profession of faith. The imagination of writers at this period preferred to dwell on events of the past, rather than on the more barren themes of the present. The principal progress in Italy at this time was confined to learned corporations and to matters of scientific inquiry. The national literature of Italy began to degenerate, like art, at the end of the sixteenth century, and it only began to revive with the nineteenth. Much was done, no doubt, in this interval to throw light on the national history. Philology was cultivated in the sixteenth; archæology in the seventeenth; Roman law, mathematics, and physics, made great advances in this period. Much literary activity was developed throughout at Rome, and several popes patronised and promoted literature with great energy.

THE AGE OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI (DIED 1494).

The whole of the fifteenth century was employed in extending the resources of the friends of the Muses. Antiquity was unveiled to them in full beauty, including its graceful mythology, its subtle and profound philosophy, its masterly eloquence, and entrancing poetry. Another age was required to make use of all this material in the formation of a nobler race. About the end of the century a divine breath permeated the finished statue, and it started into life.

Those men of genius who shed so brilliant a glory on Italy in the sixteenth century, were clustered like a constellation of light round Lorenzo de' Medici, and formed his society. A high rank among these must be assigned to Politiano, who prepared the career of the great epic and lyric Italian poets that followed closely after.

Angelo Politiano was born at Monte Pulciano, July 24, 1454, his family name being Ambrogini. He appears to have attracted considerable notice by writing Greek and Latin epigrams, but the work that introduced him to Lorenzo de' Medici was a poem on a tournament, in which Julian de' Medici was the victor, in 1468. From this time Politiano was the constant confidant and companion of Lorenzo, who made him tutor to his children. Yet this poem of Politiano was a fragment, and devoted to an unworthy theme. It is probably owing to this unworthiness that the poet left it unfinished. Yet neither Tasso nor Ariosto surpass Politiano in the management of the octave stanza, the spirit of his narrative, in grace and vivacity, and in uniting a delicious harmony with the greatest resources of description.

Politiano did more than this. He had the merit of reviving the tragedies of the ancients ; or, more correctly, he created a new kind of pastoral tragedy, on which even Tasso employed his genius. His best-known dramatic work is the "Orpheus," in five acts, which has the ancient chorus, and is rather an eclogue than a drama. This resulted from an exaggerated estimate of Virgil, who was supposed to unite every excellence in his works, and to be a model for the dramatist in his *Bucolics*. The play revolves round the love of Aristæus for Eurydice, containing the lamentations of Orpheus, his descent into hell and punishment. Each act contains little more than a hundred verses. Politiano makes use of various metres—the *terza rima*, the octave stanza, and even the more involved couplets of the *canzoni*—for the dialogue. It has scarcely any resemblance to the modern drama, yet the Orpheus produced a revolution in poetry, combining beauty of verse and music with the charm of decorations, and leading the way to the sublimest enjoyment which the muse can bestow.

About this time the Academy and the poets of Rome reproduced the comedies of Plautus. The example of Politiano and this reproduction gave a great push to the revival of the drama. It came at length to form a part of religious ceremonies, and nobles and princes used to act in the performances. Italy could boast of representing annually two theatrical displays—one at Ferrara or Milan, the other at Rome or Naples. These were frequented by all the neighbouring courts and their retinues. The severe judgment of the public was disarmed by the splendours of the spectacle, the extravagant expenditure, and gratitude elicited by the liberality of so gratuitous a favour. The records of the Italian cities announce the great admiration felt for these displays ; yet the poets sought less the applause of the public than the imitation of the classics in their dramatic productions ; and Seneca was unfortunately viewed as being equally entitled to admiration with Sophocles. Accordingly, the first efforts of the reviving drama are full of tumid declamations, and all the defects of the Roman tragedies.

Meanwhile a totally different spirit and drift were perceptible in another branch of Italian poetry—the *Morgante Maggiore* of the Florentine Luigi Pulci, and the *Orlando Innamorato* of Maria Boiardo, Count of Scandia. These works belonged to the class of chivalrous poems which have been reviewed in describing the German, French, and Spanish literature of the Middle Ages. It has been seen that these chivalrous poems had some circulation

in Italy in the time of Dante (twelfth and thirteenth centuries). They accorded with the prevalent love of adventure and belief in the marvellous which were the dominant tone of the Crusade period. At the close of the fifteenth century matters were changed; the belief in the marvellous was diminished; and the warriors still wearing armour were far from recalling the true love and valour of the Paladins of old.

Accordingly, the adventures of the older romances were repeated in Italy in a spirit of mockery; nor did the Italian language at that time admit the serious treatment of any subject, this being left to the Latin. After the time of Boccaccio, a character of *naïveté*, mixed with satire, remained, and still remains, the characteristic feature of the Italian language, and is specially perceptible in Ariosto. This great writer is conceived to have united the mixture of humour with fabulous narrative in a just measure; but it took some time for the romantic poets of Italy to bring matters to this point.

Luigi Pulci (1431-1487) appears in his "Morgante" (1485) in turns serious and insipid, burlesque and vulgar, or religious. The poem consists of twenty-eight cantos, each canto containing 200 stanzas. His real hero is rather Orlando than Morgante; but although this romance consists entirely of warlike encounters, it has not that enthusiasm of valour which is the captivating feature of the old romances. Though Orlando and Rinaldo are not vanquished, we do not feel confident that they are invincible. Morgante alone, having as weapon the hammer of a great bell, crushes all that oppose him. On the other hand, woman appears in a very subordinate light, and there is no trace of that romantic gallantry seen in the chivalrous poems of the North. Even the purity of his Italian style is only his faithful adherence to the Tuscan idioms.

Count Boiardo, governor of Reggio, and a statesman attached to the court of Hercules I. at Ferrara (1430-1494), composed his "Orlando Innamorato" about the same time that Pulci gave forth his "Morgante." The "Orlando Innamorato" was not completed by its author, being improved and re-modelled after his death by Berni. It is more attractive than the "Morgante" of Pulci, from the richness of the colour, the interest of the adventures, and the due honour given by Boiardo to his female characters, his principal heroine, Angelica, exercising a supreme control over the hearts of her knights. The names given in this poem to the principal Christian and Saracen knights, and the characters assigned to them, have adhered to them ever since. Sacripante,

Agramante, Mandricardo, &c., are said to have been names taken from vassals of his own fief of Scandriano ; while Rodomonte, the appellation given to his most redoubtable Moorish warrior, was suggested to him naturally, and occasioned such joy in his mind that he had the bells rung, cannon fired, and celebrated the invention as a high day and holiday.

The style did not equal the liveliness of his imagination. It is negligent, while his verses are discordant, and the work requires re-modelling. Nevertheless, the Italian language was perfected at this time, and became an admirable instrument for the genius of such men as Ariosto and Tasso. The stanza had been found most appropriate to epic poetry ; but till the appearance of Ariosto no one had divined the charm those stanzas would receive from his pen in describing the marvellous adventures of chivalry.

Ludovico Ariosto was born September 8, 1474, at Reggio, his father being governor of that town for the Duke of Ferrara. He had been intended for the law by his father ; but after five years' unprofitable study his father allowed him to follow the bent of his genius in literature. Ariosto then went to Rome, where he wrote one of the first Italian comedies (in prose), "*La Capanna*," (1500). He soon after composed another comedy and sonnets, and was known as a man of wit and judgment. After his father's death he was attached as secretary to the service of the Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, second son of Hercules I. He was thus engaged in some important negotiations, but he never pursued them without regret, and at length gave himself almost entirely to poetry. He commenced the "*Orlando Furioso*" in 1505, and worked at it for eleven years. In 1516 he gave at Ferrara the first edition of his work, which consists of 46 cantos, 4,831 stanzas, and 38,648 verses. It was received with great enthusiasm, and by 1532 four editions had appeared. Ariosto was soon after raised by Alfonso I., and given an employment under his government. He was about this time commissioned to suppress the banditti of the Garfagnana, and it is said his poetical fame served him as passport among these lawless men. Soon after he was given a more congenial appointment by the Duke of Ferrara ; and, with a very limited income, he provided for his children, dying June 6, 1533.

A few words must be devoted to his great poem, which celebrates the Paladins and their amours at the court of Charlemagne during the mythical wars of that monarch against the Moors. The principal character of the poem, Orlando (Roland), becomes

mad through love for Angelica, though this event only occurs in the twenty-third canto. He did not profess to write a strictly epic poem, nor would he write it in Latin. He despised the adopted rules of poetry, and found he had genius to create new ones. The work has unity of action in the great contest of Christians and Moors; the lives of his heroes contributing in this great action, and forming so many subordinate episodes.

Yet Ariosto threw off to a great extent the embarrassment of a unity of action. His poem is, in fact, a continuation of that of Boiardo, taking up the adventures of Orlando when that poet left him. Hence Boiardo's poem ought to be read as a key to explain Ariosto's. Ariosto plays with his readers in continually introducing new characters while getting rid of old ones. His poem is only a fragment of the history of the knights of Charlemagne, having neither beginning nor end.

So much for the theme. The following are the special features of the "Orlando." A principal enjoyment of man consists in the development of his energies and powers. The great art of the romantic poet is to make his hero triumph over all the forces of nature and the spells of magic. Ariosto always succeeds in inspiring this enthusiasm of valour. Again, the imaginary and essentially poetic world in which he transports the reader, where all the vulgar cares of life are suspended, charms away all solitudes. It may be admitted that the distance is so great between the real world and the world of romance, that men derive no instruction from the latter. But the dream of fancy without any defined object is perhaps the real essence of poetry.

According to many judges, chivalry with Ariosto shines forth in all its dignity, delicacy, and grace—protection of the feeble, a devoted respect for the female sex. The supernatural element introduced in the poem is partly of Arabian origin, and divested of all terror. It is rather a brilliant heightening of the powers of man. Genii abound, and their power is exercised in splendid creations, a taste for the arts and a love of pleasure. Alcina, the Hippogriff, the ring of Angelica, are the creations of Islam.

Ariosto displays throughout brilliant imagination and a most fertile invention. "Bradamente," "Ruggiero," "Ariodonte," "Angelica," and "Medoro," form a world of traditional poetry, as fruitful as that of the Greeks. Yet the dramatic powers of Ariosto do not equal his descriptions. He shows more imagination than heart in bringing forward his characters. Even the

hero Orlando, Ruggiero, Rinaldo, and Griffone, differ but little from the Saracen knights. Again, his versification is more remarkable for grace and sweetness than for power. Every description is a picture; he even seeks grace in negligence, and when he surrenders himself to his genius, shows such inimitable grace that we readily admit this negligence to be a proof of his happy genius.

Some of his passages have deep pathos. The circumstance that gave rise to the madness of Orlando is developed with almost unrivalled eloquence of passion :—

“ Tre volte e quattro e sei lesse lo scritto
Quello infelice, e pur cercando in vano
Che non vi fosse quel che v'era scritto,
E sempre lo vedea più chiaro e piano.”*

Although convinced of his misfortune, and that Angelica no longer loves him, Orlando flies in vain into a forest, seeking to shun the eye of man. He sees again the inscription on the rock, turning his deep grief into rage :—

“ Caduto gli era sopra il petto il mento,
La fronte priva di baldanza e lassa,
Ne poté aver, che'l duol l'occupi tanto,
A le querele voce, humore al pianto.”

(Canto 23, st. 112, 113.)

Another equally pathetic passage describes the death of Zerbino, the generous son of the King of Scotland, defending the arms of Orlando against the Moor, Mandricardo, whose arms were charmed. Every stroke of the terrible sword Durandel shatters the armour of Zerbino, whose wounds are far too deep to be staunched. In the centre of a forest, alone with Isabel his love, his blood ebbs away, his anguish augments, and his life departs :—

“ Per debolezza più non potea gire,
Si che fermossi a piè d'una fontana ;
Non sà che far, nè che si debba dire.
Per aiutarlo la donzella humana.
. . . Perche ahi lassa ! dicea non mi sommersi
Quando levai ne l'Oceano le vele ?
Zerbin che i languidi occhi ha in lei conversi
Sente più doglia ch'ella si querele.
. . . Così, cor mio, vogliate (le diceva)
Dapoi ch'io saro morte, amar mi ancora.”

(Canto 23, st. 6.)

* See Appendix C.

The death of Isabel herself is related in the most touching manner in the 25th canto.

As a general summing up, it may be added that the grace which pervades the whole poem, the enchanting language, and the nature of the ornaments, are in perfect harmony with the subject.

The "Orlando" is the glory of Ariosto. Yet he wrote other works of merit, including five comedies, rarely read, and unpopular, as too close imitations of the classic drama, but having novel and engaging plots, though the gaiety is forced, and the wit rather Italian than Roman. Everything in these pieces reminds one of the Roman theatre. They show a powerful talent, corrupted by servile imitation. Ariosto first perceived that Italian did not offer a versification for comedy. He wrote his first verses in prose, and then turned them into *versi sdruccioli*. The sonnets of Ariosto have less nature but more harmony than those of Petrarcha. His elegies, or "Capitoli Amoriosi" in *terza rima*, may bear comparison with the most touching passages in Ovid, Propertius, and Tibullus. His epistles in verse and his satires show him to have been an amiable man, only impatient at the misfortunes and errors of those around him, and rather too occupied with himself and his own comfort to have been one of the knights errant whom he sang.

Three names mark the era intervening between Ariosto and Tasso—Trissino, Alamanni, and Bernardo Tasso. Giangiorgio Trissino of Vicenza (1550), entirely imbued with the laws of classical antiquity, wrote "Italia Liberata," in twenty-seven cantos of rhymeless iambs, also lyrical and dramatic poems (Verona, 1729). Luigi Alamanni, of Florence (died 1556), was an imitator of French models in his "Epos," without much individuality in other poems, emulating the Florentine Giov. Rucellai (born 1475, died 1526), author of "Le Api" and, his most successful work, "Della Coltivazione" (Padua, 1718). Bernardo Tasso is chiefly to be noted as the father of the great Torquato. He was a native of Bergamo (born 1493, died 1569); wrote "L'Amadigi" (100 cantos in *ottava rima*), Bergamo, 1755, 4, 12; "Il Floridante" (19 b. improved by Torquato), Bol. 1587; "Rime," Bergamo, 1749; "Lettere," Padova, 1783.

Very few poetical passages are to be found in Bernardo Tasso, and of these the best is probably the description of the adventures of Amadis, given by the fairy Urgando to Oriana (canto vi., stanza 33).

Torquato Tasso was born 1544, at the most lovely spot in

Italy, if not in Europe—Sorrento—while his father was attached to the service of Ferdinando San Severino, prince of Salerno (1547). Bernardo Tasso shared in the misfortune of San Severino, who was driven into revolt, and compelled to embrace the party of France, because he had opposed the introduction of the Inquisition at Naples. After leaving Sorrento, Bernardo was attached to the service of the Duke of Urbino, and afterwards to that of Mantua, where he died, September, 1569.

CHAPTER X.

ITALY, FROM TASSO (BORN 1544, DIED 1595).

THE life of Torquato Tasso was unhappy, because he aimed at the unattainable. It appears that he was enamoured of a lady of the name of Eleonora, but it is a matter of dispute who this lady was. He was irritable, imprudent, but he exhibited a valour worthy of the heroic ages. Tasso attacked a courtier (who had maliciously betrayed him) with his sword in the palace of the Duke of Ferrara. His adversary, with his three brothers, who had all drawn their swords on the poet, was banished. The poet was afterwards arrested and confined (1577), at the age of thirty-three, for having drawn a knife to strike a servant in the apartments of the duchess. His imagination, working on his imprudence, robbed him of his reason, and, escaping, he fled to Sorrento. He then passed through many adventures and difficulties, till his love brought him to Ferrara; he was about to be pardoned, but thinking himself neglected, he abandoned himself to his resentment. He was then shut up in a lunatic asylum: the duke wishing him to be considered mad to justify his own severity. This imprisonment of the poet occasioned an entire aberration of mind; he addressed all the princes of Italy, the emperor, his paternal city, begging them to set him free. His body became enfeebled, and he fancied himself the victim of attempts at poisoning. Meanwhile his great poem saw the light, without his permission, and this gave rise to an angry controversy as to the comparative merits of Ariosto and Tasso. Tasso defended himself with wit and subtlety; but the Academy of the Crusca declared against him; and from that time he projected the remodelling of his poem, and began to compose his

"Gerusalemme Conquistata," in four cantos, in a stiffer, more classical style than his great work.

He was confined for seven years in the hospital, but finally, through the interposition of the Italian princes, he was set free, and involved in pecuniary difficulties, he survived nine years at Rome and Naples. It is conceived that he killed himself at Rome, aged fifty-one (April, 1595), by administering to himself new and powerful medicines.

His great work, the "Gerusalemme Liberata," has been extolled by Italian critics as the greatest of modern epics. His merit consists in having selected the most engaging subject that could have inspired a modern poet. The great struggle of the Christians and Saracens during the Crusades represents the contest of a race destined to elevate human nature to its highest pitch of civilization, with those who would have reduced it to the most degrading barbarism. Though the Saracens were at that time superior to the Christians in letters and arts, their meridian was past, and the nature of their religion fixed them first in immobility and then in decay. If the Crusaders had succeeded, the higher laws and customs would have prevailed throughout the east, the banks of the Jordan would have been inhabited by a happy people, the fruitful plains of Syria might have been the abode of peace and enjoyment. The overbearing Turk, the cruel Druse, and savage Bedouin, would not have oppressed the servants of the Cross. But if the Mahomedans had carried out their dreams of conquests, the energies of the human mind would have been crippled, all Europeans would have become as deceitful and ignorant as Greeks and Fellahs, and Europe a region inundated with marshy waters or covered with dark forests.

The religious motive that prompted the struggle was noble and disinterested, because notwithstanding the sneers of Voltaire, it is higher and better to combat for a great religious conviction than for many mercenary motives actuating modern empires.

The scene of the "Jerusalem" is one where nature exhibits her richest treasures. It is on the borders of Eden and near the sands of the desert. Again, the whole world is the patrimony of the poet in the countries of the Christian host. Some assert that neither the *Iliad* nor the *Æneid* have the dignity of subject, the divine and human interest, or the dramatic action peculiar to Tasso's poem. The entire course of the poem is truly epic. All the action is contained in the campaign of 1099, and in the space of forty days. One of the most touch-

ing episodes of the poem is where Olindo, out of love for the young Christian, Sophronica, offers to sacrifice himself for her the cruelty of Aladin, who condemns them both to death, and the heroism of Clorinda, who saves both from the stake.

Tasso is thought to have imitated the Bradamante or Marfisa of Ariosto in his Clorinda. Her character may be also misplaced among the Infidels, yet it is in her that the greatest beauties of the poet are displayed. Tancred is another noble conception. With the heroes of the classical epic, love is a weakness; with the Christian knights, a devotion. Again, Tasso's portrait of Satan inspires rather terror than disgust:—

“Orrida maestà nel fier aspetto,
Terroro accresce, e più superbo il rende,
Rosseggian gli occhi, e di veneno infetto,
Come infausta cometa il guardo splende.”*

Perhaps the most beautiful part of the poem is the description of the enchanting garden of Armida, in which the magician held Rinaldo under a powerful spell from which he was to be rescued by two knights. The description of these beautiful gardens inspires the greatest delight, and the poet describes them in verses breathing the harmony appropriate to the joys surrounding Armida. But the masterpiece of the poem is the single combat of Tancred and Clorinda, who do not recognise each other in the shades of night. The combat itself is painted with matchless force of colouring. When, however, Clorinda is mortally wounded by Tancred, the pathetic reaches the highest pitch, nor does poetry offer anything more affecting:—

“Ma ecco omai l'ora fatale è giunta,
Che 'l viver di Clorinda al suo fin deve;
Spinge egli il ferro nel bel sen di punta,
Che vi s'immerge, e'l sangue avido beve.
E la veste che d'or vago trapunta,
Le mammelle stringea tenera e leve,
L'empie d'un caldo fiume; ella già sente,
Morirsi, e'l pie le manca egro e languente.
Tremar senti la man, mentre la fronte,
Non conosciuta amor sciolse e scoprio.
La vidde, e la connobbe, e resto' senza
E voce e moto. Ahi vista! ahi conoscenza!
... Mentre egli il suon de sacri detti sciolse,
Colei di gioia trasmutossi e rise,
E in atto di morir lieto e vivace,
Dir pareva: S'apre il cielo; io vado in pace.”

The romantic interest attaching to Tancred and Clorinda is

* See Appendix D.

carried to the same extent as in the love romances. Tancred presents us with the most loyal, the bravest, and the most generous of knights, with a vein of modesty and melancholy that is most attractive. Clorinda, notwithstanding her almost savage valour, has the mild virtues of the female character, and attracts us by her generosity. The catastrophe where Tancred ignorantly slays Clorinda is, perhaps, the most affecting that any writer of romance has invented, or any tragedy has brought upon the stage. It has been represented with much force in English lyrics by Tennyson in his "Oriana."

A great contrast to this dignified and exalted poem is found in the burlesque, ironical, and humoristic school of writers that came up almost simultaneously with Tasso. The "*Poesia Berniesca*," inaugurated by Fran. Berni, of Lamporecchio (born 1490, died 1536), exceeded all bounds of propriety, and revelled in sensualistic extravagance. Its principal contributors were Pietro Aretino (who died 1566), Agnolo Firenzuola (died 1544), and Nicc. Franco of Benevento (1569). A complete edition of these humoristic writers was given by Ant. Franc-Grazzini il *Lasca*, 1518; opere burlesche, Flor., 1723. Satires imitating the antique were composed by Ercole Bentivoglio, L. Paterno, and P. Nelli of Siena.

The seventeenth century marks the decay of poetry in Italy. The principal works were satires, fused with epos and lyrics compounded with the drama. The most remarkable writers of the period are Giambattista Guarini of Ferrara (born 1537, died 1612), with a real sense for beauty, rhythmically developed in sonnets and madrigals, especially in his pastoral play, the "*Pastor Fido*," 1590, also frequently a good prose writer (*Opere*, Verona, 1737). Bernardo Baldi of Urbino (born 1553, died 1617) tried his hand at an imitation of *Æsop's Fables*, and was remarkable for great correctness in rhymeless iambs. Giambattista Marino of Naples (born 1569, died 1625) has some merits as a lyric, but was exaggerated in tone in his "*Adone*" of twenty cantos (1623), and "*La Strage degli Innocenti*," four cantos, 1633. The age was very prolific in satires, and mention must be made of Aless. Tassoni of Modena (born 1565, died 1635), founder of the Comic Epos, in "*La Secchia Rapita*," 1616 (Modena, 1744). In lyrics the tone of Guarini and Marino prevailed till Gabriello Chiabrera of Savona (born 1552, died 1637), attained great influence, imitating closely the classics of antiquity—*Poesie Liriche*, Milan, 1807. Fulvio Testi of Modena followed Horace (1646). Alessandro Marchetti trans-

lated Lucretius (died 1714)—“*Vita e Poesie*,” Ven., 1755. Aless. Guidi of Pavia (died 1712) was a correct religious lyric, and wrote a valued pastoral, “*Endymion*,” 1692.

A revival of poetry took place in the eighteenth century ; and a more serious tone began to prevail. Niccolò Fortinguerra at Rome (died 1735) translated “*Terence*,” and wrote some lively lyrics, and an Epos “*Ricciardetto*,” in thirty cantos (Pisa, 1812) ; the Venetian Apostolo Zeno had great literary merit (born 1669, died 1750) in improving the Italian opera ; Paolo Rolli of Rome (died 1764) was a fine translator of Greek, Roman, and English classics ; but above all, Pietro Metastasio of Rome (born 1698, died 1782) stood quite apart in the excellence of his operatic compositions (*Opere*, Milano, 1817).

A competent critic remarks “that none of the Italian writers ever more completely united all the qualities that constitute a poet ; vivacity of imagination, refinement of feeling, with every charm of versification and expression.” Yet Metastasio laid no claim to the highest genius.

Metastasio had almost the merit of discovering the true style of composition for the opera. He scorned to subject himself to unity of place, he liked to vary the scene. The catastrophe in his pieces is almost always happy. He succeeded with unexampled skill in uniting natural expression with all the dignity and richness found in lyric poetry, and his lines and words are infused with an irresistible harmony so admirably reproduced in the sublime accompaniments of Pergolesi.

Metastasio composed twenty-eight great operas, borrowing from mythology and history. In his operas the passions are all refined, and patriotism, filial love, liberty, and chivalric honour are carried to extremes. All his plays exhibit the opposition of interest between man’s duties and his passions. Accordingly there is a certain amount of monotony in his plays. But the flow of his verse in the recitation has been pronounced the most pure and harmonious known in any language.

His most finished pieces are “*Issipile*” and the “*Olimpiade*.” Nine of his pieces, composed during his residence of ten years at Vienna, are thought very superior to the others. These are his “*Issipile*,” “*Olimpiade*,” “*La Clemenza di Tito*,” “*Ciro*,” “*Temistocle*,” “*Demofonte*,” “*Zenobia*,” and “*Regolo*.” To appreciate “*Issipile*,” the reader must wander away into an ideal world, where all is new, and create for himself an illusion, seeming to disguise improbabilities. The speech of Eurynome is very beautiful. The character of Thoas combines the

highest qualities of manly kindness and protection. The "Olimpiade" is throughout of a soft and impassioned character. The style is extremely pure, with much improbability in its incident. This opera exceeds all the others of the author in impassioned eloquence. The farewell of Megacles to his love and his friend is in the most eloquent and impassioned language; and the passage, "Che abisso di pene," is a fine burst of grief from the depths of the heart.

Yet Metastasio becomes tedious because of the repetitions in his characters, the author seeming to take it for granted that one vice is followed by all the rest in the decalogue, and that it is impossible for a virtuous character to commit a single fault. Among his historical pieces one of the most highly esteemed is "La Clemenza di Tito." It may be added that his cantate and canzonette would alone have given him a great name, and that Metastasio is perhaps the most pleasing and the least difficult of the Italian poets.

Gasp. Gozzi (born 1713, died 1786) was the author of excellent canzoni and satires—Opere, Padova, 1818; Gius. Parini was a fine painter of man and nature—Opere, Milan, 1801 (born at Milan, 1729, died 1799); Clement Bondi, of Mezzano (born 1742, died 1821), was a lyric poet of earnest and didactic tone; Giobattista Casti, a noted satirist (died 1803); and Vittorio Alfieri, revived the classical drama in Italy, as will be noted in the following section. In the eighteenth century the most eminent poets have been the dramatist Vincenzo Monti (born 1753, died 1828); Silvio Pellico; J. Pindemonti (born 1753, died 1828); Alessandro Manzoni, author of elegant lyrics and excellent dramas.

The rise of the legitimate drama in Italy claims a short attention at our hands. Improvisatorial art is quite of Italian growth, and some specimens of the best effusions of this class have come down to this day, the best emanating from Bern. Accolti (died 1534)—Opere, Florence, 1518; Silvio Antonino (died 1603); Franc. Gianni (died 1823)—Versi es temporanei, Genoa, 1794; Barth. Lorenzi, and Bach. Sestino (died 1822).

The Italian drama grew out of the Mysteries of the Middle Ages, and fell into two branches, the popular and the classical comedy. It is only in recent times that tragedy has arisen there in all its moral dignity. The popular comedy was the *Comedia de' l'Arte*, the classical, the *Comedia Erudita*. The principal contributors to the latter were Cardinal Bern. Divizio da Bibbiena (died 1520), Nicc. Macchiavelli, and Ariosto. The popular comedy was promoted by Pietro Aretino, F. Berni, A. F. G. 72-

zini, and others. Ercole Bentivoglio, of Milan (died 1561), wrote in a more serious tone; the noted philosopher, Giordano Bruno (died 1600); and the great painter, Michael Angelo Buonaroti (died 1626), renewed the style of Berni and Aretino.

It was Carlo Goldoni, of Venice (born 1707, died 1793), who tried to restore the comic drama by combating the decay into which it had fallen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in bending to a slavish imitation of the French. Goldoni tried to restore it to its national individuality, and to unite this with æsthetic regularity and with a moral purpose—*Opere*, Venice, 1804. Though born at Venice, Goldoni died at Paris. His reforms encountered serious opposition from Count Carlo Gozzi, a popular writer, of short-lived fame, who accused him of depriving the Italian theatre of the charm of poetry and imagination. In his irritation Goldoni left Italy, and would never return to it.

The Italians consider Goldoni as the author who carried the dramatic art in Italy to the highest perfection; and he certainly had no common powers, showing great fertility of invention. His dialogue is also very animated and expressive. He had also an exquisite relish of Italian humour. He has types of Italian character represented under special names. Thus his Rosettas are sentimental young ladies, a little impressionable, and very obedient; and his Beatrices are, as a contrast, full of impetuosity, vivacity, and frolic. The good and bad qualities of women are carried to extravagant lengths in Goldoni; and hypocritical friendships, not uncommon in Italy, are frequently portrayed.

Defects appear in the character of his men equally strongly marked. Sound morality is falsely appreciated and understood. Even integrity is represented under very false colours, and without any pretence to delicacy of mind. Courage is turned into a sort of bravado, which fails when put to the proof. Yet, in describing defects and vices, Goldoni threw much life in the portraits he drew.

Goldoni has merit in the natural and faithful delineation of manners, but he conveys no idea of grandeur or transcendent genius.

Tragedy in the beginning was entirely dependent on antiquity. This is seen in Trissino's "*Sofonisbe*," Alemanni's "*Antigone*," and others. G. Rucellai's "*Rosmunda*" (1525), and Ces. de Cesari, in "*Romilde*," and Tasso, in "*Torrismondo*" (1587), showed the romantic element. L. Martelli, in his "*Tullia*," and Prosp. Buonarelli, in his "*Soliman*" (1619), show individuality. The seventeenth century exhibits little power in tragedy; in the

eighteenth the ancients were imitated in tragedy, Vincenzo Gravina (died 1788) and Scip. Maffei displaying some merits; till Vittorio Alfieri, of Asti (born 1749, died 1803), endeavoured to raise tragedy to a higher level in Italy in twenty-one eloquent tragedies, displaying much nobility and loftiness of mind. His comedies lack simplicity, and his satires breathe a bitter spirit, but his tragedies have secured him a great name.

Count Vittorio Alfieri, of Asti, was antipodal to Metastasio, whom he accused of having corrupted the Italian taste by his effeminacy. He felt a sort of personal hatred for Metastasio's system, which he charged with the humiliation which had so long debased the Italians. Alfieri had an exalted idea of the duties and the dignity of man, and so ardent a love of liberty that he did not clearly perceive how many crimes had been committed in its name.

Metastasio was the poet of love, Alfieri, of liberty, and so much so, that all his pieces have a political drift. He has certain defects, nor did he possess the requisite talent for tragedy, but the work he achieved will always command admiration. Before his time Italy had no tragedies worthy of the name. Alfieri united the merits of the French drama to the grandeur of the English stage; and his successors in the same line have sufficiently proved what he did to improve the Italian tragedy.

Alfieri had defects. His aim was to exhibit a single action and a single passion on the theatre. He has therefore suppressed all inferior parts, and all conversations foreign to the plot, and has thereby rendered his tragedies shorter than usual. They rarely exceed 1,400 lines. He has exaggerated the principle of poetical unity. Alfieri, in his tragedies, only touches one string, and he judges himself impartially, for he says: "The principal defect which I remark in the conduct of my tragedies is uniformity." The most important change brought about by Alfieri was in the style. His predecessors had been harmonious to excess, and indulged to a fault in the softness of Italian metre. Alfieri studied to render his style hard and abrupt. Harmony and the language of imagination have been almost totally suppressed by him. In most of his plays there is more eloquence than poetry. Yet he founded a new school of poetry and the drama in Italy, and his tragedies deservedly stand as the first in the Italian language, and as equal in many points to those of the great French dramatists.

CHAPTER XI.

MODERN ITALIAN PROSE.

ITALIAN prose attained a riper simplicity in the sixteenth century, without sacrificing its humoristic character. In the historical works of the seventeenth century, simplicity is rather wanting and artifice apparent; while in the eighteenth an attempt is made to revert to the style of the sixteenth century. A noble turn could with difficulty be given to popular literature, because the learned formed a class apart. (G. Fontanini—"Biblioteca dell' Eloquenza Ital. colle Annotaz di Ap. Zeno," Parma, 1803—1810; "Prose Fioren," Venice, 1751; "Raccol. d'Orazioni e Lettere," Milan, 1808; "Racc. di Novelle," 1804.)

In the sixteenth century, the painter Leon. da Vinci (born 1452, died 1519) wrote excellent works in prose ("Della Pittura," libri iii., Roma, 1817); but the great prose writer of the age, marking in the history of Italian literature, is the Florentine State Secretary, Niccolò Macchiavelli (born 1469, died 1527), a man of deep, independent thought, advocating systematically a complete violation of public morality, and such an entire contempt for Christian principles, that he appears like a Pagan of ancient Rome transplanted to the sixteenth Christian century. Nevertheless, Macchiavelli has merits, particularly of style, that have made him renowned.

His great works are, "Discorsi sulla Prima Decada di Livio," "Il Principe," "Dell' Arte della Guerra" (1521), and "Florentine History," from 1215 to 1492 (8 vols.), besides the romantic biography of "Cast. Castracani," and novels ("Opere," edited by Piatti, Florence, 1813).

Macchiavelli was enabled to acquire a deep knowledge of men and manners in the course of his four embassies to the court of France, and of another to the court of that accomplished villain, Cesare Borgia. He had a considerable hand in directing the affairs of Florence, and organising its militia under the Medici; and when that family was driven into exile, he lost his employment and joined a conspiracy. He was discovered, put to the torture, and resisting all attempts to wrest from him anything that could impeach himself or his friends, he was set free on the elevation of Leo X. to the Pontificate.

It was during the period that Macchiavelli was out of office that he wrote his works. His "*Principe*," which was dedicated to Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, was not intended so much to secure on the throne a tyrant whom he hated, nor an attempt to make the maxims of such tyrants odious to the people. Macchiavelli did nothing but reduce to a system the diabolical polity which was that of almost all States in Italy in the sixteenth century. He treats the subject with a general feeling of bitterness against society, and a contempt for the human race. He applies to the interests and sordid calculations of mankind as they do not merit an appeal to their enthusiasm and moral sense. The "*Principe*" is in its way a picture, and yet a satire full of the venom and bitterness of Dean Swift's fictions. His work on Livy investigates the causes of the power of the Romans, and the most profound political observations since his time have been mainly derived from Macchiavelli. This work is not immoral, and did not receive or deserve an anathema from the Church like that launched against the "*Principe*." His "*History of Florence*," dedicated to Clement VII., is a masterpiece, uniting the eloquence of history with the depth of reflection.

A contemporary of Macchiavelli was the Florentine historian Franc. Guicciardini (born 1482, died 1540), not very impartial, and somewhat careless: "*Ist. d'Italia*," 1493—1532, in twenty vols., Pisa, 1819. Giacomo Nardi (died 1555) wrote "*Florentine History*," 1215 to 1537, in twelve vols., edited by Settimanni, Augsburg, 1727. Bern. Segni contributed to "*Florentine History*," from 1527 to 1535, edited also at Augsburg, 1727. Annibale Caro (died 1566) translated Virgil's "*Æneid*," in rhymeless verse (*Opere*, Milan, 1807). Benvenuto Cellini, the sculptor (born 1500, died 1570), wrote his autobiography (*Milan*, 1806). Gio. Battista Adriani (1511—1579) gave a picturesque and graphic account of his time—" *Istoria de Suoi Tempi*," 1536—1574 (xxii. books, Flor., 1823). Paolo Paruta (died 1598) published political discourses and historical works (" *History of Venice*," twelve books, from 1513 to 1552). Scipio Ammirato continued "*Florentine History*," in thirty-five books, till 1434 (Florence, 1647).

Passing to still lighter literature, among novelists, imitators of Boccaccio, Molza, Grazzini, Firenzuola, and Franco deserve to be noticed, all rather in the style of Aretino; and especially Jacomo Caviceo of Parma (1511)—"*Libro del Peregrino*," 1508; Gius Nelli, *Amorose Novelle*, and the Bishop and Dominican Matteo Bandella (died 1562) *Novelle*, Lond., 1740.

The prose of the seventeenth century was not so rich in thought, yet it was not deficient in some valuable writers. It produced in particular two controversial works on the history of the Council of Trent, the Venetian Paulo Sarpi giving a methodical and sharply critical account of the Council in opposition to the Court of Rome (*Opere*, Nap., 1790), while his opponent, Cardinal Sforza Pallavicino, the defender of the Papacy, is quite equal to his adversary in ability, and certainly not inferior in veracity (died 1657). Arrigo Caterino Davila (born 1576, died 1631) wrote a pleasing history in agreeable language, but too careless about the authenticity of supposed facts (Milan, 1807). Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio gave an account of the war against Spain in the Netherlands, 1559 to 1621, but his style is too artificial.

The principal novelists of this century were—Gio. Battista Basile, "*Il Pentamerone*," 1637; and Gio. Franc. Loredano (died 1669), author of the "*Dianea*" (*Opere*, Ven., 1767).

One Italian name alone would suffice to give glory to the literature of the eighteenth century. Gio. Batt. Vico, of Naples (died 1744), wrote the "*Principj d'una Scienza Nuova*," 1725 (Mil. 1816), leading the way to the philosophy of history, so ably treated in modern times (translated into German by W. E. Weber, Leipzig, 1822; into French by Michelet).

Vico's views were supposed to be slightly pantheistic, but such is not the case, and the profound thought that led him to see a divine element underlying Paganism was a trait of genius and the evidence of original power. Vico's views were carried out by the Neapolitan, Ant. Genovesi (died 1769), and Fernando Galiani (died 1787).

Political economy came up as a new science at this time in Italy, and had able expositors in Galeano Filangieri (died 1788), Fr. Maria Pagano (died 1799), and Ces. Bonesana Beccaria, who wrote ably on the reform of penal law (died 1793). Franc. Algarotti (died 1766—native of Venice) was a popular philosopher, somewhat of the kind of Voltaire and Diderot, and resided some time in the distinguished literary circle of Frederick the Great of Prussia (*Opere*, 1791). M. Cesarotti (died 1808) and Gius. Baretti (died 1789) were active writers at the end of the century; but the first place in history belongs to the patient and profound L. A. Muratori (died 1750), so deservedly known by his valuable collection called "*Annali*." To him we may add the Veronese Scipione Maffei (died 1755), and Carlo Giov. Maria Denina (died 1813); whilst in the nineteenth century

the most recent writers of note are—Carlo Botta, "*Storia d'Italia*;" Count Balbo, "*Storia d'Italia*;" Farini, "*Storia d'Italia*;" Gioberti, "*Del Primato*" and "*Il Gesuita Moderno*;" Rosmini, author of many philosophical works; Count Dandolo, "*Italia del Medio Evo*;" Troja, "*Storia d'Italia*;" and other graver authors.

Romance has been well represented by Manzoni, "*I Promessi Sposi*" (died 1873).

CHAPTER XII.

SPAIN : POETRY, LYRICS.

SPAIN follows Italy in the natural order of connection—first, because it is closely cognate in language; secondly, because the political connection of the two countries was immediate and great, as that of their literature, with the difference that while Spanish arms subdued a great part of Italy, Italian letters and arts did much to modify those of Spain; thirdly, Spain, like Italy, developed in particular a finished prose literature at an early period.

The speciality of the Spanish national character reposes on two features—the faith, and love of country. Spain, sharply sundered from other countries, developed a special idiosyncrasy in the national mind. The traditional element weighed powerfully on the lively fantasy of this southern people; foreign influence was long rejected by it; and a conservative temper was cultivated and mirrored in the literature of the Peninsula till the seventeenth century.

After the Bourbon family came to the throne, the antagonism between Old Castilian conservatism and a more modern spirit was sharply determined, and under Charles III. (1759-1788) the latter seemed to gain the upper hand. But the national spirit soon recovered the mastery, and received a powerful revival in the heroic struggle for independence against Napoleon. Nevertheless, this struggle helped to awaken the people to the value and necessity of constitutional forms; the feeling was strengthened by the insurrection of the Spanish colonies; and amidst all the various changes of dynasties and ministries, the power of the crown, church, and nobles was much weakened, and a taste for republican forms encouraged. Mathematics and

natural science have been latterly cultivated with success; philology has been promoted by studies of the Basque language; but philosophy has mostly retained a strict scholastic form, though Balmez treated the subject with more freedom and depth than is usual in Spain. The laws of the Castilian language were determined and collected by the Spanish Academy, founded by Philip V. (1714), which issued the best grammar of the language (Madrid, 1771) and the best dictionary (Madrid, 1726), and M. Valbuena's "Diccionario Español Latin" (Madrid, 1823).

Spanish poetry adopted some elements from Italy in the sixteenth century, without losing its individuality. In the seventeenth there was a partial sway of hyper-artificial taste; but in the eighteenth began a strong resistance to a degenerate spirit; and this has continued to our time, though the national and individual colouring of Spanish poetry has undoubtedly diminished in intensity. Italian models were successively imitated by Juan Boscan, of Barcelona (died 1540-3), in lyrics, tales, and elegies. Garcilaso de la Vega shows the influence of Italian poetry in his "Sonnets and Eclogues" (Obras. Madrid, 1796); also the Portuguese Franc. de Saa de Miraña (died 1558), especially in idylls (Obras. Lisbon, 1784). Jorge de Montemayor (died 1561) wrote a pastoral, "Diana," in the Italian style (Madrid, 1795); and Tansilo, another, "El Pastor de Filida" (Madrid, 1582), while Nic. Espinosa continued the "Orlando" of Ariosto (1554); and Luis Barahona de Soto imitated him, besides writing eclogues, satires, and *lagrimas de angelica* on the theme of the "Orlando." Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, de Granada (born 1503, died 1575), was a writer well acquainted with the ancient classics, and with Italian literature, but also retaining a strong colouring of individuality and nationality. His principal works are satires and epistles after the model of Horace; a prose romance, "Vida de Lazarillo;" and the history of the war against the Moors of Granada (Valencia, 1776—Obras. Madrid, 1610). Hernan de Herrera, of Seville (died about 1578), was an imitator of Petrarch (Obras. Sevilla, 1582); and Luis Ponce de Leon was a writer of profound and eloquent mystical works in poetry and prose (died 1591) (Obras. Valencia, 1785). Alonso de Ercilla was an epic poet of considerable merit, shown in his "Araucana," a poem devoted to describe the resistance of the native Indians of Chili to the Spanish rule in South America (died 1590). The poem is in 37 cantos (1569—published at Madrid, 1776). About this time appeared Pedro de Padilla (died 1595) author of idylls and romances; and Cristoval de Castil-

lejo (died 1596), who composed satires, romances, and songs in the Old Spanish style. Miguel de Cervantes, who will be noticed again among the prose writers, of Alcalá de Henares (born 1547, died 1616), wrote, besides his immortal work of "Don Quixote," a "Viaje al Parnaso," in *terza rima* (Madrid, 1784), "Comedias and Entremeses" (Madrid, 1749); also "Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda" (Obras. Mad., 1804).

Bartolomé Leon (died 1631) was the author of odes, satires, and epistles in the style of Horace (Obras. Mad., 1804). Bernardo de Valbuena wrote the "Siglo de Oro" (died 1627) (Madrid, 1608); Vinc. de Espinel composed a Horatian "Arte Poetica" (Madrid, 1591); and Luis de Gongora, of Cordova (born 1561, died 1627), was the writer of romances in a popular tone, and was the head of the *conceptistas* engaged in exaggerated striving after novelty (Poesias, Mad., 1787).

One of the remarkable authors of the seventeenth century was Francisco de Quevedo, of Madrid (died 1645), who was a humorist noted for popular songs and romances, especially his "Parnaso Español" (Madrid, 1729); his "Sueños" (1628); and Beggar romance, "Gran Tacaño" (Obras. Mad., 1790). Among translators of the classics at this time may be noted Juan de Xauregui (died 1650), translator of "Lucan," and Est. Man de Villégos (died 1669), translator of "Anacreon" and of the "Odes" of Horace (Eroticas, Madrid, 1774). In the New World appears at this time a very fertile poetical genius, Juana Inéz de la Cruz, of Mexico (about 1670) (Poemas, Madrid, 1714). Garcia de la Huerta (died 1784) was distinguished for his poetical efforts in songs, idylls, and the drama (Poesias, Madrid, 1786). The eighteenth century produced several other writers of considerable merit, including Juan de Escoiquiz, "Mexico Conquistada" (Madrid, 1798); P. Montengon (died 1817), founder of a new school; his friend, Jos. Iglesias (born 1753, died 1791), the representative of Old Castilian; J. Melendez, and Man. Quintana, &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SPANISH DRAMA. LOPE AND CALDERON.

THE drama issued in Spain, as elsewhere, out of the Church Mysteries, preserved faithfully the characteristics of the national mind, and represented its striking features successfully. Since

the end of the fifteenth century the Spanish drama was divided into preludes, plays, and interludes, containing, like human life, a mixture of the religious and the secular, of seriousness and hilarity, and has stiffly resisted the attempts in the eighteenth century to force upon it the rules of the ancient and the modern drama. (Compare C. Pellicer's "Sobre el Origen y Progreso de la Comedia en España," Madrid, 1801; "Teatro Esp.," per V. G. de la Huerta, Madrid, 1785; "Coleccion de las Piecas Dramaticas," Madrid, 1826.) The first steps in giving an artistic form to the Spanish drama were made by Bart. de Torres, Naharro, and Lope de Rueda (about 1520). Some improvements were introduced by J. de la Cueva and C. de Castillejo; but it was settled in its national form by a man of the most extraordinary fertility of invention, Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, of Madrid (born 1562, died 1635), who attained to greater popularity in his lifetime than has happened probably with any other author, ancient or modern.

The life of Lope de Vega is varied and chequered, though in a far less degree than that of his great contemporary, Miguel Cervantes. It is also remarkable that the families of both Lope de Vega and Calderon de la Barca, the two great Spanish dramatists, come from the same little picturesque valley of Carriedo, where each possessed an ancestral estate. The two poets were also both born at Madrid—De Vega Nov. 25th, 1562.

The limits of this work only admit of a summary account of the life of this great writer. His father died when he was young, and left the family in poverty; but his education was not neglected. He appears to have made very rapid progress at the Imperial College at Madrid, though he found mathematics unsuited to his genius. A curious episode is related in his school life, when he and a schoolfellow ran away, at the age of fifteen, to see the world. They got as far as Astorga (about three days' walk); and at Segovia, tired of their adventure, and trying to get home, they endeavoured to change a gold chain for some small coins at a silversmith's. This led to suspicion. They were arrested, and when the magistrate discovered who they were, he had the good sense to send them to Madrid, escorted by an officer of justice.

Lope served for a time as a soldier against the Portuguese. He was next attached to the service of the Bishop of Avila, Geronimo Manrique, whom he found a useful patron; and went thence to the University of Alcala, where he got a bachelor's degree. Returning to Madrid, he was attached to the service of

the grandson of the remorseless Duke of Alva, who by no means inherited the terrible spirit of the persecutor of the Netherlands. Here he wrote his pastoral romance "Arcadia," and soon after he married Isabel de Urbina, daughter of the King-at-arms to Philip II. and Philip III.

His domestic happiness was soon interrupted. He quarrelled with and wounded a nobleman of bad repute, was cast into prison, and, when released, went to Valencia, where he wrote his first comedies, his exile lasting several years. Soon after his return to Madrid he lost his wife; and shortly after entered into the Invincible Armada, taking the musket on his shoulder in the midst of general enthusiasm (1588). After sharing the disasters of that expedition, he thought himself happy to be back safe in Spain; and soon after entered on the same poor course of life as with the Duke of Alva, becoming secretary first to the Marquis of Malpica, and afterwards to the generous Marquis of Sarria. About this time he married, for the second time, Doña Juana de Guardio (1597), a lady of good family.

Lope was now thirty-five, and enjoyed some years of happiness; but it was soon broken. He lost his son Carlos, to whom he was tenderly attached, at the age of seven; and the child's mother died soon after, broken by grief, leaving a daughter, Feliciana, afterwards married to Don Luis de Usategui, the editor of some of his father-in-law's posthumous works.

Lope was also involved in certain irregularities of life about this time; but as years proceeded his mind took a serious turn. He devoted himself to works of piety and charity; and finally, at Toledo, in 1609, he received the tonsure, and became a priest. He then joined the same brotherhood of which Cervantes was a member. In 1625 he entered the congregation of the native priesthood of Madrid, and was so exact in the performance of his duties that, in 1628, he was elected its chief chaplain. Accordingly, for the last twenty-six years of his long life, he was strictly connected with the Spanish church. Yet, singularly enough, such a connection did not imply an abandonment of the world. It was during this priestly time of his life that he was in highest favour as a poet; writing many of those plays that seem very questionable in tone, while carefully setting forth his clerical distinctions, and especially that of Familiar, or Servant of the Holy Office.

His popularity was, however, first established in the happier period of his life, in his poem of "Isidro, the Ploughman," the patron of Madrid, in honour of Philip III.'s recovery from illness.

A large fortune followed his popularity; but he was often embarrassed, owing to his extravagance. After enjoying a fame almost unparalleled in literature—not only in Spain, but Rome, Milan, and Naples—he died in a state of what Ticknor calls melancholy fanaticism, but what might be styled religious exaltation. His death was accompanied by every sign of submissive devotion, and he was mourned and buried in a style seldom accruing even to the greatest statesmen or warriors. His funeral lasted nine days. The crowds who attended it were immense. Three bishops officiated, and the first nobles of the land attended as mourners.

With regard to the dramatic works of Lope, they fall into four classes: the *capa y espada* (genteel comedy), the *comedia heroica* (high life, historic play), the *comedias de ruido* (or those of low life), and the *autos sacramentales* (or religious plays). The number of his plays was something prodigious, and he is said to have left more in MS. than those in print, which, by the most authentic calculation, amount to about 2,000. Among the best of the *capa y espada* comedies may be mentioned "The Ugly Beauty;" "Money makes the Man" ("Dineros son Calidad"); "The Pruderies of Belisa," a play remarkable as being for once within the rules; "The Slave of her Lover," in which critics affirm that he has sounded the depth of woman's tenderness; and "The Dog in the Manger," showing an equally profound estimate of selfish vanity. *El azero de Madrid* (or Madrid steel)—a medicine then much in vogue—gave many of the materials for Molière's "Médecin malgré lui;" the whole drama teems with life and gaiety, and possesses a truth and reality rare on any stage. "The Reward of Speaking well" is a delightful play, in which the hero is conceived to be in some measure a representation of himself (the poet).

Lope wrote a great number of heroic dramas, but they are of various merit, and show in general his disregard of historical accuracy, and the incongruity then tolerated and approved in Spain. Thus his "Roma Abrasada," a play on the burning of Rome by Nero, is entirely careless about the accuracy of the historic facts, and represents Nero serenading Eta by night under her window, like a Spanish cavalier. In some of these pieces he brings Columbus on the stage; and in one of his finest plays, "The Duke of Ferrara," which he finished when he was nearly sixty-nine years old, and which is one of his best, he introduces the terrible story of Parisina, the theme of one of Byron's pieces. Two plays, "Punishment, not Vengeance," and "The

"Star of Seville," are full of the deepest spirit of tragedy. Of the third class, or domestic pieces of a lower order, the best specimen is "The Wise Man at Home." It contains very spirited sketches of common life. "The Captives of Algiers" ("El Trato de Argel") is partly borrowed from a play of Cervantes. Among the comedias de santos, or autos sacramentales, the one that gives the best idea of this class of plays, is that on "San Isidro," of Madrid. Gay scenes, broad farce, wars of stirring interest against the Moors, are intermingled with popular songs, the parody of old Moorish ballads, and a mixture of angels, demons, passion, envy, falsehood, and personifications. But through the whole runs the loving and devout character of the saint, giving it a sort of poetical unity. Most of these autos seem grotesque, but some are more uniformly grave. They always consist of the loa (or prologue), the entremes (or interlude), and the autos, or sacramental acts themselves.

Only a few remarks can be here offered on the spirit and style of Lope:—1. He is remarkable for the variety, as well as the number of his plays. 2. All other interests are made secondary to the interest of the story; thus his characters occupy a subordinate place. He sacrifices regularity and congruity to secure interest. But this was overlooked by his audiences. A comic underplot was introduced by him in all his plays, with the popular character of graciosos or drolls, giving parodies of the hero and heroines, as Sancho Panza does in the case of Don Quixote.

A chief secret of the success and charm of Lope is his wonderful power of versification. Italian octave stanzas are frequent; *terza rima* occurs in most sonnets; but he relied above everything on the old national ballad measure, both the proper romance, with asonantes, and the redondilla, with rhymes between the first and fourth lines, and between the second and third. He also introduced much old ballad poetry in his plays. As a general conclusion, it may be added that Lope de Vega's nature was of near kindred to the genius of improvisation. He dictated verses more rapidly than an amanuensis could take them down, wrote a whole play in two days, and was continually on the borders of the improvisatore's proper province.

The most noted of the early disciples of Lope de Vega was Guillen de Castro, captain of cavalry, and the author of twenty-eight plays still extant (born in 1567, of good family, and dying in great poverty, 1631). His most important plays were "Las Mocedades del Cid," both founded on the old ballads of his

country. The first of these plays became extensively known through Europe, and Corneille made it the basis of his brilliant drama of "The Cid." In some parts the Spanish is superior to the French version.

Luis Velez de Guevara, another imitator of Lope, was born at Ecija, in Andalusia, 1570, and, living almost entirely at Madrid, died there, 1644. Few of his plays have come down to modern times; but one of those preserved is supposed to be his best, "Mas pesa el Rey que la Sangre" ("King before Kin"). This is a deep tragedy, and is one of the most striking and solemn exhibitions of the modern theatre. The "Diana of the Mountains" is a poetical picture of the dignity, loyalty, and passionate form of character in the Spanish peasantry; and "Empire after Death" is a tragedy full of melancholy and idyllic softness, founded on the story of Iñez de Castro. The most striking imitator of Lope was Juan Perez de Montalvan, born at Madrid, 1602, and dying 1638, aged only thirty-six. His life was short, but brilliant. In 1632 he had composed thirty-six dramas and twelve autos. He has been deservedly called the firstborn of Lope de Vega's genius. Six of his plays are of the capa y espada class, in the first of the two volumes of his collected works. Four of the remaining six are historical. In his historical plays he endeavoured to maintain historical truth more than his contemporaries; but many of his autos are as wild and extravagant as anything in the Spanish drama. The only one of his plays that has obtained permanent popularity is his "Lovers of Tenvel." Several other dramatic writers appeared at this time. Tirso de Molina (died 1648); Mira de Mesara (1602-1635), a native of Guadix, in the kingdom of Granada; Joseph de Valdivielso flourished about 1607-1633; Antonio de Mendoza (about 1623-48) wrote much for the court; Ruiz de Alarçon, of Tasco, in Mexico (at Madrid in 1622, died 1639), a writer whose merit was undervalued. His best plays are "The Weaver of Segovia" and "Truth itself Suspected."

At this time the theatre became so attractive that ecclesiastics and the higher nobility were much engaged in writing dramas, sometimes anonymously. But the school of Lope had to encounter sharp opposition at this time—first, from the learned; and, secondly, from the Church. The learned wished to introduce a more classical type, while the Church was more justified in its opposition, on account of the improprieties of many of the plays. The upshot of this was that Mariana, in 1590, wrote an eloquent treatise, "De Spectaculis," against the theatre; and Philip II.,

dying, forbade all theatrical representations. But the drama was in too great favour with the people to be driven from the ground. The city of Madrid begged the theatres might be reopened; and Philip III., in 1600, laid the whole subject before a council of ecclesiastics and four of the principal lay authorities of the kingdom. The result was a permission to reopen the theatres, but with certain limitations as to the nature of the pieces, allowing representations only on Sundays and three other days of the week. These regulations have formed the secure basis of the Spanish stage ever since.

From the beginning of the seventeenth century, the popular Spanish drama was too strong to be subjected either to classical criticism, or ecclesiastical control.

The way had been prepared by these contests for the appearance of Vega's great rival and successor, Pedro Calderon de la Barca, the greatest glory of the Spanish drama.

Pedro Calderon de la Barca was of an old family, having estates in Val Carriedo, and certain biographers try to make out that he was connected in descent with some of the most ancient royal races. He was born at Madrid in 1601, and died May 25th, 1687, obtaining in his lifetime a popularity almost equal to that of Lope de Vega.

When only nine years old, Calderon was placed under the Jesuits, and retained the influence of his early impressions in after life. He afterwards went to Salamanca, where he studied with distinction, and became known as a writer for the theatre (1619). He was shortly after noticed in a complimentary manner by Lope de Vega, who enumerates him in his "Laurel of Apollo" among the crowd of poets born at Madrid.

About this time of his life, Calderon appears to have passed several years in military service. He was in the Milanese in 1625, and proceeded subsequently to the Netherlands, where a war was carried on disastrous to Spain, and displaying all the horrors of national and religious antipathy. It is evident that during his life in camps he was a close observer of men and manners, and the result of his varied experience is seen in his plays, in which many of his characters are represented as returning from the campaigns in Flanders. But after a few years of this active life, we find Calderon in the more congenial field of letters; and in 1632, Montalvan tells us that Calderon was already the author of many dramas.

On the death of Lope, in 1635, Calderon was regularly attached to the court of Philip IV., for the purpose of furnishing

dramas to be represented in the royal theatres. As a further honour, he was made a Knight of the Order of Santiago. Yet his very distinctions threw him once again into military life. At the very débüt of his brilliant career as a poet, a great insurrection in Catalonia, excited by France, required (1640) the attendance of the four great military orders to suppress it. Yet the King was so desirous to enjoy his services as poet, that he excused him from the field, begging Calderon to write another drama. The poet finished in great haste his "Contest of Love and Jealousy," and then, going to the army, he served loyally throughout the campaign.

After his return to Madrid, he received uniform testimonies of high royal favour, and until the death of Philip IV. had a controlling influence over whatever related to the drama.

Like Lope de Vega, he joined a religious brotherhood, in 1651, and two years later, the King named him chaplain of the chapel of the "New Kings," at Toledo. But as this kept him too much from court, he was created (1663) chaplain of honour to the King, while yet retaining his former place. He also became priest of the Congregation of St. Peter, and rose to its head, using his authority for fifteen years with gentleness and dignity.

But his accumulation of ecclesiastical dignities did not interfere with his dramatic fertility, and his fame was now so extended that he gathered together an ample fortune.

After the death of Philip IV. he appears to have declined in court favour; but he continued to write for the public theatres, the court, and the churches, and retained to the end of his life an extraordinary popularity. He was first buried, according to his will, without any pomp, at the church of San Salvador; but a more splendid funeral was celebrated a few days later, and his death was publicly noticed even at Naples, Valencia, Lisbon, Milan, and Rome. In 1840, his remains were removed to a splendid church at Atoche, where they repose.

It is recorded that Calderon, like Milton and Sophocles, was conspicuous for his personal beauty. An engraving, published soon after his decease, presents a venerable countenance, to which it is easy to supply the brilliant eye and gentle voice assigned to him, while he reminds the spectator of Shakespeare in the ample breadth of his finely-turned brow. In character he seems to have been benevolent and kindly. It is related that it was his practice to assemble his friends around him on his birth-days, and to recount to them amusing stories of his childhood. He enjoyed the patronage of many great personages, but especially

of the Duke Olivares, who appears to have been as much attracted to him by the sweetness of his disposition as by his genius.

It is remarkable that he hardly published anything of what he wrote. But, unfortunately, the booksellers issued so many imperfect versions of his plays, and so many pseudo-dramas were issued under his name, that he had occasion to complain bitterly of this injury; and, as a kind of check to this injustice, he gave, in 1680, a list of his authentic works, forming the proper basis for a knowledge of Calderon's dramatic works, consisting at that date of one hundred and eleven full length dramas, and seventy sacramental autos. Some of these have indeed been lost, so that there are now seventy-three sacramental autos, and one hundred and eight comedias.

Calderon has been rightly judged as less natural, but more noble than Lope. Even those of his plays which have most to do with common life, fascinate the reader with a kind of fanciful magic. The drama of Calderon is more poetical in its tone and tendencies than that of Lope, and shows more technical and skilful arrangement of incidents. In Calderon's happiest efforts, the reader seems lifted to another and more gorgeous world, where the scenery is illuminated with an unearthly splendour, and the feelings are so stirred by the motives and passions of the personages who pass before him, that he is deeply moved even before we enter into each part. The gayer portions of his drama are buoyant with life and spirit, and the graver and more tragic parts lift the reader unconsciously to brilliant heights of imagination.

This elevated tone of Calderon explains his merits and defects. He is, perhaps, less graceful and natural than Lope, and more prone to mannerism—the defect of his age. He repeats himself, and is sometimes wearisome, notwithstanding his wonderful richness of versification. But when he succeeds, his success is of no common character. He places before the reader only models of ideal beauty, perfection, and splendour—a world into which nothing should enter but the grand old Castilian virtues, heroism, courtly honour, generous self-devotion to loyalty, a reserved but passionate love.

He has been criticised as immoral in his tendency, in exaggerating the principle of family honour; but surely this is a fault on the right side, and his high estimate of honour founded on principle, is an immense advance upon the intrigues and adventures filling a large part of ancient and even modern tragedies and comedies.

But it is in his autos that the mind of Calderon is most fully expressed. His poetry is here a never-ending hymn of joy in the majesty of creation; he describes the productions of nature and art as if he beheld them for the first time in festal magnificence. It is like the first awaking of Adam; and, when the poet compares objects the most remote, such as the smallest and greatest, flowers and stars, all his metaphors bear on the mutual attraction between all created things; this delightful harmony being a refulgence of eternal, all-embracing love.

Calderon, in his best pieces, brings the reader into a land of enchantment, created by his genius, glowing with the lovely forms he has created, Clara and Dona Angela, or heroic forms, like Tuzani, Mariamne, and Don Ferdinand.

Classifying his works under the head of the passions, and commencing with love, his drama "Love survives Life" may be taken as a type of this class. The plot revolves round the struggle of Spain with the Moors, and Tuzani, the hero, as well as Clara Malec, the heroine, are Moors. The army of Don John of Austria is brought on the stage, in scenes of great dramatic effect, and the rest of the play is devoted to Tuzani's vengeance on the Spanish soldier who had murdered his wife Clara in his absence at a fortress which falls into the hands of the Spaniards. Terrible scenes—all the realities of war, and civil war—are brought forward in this play; but its fine points consist in giving us the image of pure, elevated love, contrasted with the wild elements of that age.

"The Physician of his own Honour" is as terrible an expression of jealousy and a high sense of family honour as the Othello of Shakespeare. The wife of Don Gutiere de Solis, a Spanish noble, is sincerely attached to her husband; but unfortunate accidents make her appear to be alienated from him. Don Gutiere, led away by false appearances, causes his wife to be bled to death by a surgeon, and when the matter is disclosed to the king, he is exonerated, on the score of family honour. "No Monster like Jealousy," is another type of this class of play.

A high sense of loyalty is the great motive principle of other plays of Calderon—for example, "The Firm-hearted Prince." The plot relates to the expedition of the Portuguese Infante Don Fernando against the Moors in Africa, in 1438. The story was found in the old Portuguese chronicles of Joam Alvares and Ruy de Pima. The main interest of the play relates to the trial of Don Fernando's patience and fortitude, in captivity among

the Moors. Refusing to be ransomed against the town of Ceuta, he is reduced to the position of a common slave. But Moorish generosity comes also into play in the piece, and the Moorish general offers to facilitate Don Fernando's escape. This occasions another self-sacrifice of the prince. He refuses to profit by the general's generosity, if his escape is at the expense of the Moor's honour. Meanwhile the sufferings of the prince are increased, but he will not yield. At length he dies of misery, but with a mind unshaken, and heroic constancy. Immediately after his decease, a Portuguese army arrives to rescue him, and in a grand scene the departed hero appears, in the costume of his religious and military order, and, torch in hand, beckons on the Christians to victory. Their efforts are crowned with success, and the remains of the hero are saved from Moorish contamination.

Of Calderon's *capa y espada* comedias, the most remarkable are, "Worse and Worse," "Better and Better," "Beware of Smooth Water," "First of all, my Lady," and "The Fairy Lady," a play full of ingenuity, and sparkling with life and spirit.

"The Scarf and the Flower" is another play of this class (date 1632), love-jealousies constituting the chief complications of the piece, which, like many of this class, shows great freshness and life, and a true courtly and graceful Castilian tone.

Calderon has high merit in style and versification, showing brilliancy of all kinds, indulging in rich variety of measures, Spanish and Italian, octave stanzas, terza rima, different forms of *redondillas*, ballad *asonantes* and *resonantes*, showing an extraordinary mastery over his language.

Of the religious plays of Calderon, one of the most remarkable is "The Purgatory of Saint Patrick." The play opens with a shipwreck; much of the scene is laid in Ireland; miracles of all kinds abound in it; but the grotesque and unseemly are introduced, including even the infallible *gracioso*, as rude and free spoken as any of his class, and a romantic plot. Yet there is nothing so offensive in this play as in the "Devotion to the Cross," which, to modern notions, presents features not accordant with morality. Few plays contain more of the spirit of the old Spanish mysteries than "The Wonder-working Magician," founded on the story of Saint Cyprian; and few have more effectually evaded the restrictions planned by the Church and Crown on the productions of the theatre.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DRAMA AFTER CALDERON.

AMONG the dramatists succeeding Calderon, and preceding the two Moratins, occur Antonio de Solio, Ag. Moreto, Franc. de Roxas, Ag. de Salazar, Alvaro Cubillo, Miguel de Barrios, Antonio de Zamora, Joseph de Canizares, till the time of imitations from the French by Cadabalso, and genuine Spanish comedy inaugurated by Yriarte.

This was the period of the lowest ebb of the Spanish drama, and a few remarks will suffice to characterise its features in these writers. The principal characteristic of this period is expressed by the term *cultismo*, which was given to the writers who claimed for themselves a peculiarly elegant and cultivated style of composition; and who, while trying to justify their pretensions, were betrayed into the most ridiculous extravagances, pedantry, and affectation. *Cultismo* is, in fact, a pedantic style, and was largely developed in Europe after the revival of letters. It had a special stronghold in Spain, and particularly at court; and, though combated by Lope, that great dramatist was unconsciously its victim.

The poet peculiarly deserving the charge of introducing and promoting cultism in Spain was Luis de Gongoza (1561). Accordingly, this corrupt style has often borne the name of Gongorism. Gongoza is remarkable for having introduced new words into his verses, especially from the ancient classical languages. "Pyramus and Thisbe," "Polyphemus," and other large poems of this author, required even commentaries to make them understood. Paravicino (died 1633), Anastasio Pantaleon (died 1629), Ulloa (about 1653), and others were generally devoted to this corrupt taste, which reacted on the drama, and as bad imitations of the French style soon after crept in, the drama and poetry generally were at a very low ebb about the time of Philip V. Even prose was deeply tainted with Gongorism at this time.

The accession of a prince like Charles III. marks the critical moment when Spanish literature reverted to healthier channels, chiefly through the influence of that excellent monarch. A man of discernment and energy, and experienced in men and affairs, during his government of Naples, extending over twenty-four years, he made many useful endeavours to restore a decaying

monarchy, for the national character, as well as literature, showed distinct symptoms of degeneracy at this time, partly to be attributed to the evils resulting from the inordinate greed of gold during the first period of the conquest of America. Fortunately, Charles appears to have comprehended his position, and he was in some respects successful in his reforms; but many abuses were beyond his reach.

His spirit and reforms had a considerable effect in advancing the general, and particularly the material prosperity of the land. But intellectual culture is slow in growth, and intellectual reform still more difficult. Nevertheless vigorous attempts were made to restore a taste for the old national poetry, and efforts were made to give a correcter taste to the national drama by a careful study of the best French and Italian models, such as Boileau. This plan was pursued with much success by the society surrounding the elder Moratin, who achieved considerable results in coupling the old Spanish spirit with a correct modern taste. Most of the contemporaries of the elder Moratin, Yriarte, and the rest, were too much tainted with French influence and philosophy to produce works of a thoroughly healthy tone, and even Moratin, with all his many merits, must be charged with too great a tendency to introduce Gallican fashions, and with injustice in his efforts to disparage the school of Lope and Calderon. There were two Moratins—father and son. The elder Moratin was of an old Biscayan family (born 1737, died 1780), was an adherent of the French school, modified by old Spanish literature, found many active followers, and devoted himself to reform the taste of his countrymen. He was the centre of a society of lively and congenial spirits, who made it a maxim never to talk of anything but the theatre, bull-fights, and poetry. These literary friends met in a circle, at the fonda or tavern of San Sebastian, where they maintained a club-room, and among them may be noticed Rios, author of an analysis of Don Quixote, Cadahalso, the poet; Yriarte, the fabulist; Ayala, the tragic actor, etc. The principal drama of the elder Moratin was his "Petimetra, the Female Fribble," (1764) divided into three jornadas, or acts, written sometimes in full rhymes, sometimes only in asonantes. The principal part in this play, Dona Geronima, is feebly drawn, though the versification is sometimes beautiful. This was the first *original* Spanish comedy formed on French models.

Moratin's "Hormesinda" (1770) was the first original Spanish drama that appeared in Spain under the canons of Corneille and

Racine. The plot is founded on the Arab invasion and the achievements of Pelayo, and written like another tragedy, "Lucretia" (in the French style), in irregular verse. His last tragedy, "Guzman the True" (1777), founded on the famous nobleman who preferred to have his son sacrificed rather than to surrender the fortress of Tarifa, has consistency, and more poetical power than any other piece of this author; yet it was not more successful, nor did it deserve more success than his other pieces.

Nothing noteworthy was done in comedy in the latter part of the reign of Charles III. But a change came over the Spanish stage under Charles III., represented by the opposition of the younger Moratin and La Huerta. A work, published by the elder Moratin, in 1762, "The Truth about the Spanish Stage," consisted of three spirited pamphlets, attacking the old drama generally, and the *autos sacramentales*, condemning these coarse exhibitions as blasphemous, while allowing the poetical merit of Calderon. This work of Moratin succeeded in causing a prohibition of the autos by regal edict, June 17, 1765, though they were never eradicated from the villages.

Everything was in a very low state in dramatic representation at this time. A blacksmith was the reigning critic; the scenery was a little improved under the minister Areada; but the pieces were still represented in open court-yards, with galleries and corridors round them. There was no proper cover to these court-yards, the awning being so imperfect that the rain soaked through, so that if a heavy shower came on, the performance was broken up, and the crowd driven home. But the great obstacle to the success of an improved drama was the number of writers who pandered to the low vulgar audiences of the day. Ramon de la Cruz (1731—1765), a government officer of good family, author of three hundred dramas; Sedano, Valladares, and Cometta Zuvala, were the principal of the indifferent playwrights of this period. But, as previously remarked, a change for the better took place under the younger Moratin and La Huerta.

Moratin the younger, born 1760, had great obstacles in his way to success and fame. The bad taste that had increased and prevailed in Spain, on the stage and throughout the domain of literature, since the middle of the sixteenth century, encountered sharp opposition from the correcter school founded on classical and French models. The elder Moratin had inaugurated this reform, which was zealously promoted by the younger Moratin, and prevailed at length, notwithstanding the vigorous antagonism

of cultism, Gongorism, and a general degeneracy of taste throughout the nation.

After the appearance of the younger Moratin's drama, entitled "The New Play" (1792), he secured a permanent place on the national stage, in defiance of the exasperated opposition of the old school. "The Female Hypocrite," written in 1791, and acted publicly in 1804, greatly increased his reputation, the plot revolving on the theme of a girl, made to assume, by the severity of her family, the appearance of being very devout. But the subject trenched on dangerous ground, and the play was forbidden by the Inquisition, which, however, had now so little influence that the patronage of Godoy, the Prince of Peace, Prime Minister of Charles IV., was sufficient to overrule its decision.

The last original effort of Moratin was "The Little Girl's Consent," a play acted in 1806. The general movement of this piece is very natural, and the plot is full of life and stir, which were always popular on the Spanish stage. This play raised the popularity of Moratin to the highest pitch. It was acted for twenty-six nights consecutively,—a matter very unusual with the fickle Spanish audiences of that day. All criticism was disarmed—the triumph of Moratin was complete. But it did not last long, for three years later began the terrible struggle against the insolent aggressions and intolerable oppressions of French ambition under Napoleon I. This struggle seemed to rouse up all the best virile energies of the nation into full fire and activity. It is evident that this rivetting drama of real life must of necessity paralyze the efforts of the drama and of general literature, for a time. Yet Moratin produced two spirited plays, one imitating Molière's "Ecole des Femmes" (1812), the other Shakespeare's "Hamlet," written in 1798, but never performed. The reputation of the younger Moratin rests on five published comedies; but these suffice to show that it was well deserved, though insufficient to destroy the evil influence of bad taste in the old masters among playwrights.

The drama in Spain had made progress since the accession of the house of Bourbon under Philip V. A correcter style of playwriting had found favour, especially with the cultivated classes, and actors of extraordinary merit had appeared from time to time, such as Damian de Castro, Maria l'Advenant, who delighted in the parts of Calderon, the Tirana, whose dramatic powers astonished the English actor Cumberland, and Maiguez, the friend of almost all the eminent Spanish men of letters of his time.

The greater part of the eighteenth century was taken up with the contest between two schools, the degenerate Spanish and the French imitators. On one side was low buffoonery, noise, and show, for the old spirit and life of the drama of the seventeenth century had departed. On the other, were sentimental, jejune comedies, partly stiff and cold translations from the French. The drama mirrored the spirit of the age, underneath a mass of coarseness, above a frothy artificiality. The present is a transitional age; all verges on revolution; the transition, politically and dramatically, is not yet over. The old Spanish drama of Calderon cannot be restored, nor is the school of Moratin strong enough to replace it. All points to new transformations in the republic of letters, as well as in that of office and law.

CHAPTER XV.

PROSE IN SPAIN SINCE THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

CERVANTES.

SPAIN, with many differences, presents certain analogies with Italy in the march of its literature. Thus, in both countries, prose as well as poetry were developed at an early period. This prose, which was cultivated with great results in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, began to degenerate especially about the middle of that latter period, principally through the influence of Balthazar Gracian (died 1652), who introduced Gongorism.

Of the earlier, purer, and more classical writers in prose may be noticed, Fernan Perez de Oliva, of Cordova (1553), the author of an Oration on the Dignity of Man (*Obras*, Madrid, 1717); Francisco Cervantes de Saavedra, A. de Morales, P. de Valles, Luis Mexia (died 1552), A. Bartol de las Casas (born 1474, died 1566), nobly energetic in advocating the rights of the oppressed Americans; Luis Ponce de Leon, a mystical writer of great eloquence and power; Juan Huarte (died 1590), author of "*Examen de Ingenios*," and Quevedo. The amount of chivalrous romances was quite overpowering in the sixteenth century, and most of them are intolerable to modern taste. It was to combat this extravagance that Cervantes launched into the world his wondrous invention of "*Don Quixote*," nor has any work of criticism in the whole annals of literature so completely succeeded in sweeping away the abuses it combated.

A closer attention must now be given to Cervantes, in some points the greatest literary genius of Spain. The family of

Cervantes was of Galician and noble extraction ; but the Castilian branch had sunk in its fortunes, in the sixteenth century, and the parents of Miguel were poor inhabitants of Alcala de Henares, a small but prosperous town, noted for its University, near Madrid. Miguel, the youngest of four children, was born, October, 1547.

It cannot be doubted that he received a careful education at his native place, then a noted University, founded by Cardinal Ximenes, and he speaks with pleasure, in his "Galatea," of "the banks of the famous Henares." We know little of this period of his life, except the pleasure he felt in seeing the theatrical representations of Lope de Rueda, that he wrote verses very young, and even picked up in the street torn scraps of paper to read. In fact, he pretends that the story of "Don Quixote" was discovered by him as waste-paper at a silk-mercator's. He says, personifying himself, "Cómo soy aficionado a leer aunque sean los papéles róticos de las calles, llevádo d'esta mi natural inclinacion, tome un cartapacio, etc."*—"Don Quixote," Parte I.) It is supposed that he continued his studies at Madrid, and that he attended the University at Salamanca for two years. His first production, as an author, was in a volume of verse, on the death of the unhappy Isabelle of Valois, wife of Philip II., to which Cervantes contributed six short poems (1569).

In 1570 he was chamberlain to Monsignore, afterwards Cardinal Aquaviva, at Rome (1570), and, in 1571, he appears to have found the romantic attraction of a crusade against the Turks too much to resist. The Pope, Philip II., and Venice, had set afloat a "Holy League," commanded by the chivalrous Don John of Austria, against the Turks. Cervantes, now twenty-three years old, served in the expedition as a common soldier ; and, speaking of this, he says, "that none make better soldiers usually than literary men." He continued honourably engaged in military service till 1575, and during these five years learnt many precious life lessons. He was present at the great sea-fight of Lepanto, October 7, 1571, when the progress of Turkish armies in the west received a death-blow ; and, though suffering from fever, he insisted on sharing in the action, and behaved with so much gallantry that he carried a proud and painful evidence of it to the grave ; for, besides two other wounds, he received one that disabled his left hand for the rest of his life. With other sufferers, he was conveyed to the hospital of Messina, and re-

* "As I am fond of reading even torn bits of written paper in the streets, moved by this natural bent, I took a fragment."

mained there till April 2, 1572, after which he served first under Marc Antonio Colonna, and in 1573, his regiment served against Tunis, in Sicily, and Italy, where he remained about a year at Naples.

In 1575 he embarked for Spain; but, on his return, September 26, he was captured by Algerine pirates, and taken to Algiers, where he passed five disastrous years. This period of his life is as stirring and pathetic as the best drama, and it may be said generally of Cervantes that few episodes are more romantic or moving than the vicissitudes of fortune through which he passed. At Algiers he served three masters in succession—two renegades and the Dey—all treating him with the greatest severity; especially when the authorities detected him in several attempts to rouse an insurrection among the Christian slaves.

The high spirit of Cervantes was so far from being broken by slavery, that it seemed to receive a higher tempering by the process. In one case he made an attempt to escape to Oran (then a Spanish settlement on the coast), but, being abandoned by his guide, he was forced to return. In another attempt he lay hid, with thirteen fellow-sufferers, in a cave by the sea-shore, and while waiting for rescue from sea, he provided for their wants during several weeks. At length he was basely betrayed, and then he took upon himself alone the whole of the penalty inflicted for the conspiracy.

Again, when he had formed a grand plan to raise all the Christian slaves in Algiers against their oppressors, and with many prospects of success, as the captives were 25,000 in number, the Dey declared that, if he could only keep that lame Spaniard well guarded, he should regard his slaves, his galleys, and his capital as safe. The generous and lofty spirit of Cervantes was shown on another occasion, when treachery defeated a scheme he had matured for rescuing sixty of his countrymen. Here, again, he announced himself as the sole author, and the willing victim. Accordingly, his life was constantly in danger; he was frequently threatened with the painful deaths by fire and impaling, and on one occasion, a rope was passed round his neck, to bring his noble spirit to confess his accomplices, but in vain.

But the time of rescue was at hand. His elder brother had been ransomed from Algiers three years before, and now his mother sacrificed all her little patrimony (to which charity had to make some additions) in order to set free Miguel.

On his return to Spain, Cervantes found his family reduced to poverty; and his proud spirit, fretting under those daily petty

stings and whips of adversity, to which Shakespeare feelingly alludes, and which are often far more fretting than wounds or slavery, entered the army again, and served in Portugal and at the Azores. This service made him acquainted with Portugal, of which he always speaks with affection—a very unusual thing with Spaniards of that age.

On his return to Madrid, he married (December 12th, 1584) a lady of good family, but poor, from Esquivias, near Madrid. It is evident that, though poor, they were happy and united, during a wedded life of thirty years, for his widow, at her death, desired to be buried by his side.

At Madrid, Cervantes, who had written his eclogue or pastoral, "Galatea" (1584), to win his lady, was engaged in writing for the theatre (twenty or thirty pieces), most of them irrecoverably lost; one of them, "El Trato de Argel," recounting his own experiences at Algiers. These plays have no plot, and show much confusion, yet they have some happy passages.

Finding life at Madrid too hard, Miguel, who had to support one of his sisters, went to Seville, then the great emporium for trade to America. At Seville he remained ten years (1588—1598), engaged in several obscure functions; first, as agent to Antonio de Guevara, commissary for the American fleets, then as collector of moneys due to Government. The latter employ was chiefly useful in causing him to make many journeys, and become familiar with the romantic scenery and the picturesque life and manners of Andalusia. It is supposed he was careless about money matters, and becoming indebted to Government about this time for a ridiculously small sum of money, he was cast into prison, and only released after three months, by a strong application to Government.

Cervantes made several attempts to obtain a Government appointment in America, by setting forth his services, but in vain (1590). He wrote very little at Seville; but this portion of his life, though little known, is important, as immediately preceding the publication of the first part of "Don Quixote." From Seville, he proceeded to Valladolid, where Philip III. then resided with the court; and at Valladolid we find he was very poor, for we have in his own handwriting an account for sewing done by his sister, who, having sacrificed everything to rescue him from captivity, had become dependent on him, and died in his family. At Valladolid, a stranger was killed in a street quarrel, near the house of Cervantes, and owing to suspicions resting on his family, he was cast into prison, in conformity with Castilian law,

and kept there till an investigation was made. In 1605, Cervantes gave out at Madrid the first part of "Don Quixote," which was so favourably received that it reached a second edition before the year was out. In 1609, Miguel joined the Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament, to which Quevedo, Lope de Vegas, and others, were attached; and, although the latter great poet, then in the zenith of his fame, appears to have treated the author of "Don Quixote" with a kind of lofty, though not unkindly condescension, the conduct of Cervantes to Lope seems to have been marked by much personal dignity, and to have been singularly honourable to him.

In 1613, Cervantes published his "Novelas Exemplares," most of which contain rich eloquence, and touches showing his peculiar talent. The most noted are "The Little Gipsy Girl," and "Riconete y Certadillo." In 1614, he published his "Viage en Parnaso," a satire, in *terza rima*; a work remarkable because, in the fourth chapter, he complains with gaiety and good humour, of the poverty and neglect with which his works had been rewarded.

The eight plays produced by Cervantes at this time were in a style, and in forms of verse, already fashionable and settled. But Cervantes had not dramatic talent, and it must be confessed that several of his comedies fell below what might have been expected from him.

But his life was now fast drawing to an end. In October, 1615, he published the second part of "Don Quixote," and, in the dedication, alludes to his failing health, and adds that his life would not probably continue beyond a few months. Yet his spirits never forsook him. They had survived his sufferings at Lepanto, at Algiers, and in Spanish prisons; and, verging on seventy years, with wasted strength and sinking frame, he produced the second part of "Don Quixote"—another argument, if it were wanted, of how the immortal soul defies the barriers of the flesh. Moreover, with one foot in the grave, he produced with undiminished vivacity, his romance of "Persiles and Sigismunda," and at Esquivias, where he had received a small estate with his wife, he wrote a charming preface, in which he describes himself as overtaken, on his ride back to Madrid, by a medical student, who gave him good advice about the dropsy, then afflicting him, and to whom he replies that his pulse warns him he will not live beyond Sunday. "Thus," he adds, "farewell to jesting, farewell my merry humours, farewell my gay friends, for I feel that I am dying, and have no desire but soon to see you happy in the *other life*."

In this temper he prepared for death, attired in the Franciscan habit, his feelings of vivacity and personal gratitude not deserting him to the end. After receiving extreme unction, April 18th, he wrote his dedication to "*Persiles and Sigismunda*," marked in an extraordinary degree both by his natural humour and the solemn thoughts of the moment. He died in perfect serenity, April 23rd, 1616. He was buried, at his desire, in the convent of the Nuns of the Trinity; but when the convent was subsequently removed, all trace of the ashes of this great genius was lost. Yet little matters, in the case of one who had so triumphantly shown the superiority of mind over this shadowy house of clay, and to whom the lines of Horace apply with fullest force:—

*Exegi monumentum aere perennius
Regalique situ pyramidum altius.*

ANALYSIS OF "DON QUIXOTE."

This monument of imperishable fame is the "History of the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance and his faithful Squire, Sancho Panza."

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are brought before the reader as such living realities, that the gaunt, crazy, and dignified knight, and his rotund, humorous squire, are bodied forth in the imagination of men with greater clearness than any other creations of genius. The great poets—such as Dante and Shakespeare—rise, no doubt, to loftier heights; but Cervantes has shown himself of kindred to all times, lands, and classes, and has received a tribute of sympathy and admiration from the universal spirit of humanity.

To have a true estimate of what he effected, it is essential to call to mind the empire then exercised by the tales of chivalry over the imaginations of men. The fanaticism for these romances was so great in Spain in the sixteenth century, that it became a cause of alarm to men of sound sense. The mischief caused by this class of books is alluded to frequently, among others, by Luis de Granada; and Guevara, a learned courtier of Charles V., states, "that men did nothing in his time, but read such shameful books as "*Amadis de Gaula*," "*Primaleon*," "*Tristan*," etc. Many who read these extravagancies, took them to be real, and at length the evil was felt to be so great that, in 1553, they were prohibited from being printed and sold in the American colonies; and, in 1555, the Cortes demanded that the prohibition should be extended to Spain.

To destroy such a passion was no easy matter. Yet Cervantes succeeded, for no book of chivalry was written after the appearance of "Don Quixote" in 1605—a solitary instance of the power of genius to destroy at a single blow a flourishing department of literature of a great and proud nation.

The plan pursued by Cervantes to carry out his end was simple and effective. He takes a country gentleman of La Mancha, the type of Castilian honour and enthusiasm, full of dignity and gentleness, loved and trusted by all round him, but completely crazed by reading the romances of chivalry. After fitting himself with armour strange to his century, he takes as squire a credulous, ignorant peasant, of great good humour, and full of wise saws and sayings; but a glutton and a liar. With this escort, and mounted on a sorry steed, Rosinante, he issues forth to encounter a series of ridiculous adventures, magnified by his heated fancy into terrible and heroic episodes. Tilting at wind-mills, conceived to be formidable giants, converting inns into castles, turning galley-slaves into oppressed gentlemen, charging flocks of sheep as if they were powerful armies, he passes through a series of absurdities, described with admirable simplicity in the plain language of prose, made the more telling by its contrast with the splendid illusions and lofty dignity of the hero. The catastrophe is unavoidable. The knight and his squire, after going through countless ridiculous discomfitures, are brought home, like insane persons, to their native village, where they are left at the end of the first part.

The second part, though written by Miguel in advanced life, is even better than the first (published eight years before), and written somewhat hastily, in consequence of the appearance of a gross attempt at criticism and condemnation, in a spurious and supposititious Second Part, put forth about this time by a man named Avellaneda. This second part is full of freedom and vigour, and the genius of Cervantes seemed to come out in stronger light in proportion as he dwelt upon his favourite characters. Thus, the adventures of Don Quixote in the castle of the Duke and Duchess, who indulge him to the fulness of his eccentricities, Sancho Panza's administration of his Island of Barataria, the dreams of the Cave of Montesinos, the mock-heroic hospitalities of Don Antonio Moreno, and the final defeat of the knight, are masterly. In short, everything in this second part shows that the strong manly sense of the author, and his insight into character, had ripened since he had begun the work.

The great expressions of his original power are Don Quixote

and Sancho Panza. He delights to put them prominently forward. They evidently grow in his favour as he advances, till at length the knight shows so noble a nature, so much gentleness and delicacy, so high a sense of honour, and so strong a love for what is noble and good, that the reader is almost as grieved as the rest of the family when they lose him.

It may be admitted that the work has defects. In places it seems to have been planless, full of contradictions and incongruities. The work is supposed to refer to a remote age, and to be written by an Arabian author; yet the story shows him plainly to be a contemporary of Cervantes. Again, he introduces a series of stories recited in a company, of such length that they must have occupied the whole night. Yet he adds, at their conclusion: "It began to draw towards evening." He often calls the same individual by different names; he puts Sancho Panza seven times on his mule, after it had been stolen by Givés de Passamonte; then he tries to correct his blunder, and finishes by laughing at the whole thing.

How unpardonable such errors would appear to many modern critics with whom an occasional repetition, or a fractional aberration, is sufficient to brand and blacken the finest genius!

The fact is that Cervantes belonged to that high order of inspiration, whether in art or in authorship, where many of the best points result from deviation or violation of rule, and disregard of mechanical details. Beethoven's beauties are always fringing discord, and Newton was very careless in his additions.

But the towering greatness and glory of Cervantes are best seen by a juxtaposition of his character and his work. We should remember that his admirable romance was not the product of youthful vivacity, or of a happy course of life, when his spirits were buoyant and his hopes high; but, with all its irresistible humour, its sunny views of man, its generous trust in virtue and goodness, it was the creation of his old age, at the end of a life marked at every stage by disappointments, depressing struggles, and trying calamities. Begun in prison, it was finished while death was knocking at his door. Bearing this in mind, our admiration for the work merges in veneration for the character of the author, and heartfelt thanks are due to him to have taught men in his life and work never to despair in adversity, nor to deface the beauty of the immortal spirit by sacrificing its serenity to disputes with detractors.

Of the prose since Cervantes little need be said. Old Mariana,

the Jesuit historian, is quaint, credulous, but readable, making the Iberians direct descendants in genealogy from the men of the Ark, and seeing St. James, the national hero, fighting in half the battles against the Moors.

Antonio de Solis is an elegant writer, and gives a pleasing account of the conquest of Mexico.

"Gil Blas," though claimed by the Spaniards, was evidently written by Le Sage.

The mystical writers of Spain are beautiful in thought, and often very eloquent, especially St. Theresa, Luis de Granada, and De Puente; and her scholastic writers in Latin, like Suarez and Vives, are remarkable for depth and learning.

Among recent political histories, that of Count Toreno, describing the war against Napoleon I. (1808—1814), is one of the most able and entertaining, in a good narrative style, and with much patriotic feeling.

CHAPTER XVI.

PORTUGAL.

THE culture and national literature of Portugal are closely connected with those of Spain; but it is inferior in most branches of poetry, except the epic, in which Camoens stands pre-eminent over all writers in the Peninsula and France. The points in which Portuguese literature is specially inferior to the Spanish, are copiousness and variety. It attained its greatest height in the sixteenth century, the great epoch of national activity and enthusiasm after the subjugation of the East Indian coastlands. The period of its decay is marked by the subjugation of Portugal under Spanish sway (1580); and when she recovered her independence in 1640, the evidences of national exhaustion were apparent; nor could a more energetic national spirit be revived by the caprice and violent measures of the minister Pombal in the 18th century.

Popular education was, for the most part, entirely neglected, and the laws of the language have been insufficiently studied and analyzed. Yet Portuguese has several claims on our attention and interest. Though resembling the Spanish, the language is softened, and more contracted; the contraction from Spanish being effected chiefly by the suppression of the consonants,

especially those in the middle of a word.* The Portuguese appear to be justified in claiming for their language the title of "*Filha primogenita del Latin*." It is probable that, after the Gothic conquests in Spain, the Roman subjects were more numerous in the western provinces of the peninsula, for the Portuguese bears a stronger affinity than the Castilian to the Latin, and preceded it in point of time. In fact, it appears that, at a time when the Spanish people had not yet begun to write in the vulgar tongue, Portuguese could boast of a particular dialect already applied to poetical composition.

A few words on the development of Portuguese nationality may precede the sketch of its literature.

The struggle with the Moors developed earnest and early chivalry, as in Spain; and this spirit is reflected in the early ballads of Portugal. A strong national feeling resulted, and supported the kings and rulers in the extension of their dominions to remote regions in Africa and India. Thus a spirit of adventure was fostered, and gave all the elements for an epic. Imitations of classical and Italian models gave the form, a fine language was at hand, and Camoens, the poet of Portugal, followed.

LUIS DE CAMOENS.

The great epic writer of Portugal presents some points of resemblance to Epaminondas. He is the solitary genius of his country raising its national glory to be equal to the greatest of all times. He presents, in another respect, a likeness to Cervantes, the greatest writer, and one of the greatest characters, in Spanish history. Serving their country gloriously, and both suffering severely in her defence, they were both culpably neglected in their life by their ungrateful countrymen, and passed their days in prisons, in poverty, and in painful struggles. But the life of Camoens is a still more dismal illustration of the neglect of genius than the biography of the author of "*Don Quixote*." Indeed history presents few instances of so consistently a losing game as that offered by the life of Camoens. Disgrace, shipwreck, disappointment, poverty, ingratitude track him all his days, and their close is the climax filling up his

* Thus, *dolor* becomes *dor*; *celos*, *ceos*; *mayor*, *mor*, etc. Again, the letter *l* seems to be generally disliked, the Portuguese changing it into *r*, as *blando*, *brando*; *playa*, *praja*. *Ll* becomes *ch*, as in *chegar* for *llegar*; *cheo* for *lleno*. The Spanish *h* reverts in Portuguese to the Latin *f*; thus, the Spanish *hijo* is in Portuguese *filho*; *hidalgo*, *fidalgo*.

measure of bitterness, at sight of the discomfiture and subjugation of his beloved country under Philip II. of Spain. His life is another tear-stained page added to the pedigree of genius, and intended to teach men in burning characters that, in the distribution of gifts, the godlike crown is ever attended with thorns, and that the children of a higher inspiration can only gaze upon the higher light and beauty, at the cost of earthly comforts and lower treasures.

Luis de Camoens belonged to a noble, though not a wealthy family; the son of Simon de Camoens, who perished, shipwrecked on the coast of India, commander of a ship of war. The usual date assigned to his birth is 1529 (others give 1525). His mother, Anna, was likewise of noble birth. Camoens pursued his studies at the University of Coimbra, where he appears to have become familiarly acquainted with the history and mythology then in repute. He also wrote some sonnets, but without obtaining the approbation of the poets of the day, who, while aiming at the highest classical perfection, viewed the rising genius with pity and contempt.

On quitting Coimbra he went to Lisbon, where he became attached to Catherina de Atayde, a lady of the court. But his means of subsistence appear to have been small at this time, and he soon after volunteered into the Portuguese fleet, uniting—not without pride—the character of hero and poet, and continuing at intervals to court the attentions of the muse. Like Cervantes, Camoens had much personal courage, and, in an engagement before Ceuta, in which he greatly distinguished himself, he had the misfortune to lose an eye. Returning to Lisbon, he hoped to receive the reward that had been refused him as poet; but the world turned the cold shoulder to the child of genius, no one showed any disposition to serve him. All his efforts to obtain distinction in praiseworthy pursuits were thwarted, and he was almost reduced to penury. With his grand epic's soul—a treasury of beauty and sublimity, the seat of lofty patriotism—he was despised and overlooked by the country he loved. Stung by this neglect, he exclaimed, like Scipio, "*Ingrata patria, nec ossa quidem habebis!*" and he resolved to leave it again. Accordingly he embarked for the East Indies in 1553, the squadron consisting of four vessels, three of which foundered, only one—that which carried Camoens—reaching Goa in safety. But Camoens did not obtain employment, as he had hoped, at Goa, and only succeeded in joining a company of volunteers, sent by the Viceroy of India to the King of Cochin.

Most of the companions of Camoens fell victims to the deadly climate, and though Camoens survived it, being still without resources, he joined an expedition against the pirates of the Red Sea, and passed a winter in the Island of Ormuz, where he had time to complete a portion of his poems. Every object he beheld seemed to rouse poetic images in his soul, and his love of country revived in full force. But, like all characters in which a deeper sense of justice, and fountain of generosity are found, disgusted at the abuses of the government, he wrote a bitter satire against it, entitled the "*Disparates na India*," or, "*Follies in India*," to the grievous mortification of the Viceroy, who banished the unfortunate lover of honesty and truth to Macao (on the coast of China), whence he visited the Moluccas.

But nowhere did he meet with merited success, while, in one hand he carried the sword, and in the other his books—

"N'huma maõ livros, n'outra ferro et aço,
N'huma maõ sempre a espada, n'outra a pena."

He was at length reduced by necessity to accept the situation of commissary for the effects of the deceased: *Provedor mor dos defuntos*, at Macao.

It was during a residence of five years at Macao, that Camoens completed the great epic which has made his country glorious among the nations. A sort of grotto is still pointed out on the highest part of the isthmus uniting Macao to the Chinese continent, commanding a splendid view over both seas, and the lofty mountains that rise above the shores. In this "*Grotto of Camoens*," as it is still called, the great poet is said to have invoked the Epic Muse. Soon after, the new Viceroy, Constantino de Braganza, allowed him to return to Goa; but he was shipwrecked on the passage at the mouth of a river named by some biographers the *Gambia*.

It was on this occasion that Camoens saved himself on a plank, and of all his little property, he only succeeded in preserving his "*Lusiad*," saturated with the waves as he bore it above his head, like Cæsar with his Commentaries, swimming to the shore. But he only emerged from the raging waves to plunge into greater trouble among the angry tide of his fellow-men. He was accused of malversation in discharging his functions at Macao, and he was suffered to linger in prison, though he victoriously refuted the charge. He was still detained in captivity by the claims of his creditors, till at length, assisted by some sympathisers, he was set free, and able to take his passage home.

In 1569, he landed at Lisbon, penniless as he had left it, unlike so many of his countrymen who so often amassed immense treasure in the East, even by the most unscrupulous means.

His usual evil fortune attended Camoens on his return. He found Portugal afflicted with a destructive plague, and no one could give any attention to his immortal poem. King Sebastian, then a minor, though soon after betrayed into his fatal expedition to Africa, allowed the great epic to be dedicated to him, and gave the poet a miserable pension of fifteen milrees (five pounds) a year.

Henceforth the life of Camoens was a terrible struggle against poverty. To this period of his biography belongs the touching episode when, being frequently in want of daily bread, a black servant, who had followed him from India, was in the habit of begging alms for his master from door to door, to obtain a precarious subsistence for the great man who, with Dante and Milton, ranks as the greatest epic poet since the ancients. Admirable lesson to this age of strikes and grumbling servants, when all bonds of affection and sympathy between master and employed seem loosened, and well-nigh parted!

But greater evils were in store for the unhappy Camoens, and how should it be otherwise? For wherever the thoughtful man turns, in his progress across the page of history, he is greeted by the spectacle of suffering genius and martyred greatness. In Greece, it is Socrates and Phocion made to drink the hemlock; at Rome, Seneca and Pharseas caused to open their veins; at Florence, Dante made to pass his life in exile; at Ferrara, Tasso declared a lunatic; Cervantes throughout his life a prisoner or a pauper, and Camoens, with his epic on the shelf, dying broken-hearted in a hospital! For such was the end of this great genius. The unfortunate king Sebastian, and the whole chivalry of Portugal, had perished in the battle of Alcaçar el Grande (1578); with him expired the royal house, and the glory of the Portuguese nation was suddenly eclipsed by the encroachments of Philip II. of Spain, who annexed Portugal to his dominions. This was too much for the ardent, patriotic Camoens, who was seized with a violent fever, and carried off in 1579, passing his last days in a hospital, and in the society of monks.

No monument was raised to his memory till sixteen years after his death. The first edition of the "*Lusiad*" is of 1572; the most splendid is the monumental and highly-decorated work printed at Paris, and issued gratuitously by D. Jose Maria de Souza Botelho (1817, folio).

Camoens produced other works of considerable merit, particularly sonnets, but his fame and greatness rest on "Os Lusíadas," to which we must give some attention.

The subject of this poem was altogether national, and in this he agrees with the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*. But, like his great prototypes, Camoens not only embraced all the illustrious actions of his countrymen; he added whatever of noble and heroic achievement is presented by historical narration or legend. Vasco de Gama is not really the hero of the poem, as has been imagined; his country is the hero, as may be seen from his opening passage:—

"As armas e os Barões assinalados
Que da occidental praja Lusitana
Por mares nunca d'antes navegados,
Passaram ainda além da Toprobana :—"

and again:—

"E também as memórias gloriosas
D' aquellos reis que foram dilatando
A fé, o imperio. . . ."

To appreciate the work of Camoens, it must be remembered that no proper historical epic had then appeared in a modern tongue, for Dante's poem scarcely belongs to this class. The "Orlando" of Ariosto was the work of a romantic, not an epic writer; and the "Gerusalemme" of Tasso only appeared the year after the death of Camoens. The "Lusiad" was also composed for the most part in India.

Italian influence may be traced in his poem, and in the heroic iambic, the rhymed octave stanzas of Ariosto, which he chose in preference to the *verso sciolto* of Tasso. But Camoens has added an element of passionate tenderness and visionary passion, which the more stoical ancients thought beneath the dignity of an epic. The great point that forms his special glory and distinction from the Italian poets, is the spirit of national love and pride breathing throughout the "Lusiad."

The book was written at a happy moment for the inspiration of the poet. His country had reached the pinnacle of its fame, and vast new horizons had been opened to the mind and the enterprize of Europe. The grandest side of the poem, and of the poet, is seen in the fact that his patriotic spirit never flagged amidst neglect and official persecution, and that his whole unhappy life was given up to the erection of a monument to his country's fame. Thus, the noblest and best affections of man

* See Appendix F.

go along with him, and the reader loves his country because Camoens loved it so well and to the last.

Nevertheless, he had a difficult theme to control. To him the past, the present, and the future were made to blend with the national glory. This threw into the shade the nominal hero, and prevented the poet from expatiating on the beauties and novelties of Libya and India. It is conceived that the very theme of Tasso lent enchantment to his songs, while it is the genius of Camoens that confers lustre on his subject—in this establishing the supremacy of his genius. The Portuguese epic presents long and tedious chronological details, but so happily interwoven with his subject that they only call up the noblest memories.

Camoens was fully aware that the lofty nature of his theme required him to rise above the style of Ariosto, and appears to have proposed to himself Virgil as a model of style and treatment. And this has led him to certain defects. The love of the classical had begotten a spirit of pedantry, which would now be insupportable, and led even Camoens to deal largely in mythological fictions, introducing Venus, Mars, and Minerva as symbols of love, valour, and wisdom. Nor has he avoided the incongruity of mixing up these heathen elements with Christian characters. The same spirit that led to this unnatural combination in Italian writers of the time of Leo X., caused Camoens to represent the Almighty Father, the Virgin, and the Saints as co-operating in the work of Portuguese conquest, displaying a revolting inconsistency when adjoined to the interference of Pagan deities.

The "*Lusiad*" is shorter than most epics, containing 1102 stanzas in ten cantos. The first canto introduces Jupiter, who informs the gods of Olympus that the Portuguese were to surpass the glories of the Persians, Greeks, and Romans. Bacchus opposes their progress in India, and Venus sides with them. This contention is described in a very brilliant passage:—

"Qual austro feu ou Boreas, na espessura
De sylvestre arvoreda . . .
. . . Tal andava o tumulto levantado." . . . *

Vasco de Gama appears in the forty-fourth stanza, and the rest of the canto is taken up with his progress round Africa, to Mozambique, with the treachery of Bacchus, and the support of Venus. In the second canto Gama is almost lured to destruc-

* See Appendix E.

tion at Mombaca, but rescued by Venus, for whose consolation Jupiter recounts the future glory and conquests of the Portuguese in the East. The king of Melinda receives Vasco hospitably, and the hero, at his request, gives a long account of his past adventures, and of the history of his country. Vasco's account of his own adventures by sea, and of his discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, is full of interest, when it is considered how perilous was the work of distant navigation in those ages. One of the finest episodes in this canto is also that of the unhappy Inez de Castro.

After the conclusion of the story of Vasco, Camoens continues the thread of the story in his own person. While Bacchus is preparing to let loose a terrible tempest upon them, the Portuguese are employed in telling amusing stories on board; one of them, called "The Twelve Knights of England," relating to a tournament with eleven Portuguese knights, who naturally win the victory. The tempest at sea is admirably described by one who had evidently a real knowledge of the terrible action of the winds and waves when roused to fury.

At length, the boy at the mast-head cries, "Land!" and they reach Calicut, in India. The seventh book gives a not very exact account of India, and in the eighth is a terrible insurrection of the Mahometans of Calicut against the Christians. After many dangers, the Portuguese sail again for Europe, and, on their way, are regaled and refreshed by Venus on enchanted islands, and comforted by magical announcements of sirens relating to the future conquests of Portugal, in which the great doings of Albuquerque in the East are duly set down—doings full of atrocities, like the Spanish conquests in America, but excused and admired by the spirit of a more barbarous age. To these are added the exploits of Magalhaens, and other astonishing prophecies. The poet winds up with a speech of Thetis, and his own address to king Sebastian: the most touching passage of this effusion being the allusion to his own neglect:—

"Naõ mais, Musa, naõ mais, que a lyra tenho
Destemperada, e a voz enronquecida
E nao de canto, mas de ver que venho
Cantar a gente surda e endurecida."*

* "No more, my Muse! no more! my lyre unstrung
Is out of tune, and hoarse is grown my voice,
And not with song; but from seeing that I have sung
To people deaf, obdurate, without taste or choice."

CHAPTER XVII.

OTHER PORTUGUESE WRITERS.

THE most remarkable of the contemporaries or followers of Camoens were Rodriguez Lobo and Jeronymo Cortereal. The former was born about the middle of the sixteenth century, at Leiria, in the province of Estremadura. He was educated at the University, but passed most of his life in the country, cultivating the rural muse, and was unfortunately drowned in the Tagus, whose waters he had often celebrated in his poems. His works are of three classes, forming a book of pastoral romances, another of fugitive poems, and a third on philosophy. His pastoral romances are only a kind of frame in which he suspends his bucolic productions. There was a perfect rage for this kind of works at that time in Portugal. But it would be almost impossible for a modern reader to wade through a fourth of the insufferably tedious romances of Lobo. Yet some poetic effusions interspersed here and there may bear comparison with Metastasio. These effusions show that the incomplete rhymes, or verses termed *assonancias*, supposed to be the peculiar distinction of the Castilian, are also employed in Portuguese poetry. Lobo also attempted an immense pastoral romance on the great national hero, Nuño Alvarez Pereira, in twenty cantos, in octave verse. But the poem is totally wanting in spirit and invention. His fugitive pieces are chiefly eclogues, introducing philosophical and moral dissertations; and his *Corte na Aldea e Noites de Inverno* had a marked influence, by giving a taste for a Ciceronian style, and long periods, in which, like Pietro Bembo, his Italian contemporary, he thought more of the harmony of sentences than of ideas.

Jeronymo Cortereal began to flourish about the close of the life of Camoens. His life, like that of the author of the "Lusiad," was full of adventure and trial. For, joining the profession of arms to that of letters, he followed Don Sebastian to Africa, was made prisoner at Alcacer, and when set free, after long and extreme sufferings, he found Portugal subjugated by the arms of Philip II. of Spain. On this he retired to his family estate, and devoted his time to the composition of historical epics, written with a fine poetic spirit, and devoted to his country's glory. One of these, on the battle of Lepanto, was written in Spanish, but another, relating to the disastrous history of Manuel de Sousa Sepulveda, which also furnished a beautiful episode to the pen of Cervantes, was in Portuguese.

The story is founded on fact, and relates the shipwreck, sufferings, and death of Sousa and Leonora (an ancestor of the poet), with their children, wandering along the shores of Africa, near the Cape of Good Hope, in their efforts to reach a Portuguese settlement at Mozambique. The struggles of these unhappy people are so nobly resolute and heroic, as to elicit the reader's mingled feelings of admiration and pity. The description of this terrific journey must of necessity be interesting from its mere truth, without considering the genius of the historian. The incidents of the voyage are depicted in the most charming colours; but unfortunately Cortereal thought to embellish them still more by introducing the machinery of Grecian mythology. The shipwreck is described with a good deal of power in the seventh and eighth cantos. And now he proceeds with his narrative in a more natural strain. We accompany 154 Portuguese, capable of bearing arms, and 230 slaves, with some sick and wounded as they land from the wreck. But few provisions have been saved, the coast appears sterile, and the Caffres show themselves hostile.

Sousa, forming his plan to reach the settlement of Mozambique, commences his march in proper order to guard against surprise. But their path is obstructed by woods, mountains, and rivers: they diverge from their course, their provisions are exhausted, and many overcome by heat, thirst, and sickness, remain behind and await their destiny.

After fourteen days of painful march, they are attacked by the Caffres, whom they repulse with some loss. They then continue their march through a pathless waste for three months, passing over 300 leagues, exposed to all manner of evils, sometimes feeding on the half putrid carcasses of animals found dead in the desert.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth cantos, one of the band, Pantaleon de Sa, is conducted to the mysterious cave of an enchanter, who explains to him the history of the renowned characters of Portuguese history. Arrived on the territory of a friendly negro king, attempts were made to detain them, but they continued their journey, and at length got astray in a desert. They are near their destination, but the heroic soul of Sousa at length breaks down at sight of his wife's and children's sufferings. Pantaleon de Sa, after a thousand perils, reaches a Christian vessel and his native land; but most of the soldiers are devoured by wild beasts and perish in the desert. Sousa remains with his wife and infants, and seventeen slaves, till, having consumed all his resources, the Caffre king of the district forces him to pro-

ceed. At length he reaches the shore of the ocean, but only to be attacked by a band of Caffres, who strip them of their clothes, and leave them to perish of want.

The closing episode is touching. His partner and one of the babes sink, he is prevented from suicide by a holy resignation, and the wild beasts at length put an end to his torments.

Another epic of Cortereal, the "Siege of Dia," a place valiantly defended in India by Mascarenhas, though imitating Trissino in iambic measure, without rhyme, is very superior to the "Italia Liberata," in splendour of imagination and force of poetic colouring.

Two other epics which, in the opinion of the Portuguese, approach nearest to the elevated character of Camoens, are the "Ulysses" of Castro, and the "Malacca Conquistada" of Francisco de Sa y Menezes. They had the merit of directing the attention of the Portuguese to the glorious annals of their country, and Lobo may be said to have done much to form the historians of Portugal. In the succeeding age, the first place among Portuguese poets must be assigned to Manoel de Faria y Souza, who enjoyed a very brilliant reputation (born 1590), and Antonio Barbosa Basellar (between 1610 and 1663).

Souza, besides prose works, was the voluminous author of "Sonnets and Eclogues," some of which show grace and feeling, but the greater part of his works were in Spanish. Basellar wrote a poem in defence of the House of Braganza, and a description of melancholy elegies, named *sandades*, full of graceful and sentimental language; but also of endless repetitions of false sentimentalism. He also produced a short poem, intended as a parody of Gongozo. Souza appears to have been a successful man of business; Basellar left the court of the Muses to devote himself to jurisprudence; and a poetess of some merit at this time, Sister Violanta de Ceo, was a nun. Unhappily, Gongorism* became now dominant throughout the Peninsula, and may be detected especially in the *sandades* of Simao Torezao Coelho, Doctor of Laws, in Duarte, Ribeiro de Macedo, and Fernam Correa de la Cerda, who died bishop of Oporto.

The Portuguese colonies, since the seventeenth century, have added some names to the list of Portuguese poets, including Francisco de Vasconcellos, born at Madeira, and whose sonnets are more free from bad taste than most of that age; though Gongorism appears in his fable of "Polyphemus and Galatea." Andrea Nunez de Sylva was a Brazilian poet, who died a Theatine monk

* See Sketch of Spanish Literature, p. 81.

in Portugal. His devotional pieces are among the best productions of the age.

The only dramatic writers who appeared in Portugal before 1668, were Gil Vicente and Miranda, already mentioned. The loss of national independence created a great degeneracy in the national character. Several efforts toward a literary revival were made under John V. (1705—1750); the Portuguese Academy of Languages was formed 1714, that of History 1720, but they did not effect much. The Marquis of Pombal, though a savage despot, turned his iron will to forward the progress of knowledge. An Academy of Science was founded before 1792, and continued to exert a salutary influence over the drama and the taste of the nation.

Francisco Xavier de Meneses, Count of Ericeyra, born 1673, was a man of varied talents, and one of the most remarkable characters and poets of Portugal in the eighteenth century. He served in several campaigns, attained the rank of general, became, in 1714, the patron and secretary of the Portuguese Academy, and died in 1744, after having published an epic, entitled the "*Henriqueide*." The study of the criticisms of Boileau had, by this time, produced a salutary effect on the taste of the people of the south, and it is certain that the Count of Ericeyra had a far more correct taste and higher character than his predecessors. If his epic fell short of the highest class of poems, it must be attributed rather to the degenerate and inert state of the national fervour. Vasco de Gama is his hero; but the poet diverges frequently into tedious historical narrations. There is no fire, no inspiration in this work as in the "*Lusiad*." The events commemorated in the "*Henriqueide*" are correctly described, all the poetical rules are carefully observed; but all is expressed in a tone little raised above prose. The hero of the poem, Henry of Burgundy, was the founder of the Portuguese monarchy; and the action of the poem is devoted to the Portuguese conquests over the Moors, narrated in twelve cantos and in stanzas of octave verse.

The poet strove to imitate the great classical poets, and many imitations of the ancient and later epics are found; but he lacks their fire, his whole poem is chilled with insufferable coldness, and the beauty of the versification cannot atone for the want of soul and life.

About this time the drama began to revive at Lisbon; first as mixed plays, half opera, half recitative. The first pieces were written by an obscure and illiterate Jew, Antonio José, and

showed the coarseness resulting from his rank and position. But a vein of real gaiety and humour gave life to the Portuguese stage, and a national drama seemed about to be established, when José was seized by the Inquisition and burnt by an *auto da fé* (1745).

Many attempts were made in the eighteenth century to establish a Portuguese drama. Among the most active of these promoters of the only class of poetry in which Portugal appeared deficient, was a great imitator of Horace, Antonio Correo Garcao, who published critical works on dramatic writing; and the Countess de Vimieiro, author of "*Osmia*" (published 1795), a drama displaying a singular purity of taste, exquisite delicacy of feeling, and much interest attaching to the characters rather than the plot.

Among the more recent Portuguese poets, a high place must be allotted to Claudio Manoel de Costa, born in Brazil, educated at Coimbra, and the author of some beautiful sonnets. Several of his pieces, called "*Epicedios*," are in blank verse and eclogues, for which there has been an exaggerated taste in Portugal. His imitations of Metastasio are very happy. A more recent author, Francisco Manuel (born 1734), attained considerable celebrity, but was forced to pass into France on account of the freedom of his philosophical opinions. His odes in metre and in imitation of Horace show elevation and freedom of thought.

Another modern poet, Antonio Diniz da Cruz e Silva, published imitations of English poetry, among others, the "*Rape of the Lock*," and his satires on the polite world are full of elegance and knowledge of human life. His 300 sonnets are without charm, being exaggerations of languor and monotony.

T. A. de Cunha, the mathematician, has also written poems not without merit; and to the list of the most recent Portuguese poets may be added the names of Francisco Diaz Gomez, Francisco Cardoso, Alvarez de Robrega, Valladares, and Nicolas Tolentino de Almeida.

PROSE.

A considerable number of prose historians appeared in Portugal soon after Camoens and Lobo. John de Barros (born 1496) appeared a little earlier, and is called the Livy of Portugal. He began life as a court page, was subsequently governor of the Guinea Coast, and on his return, treasurer-general of the colonies. He projected a great historical work, in four parts. His "*Portuguese Europe*" was to describe the domestic history of the

monarchy, under Africa he was to describe the wars of the Portuguese in that part of the world, and his America was to be a history of the Brazils. But these three parts were never written, as his Asia in four decades, or forty books, comprising the Portuguese conquests in the East, occupied the whole of a long life in its completion. Its publication extended from 1552 to 1571. His work is still the great mine for authentic information relating to the history of Portuguese conquest and colonization in Asia. He is a great panegyrist of his countrymen, and rather partial in his judgment; but his account is very graphic, and he does not extenuate or veil over the atrocities accompanying the progress of the Portuguese arms.

The history of Barros was continued by Couto in fourteen volumes (1552—1615). Fernand Lopez de Castenheda and Antonio Bocarro also gave histories of Portuguese conquests in India, and Alfonso d'Albuquerque, the great conqueror, left his "Commentaries." About the same time, Damiao de Goez drew up a chronological account of the reign of Emanuel; and Bernardo de Brito (1570) projected a universal history of Portugal on so vast a scale, that he only lived to complete its introduction.

It is a great glory of another Portuguese prose writer, Jerome Osoris, that he was tolerant, though living amidst fiercest persecution of the Jews. Born in 1506, he died bishop of Sylvez in 1580, after writing the "Life of King Emanuel."

At a subsequent epoch Manoel de Faria y Souza completed a history of Portugal, mostly in Castilian, and a "Commentary on Camoens," which, while expressing great admiration of the author, totally fails in its appreciation of the merits of his epic. Jacinto Freire de Andrade obtained a high reputation by his "Life of Juan de Castro," fourth viceroy of the Indies, though his work appears to us studied, timid, and affected; in fact, Gongorism was predominant in his time. But, before quitting Portugal, we must add the name of Thomas de Jesus, who, in his "Trabajos de Jesus," produced a work of mystical and devotional character, equalling some of the noblest effusions of this class of writers in Spain.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FRANCE.—TO BOILEAU.

LYRICS.

THE literary culture of France has always been intimately associated with its political life and its social relations, adopting many elements from foreign countries, and exerting from the end of the seventeenth century a powerful influence on several European countries.

France took a rapid development under the unsettled rule of Francis I. (1515—1547), and its literature received a strong colouring, especially from classical Italian and Spanish, and though books (except controversial) were not of moment during the terrible civil wars (after 1559), their admirable and most judicious king, Henry IV. (1593—1610), gave the exhausted country a time of rest, supported by his minister, Sully. The time of probation had purified and strengthened the national mind; manners were softened, without becoming effeminate, the love of the sciences was quickened anew. Among their great promoters we have first Nic. Cl. Fabre de Peviouse of Aix (1580—1637). The same spirit of inquiry was encouraged under Cardinal Richelieu (1625—1642) and Mazarin (died 1661), and this process of preparation led on to the splendid results of the reign of Louis XIV. (1643—1715), receiving vigorous support from his minister, Colbert (died 1683), enriching France with scientific and artistic institutions, in which she was superior to the rest of Europe; diffusing her language in all European courts, and as the instrument of all diplomatic transactions, while France gave the tone and fashion in politics, industry, manners, pleasures, and the laws of taste: attended with consequences not always advantageous to neighbouring nations.

The literature of the age of Louis XIV., bearing a strong impress of Spanish and Italian influence, presented the most perfect specimens of French style; and mastering public opinion became its mouthpiece, till even the grand monarch, who could say, *l'Etat c'est moi*, was almost more afraid of epigrams than of a whole coalition. Accordingly, when the administration degenerated under the Regent of Orleans (1715), and the court became utterly corrupt (1745) under Louis XV., the existing abuses and corruptions were severely lashed, the prevailing frivolity freely satirized, and British free-thinking was transplanted to French soil. The multitude was alienated from the authorities by the

corruption of the upper classes, till, in 1789, the revolution broke out in all its fury, a somewhat better state of things was prepared by a series of terrible shocks and perturbations, and a general spirit of activity was roused in the nation that never became completely dormant afterwards.

Among the results of the Great Revolution may be mentioned an improved and extended system of education, though rather too special, and confined to certain subjects. The Polytechnic School (founded March, 1795) has been quite a model institution of the kind. Certain branches of philology, particularly Oriental languages (Chinese, Egyptian), were closely studied about this time; archæology received some attention, and contributions were made to the history of France, coloured, for the most part, with a strong spirit of national vanity. Mathematics, physics, astronomy, and natural history were cultivated with remarkable success about the time of Napoleon I. Military science received a new development; jurisprudence was greatly enriched by Montesquieu before the Revolution, and by the Code Napoléon since. A few philosophers of real merit came up about the time of the Restoration (1815—1830), and many able political works have latterly appeared. The French novelists of this age have almost all failed on the score of morality.

FRENCH.

The French language had been enriched about the beginning of the seventeenth century by good translations from the classics, and by some original works of merit, and in 1635, Richelieu established the French Academy, as a controller and a nursery of pure style. Its influence, not always wisely exerted, was extensively disputed in the eighteenth century.

POETRY.

There had been, down to the time of Francis I., an amusing play of fancy among the upper classes; but in his reign some real poets began to appear, chiefly formed on classical and Italian models. Spanish literature was also influential in France about this time; and soon after, Malherbe led the way to the purer style, and more correct form of art, in his poetical efforts.

Classifying French poetry according to lyrics, epics, and the drama, we find French literature presenting exuberance in most branches during the grand epoch of Louis XIV., showing considerable influence derived from British sources. In fact, to so great a height of excellence did French literature soar at this period, that it has never equalled it since, and the tone and style of Louis Quatorze have remained that of the most finished *French*, obtaining a sort of cosmopolitan diffusion. The branches

that have prospered most in France have been sonnets, epigrams, epistles, tales, satires, and descriptive and didactic poems. The drama, under Louis XIV., had a special success; lyrics, elegies, and idylls have not succeeded so well, being inconsistent with the artificial, intriguing character of the French, and the epic has been a failure—solemn reverence and a sense of the sublime being apparently wanting in the modern French mind.

In the sixteenth century appears first Clement Marot of Cahors (born 1495, died 1544), who gave the tone to the epigrams and narrative poems of the day. To his school belonged Etienne Dolet (died 1546), Mellin de S. Gelais (died 1558), Marguerite, Queen of Navarre (died 1549), author of "*L'Heptameron*" (born 1780); Louise Labé, of Lyon (died 1566) (*Œuvres*, Lyon, 1823), and others.

An author of this period who strove to introduce strict regularity according to classical and Italian models was Etienne Jodelle (died 1573), founder of the drama on settled principles of art; but the great man of the time was Pierre de Ronsard (born 1525, died 1585), erudite, artificial, and innovating in his spirit and style, head of a school of French poets—the Pleiades—to which belong Joachim de Bellay (died 1560) and Jean Antoine Baif (died 1592). Several other poets, of some note in their day, appeared in France about this time, including Pontus de Thiard, Scevole de S. Marthe, Jaques Tahureau, and Madeleine Naveu, with Catherine des Roches, mother and daughter (both died 1587), while the noted Calvinistic theologian, Theodore de Bèze, wrote witty satires on the events of the day.

The seventeenth century produced several eminent writers in this class of poetry. J. Vanquélín de la Fresnaye (died 1606) was one of the first who made use of Spanish eclogues and satires as models; Mathurin Regnier was a telling satirist (1573—1613) (*Œuvres*, Paris, 1746), and François de Malherbe, of Caen (born 1555, died 1628), gave the tone and example of greater regularity in language and rhyme in his lyrics (*Poésies*, Paris, 1815).

Fr. Mainard, of Toulouse (1582—1646), and his countryman, P. de Godolin (born 1579, died 1649), wrote lyrics, elegies, and epigrams in the Languedoc dialect (Ramelet Moundi, Toulouse, 1693). Paul Scarron, of Grenoble (1598—1660), was a scurrilous writer, who made use of Spanish and Italian literature in composing his political satires, "*Travesties of Virgil*," 1648, the "*Roman Comique*," 1665, and dramatic farces (*Œuvres*, Paris, 1786).

The next period is the golden epoch of French literature under Louis XIV., when several obscure writers made vain attempts at epics—George de Scudéry (died 1667), J. Chapelain (died 1674), P. le Moine (died 1672), and others. About the same time Cl. Emmanuel Lullier de la Chapelle (1626—1686) gave a quaintly picturesque description of travel, in mixed poetry and prose, assisted by Fr. le Coigneux Bachaumont (1624—1702) (*Œuvres*, Paris, 1755). Antoinette Deshoulières (1634—1694) and her daughter were noted composers of idylls; but above all, the ever fresh and delightful fabulist, Jean de la Fontaine, of Château Thierry (1621—1695) (*Œuvres*, Paris, 1818 and 1820).

La Fontaine was not a precocious genius, but of all French writers he had the most English sympathy with nature. He was intimate in the circle of Fouquet, and the delight of the little courts of Maine and Sceaux, and of Bouillon and Vendôme, but he was too free and easy for a royal ante-chamber. This caused Boileau, who banished him from his "Art Poétique," to be unjust to him. But Fénelon was less inexorable to the fabulist; he wrote his praise in Latin, and gave it to the young Duke of Burgundy, his pupil, to learn by heart. The duke became the poet's benefactor, and sent him a purse of fifty louis the day of his death. It is charming to see the aged poet, thus abandoned by the king, and protected by a child of ten years of age. The fifty louis were the only resource of La Fontaine at the moment. La Fontaine was a free, and somewhat pagan genius, but not immoral. He forgot his wife at Château Thierry, and passed his son without recognising him; but this might be absence in the poet.

His characteristics are the union of the old French spirit with more modern ways. He drank largely at the classical sources; but the *bonhomme*, as the court circles styled him, united all the most charming and elegant features of preceding poets, ancient, mediæval, and renaissance. He had even some inkling of a new philosophy, for La Fontaine unconsciously was the precursor of the philosophy of identity between man and nature. The French fabulist sympathizes with all creation; all that lives, all that grows—the tree, the bird, the flower of the field—has a soul and language for the poet. He loves the sunbeams playing like a golden fringe round the *sash of Iris*; he observes with delight the faintest breeze that by adventure wrinkles the surface of the water. The life of the universe, extinct to his friends, is revealed to his eyes with the grace of ancient mythology and the profound truth of modern poetry. La Fontaine, the least pretentious of poets, is the only French one who links the past to the future.

His fables, which are his great work, are the amusement of childhood, the instruction of a riper age, the admiration of men of letters. "He does not compose," says La Harpe; "he converses. If he relates, he is persuaded he has seen it." His colours are faithful, and have a scent of the country. When he conjures up rural France, it is la vieille France, with its immense stretches of cornfield, where the lark hides her nest; it is the heathery upland, or the thicket and underwood peopled by a world of animal life—those pretty *garçonnets*, sparkling with dew and perfumed with thyme, fragrant as bowers in Eden, amidst the lights and charms of early dawn.

Next to La Fontaine comes another renowned writer of a different stamp—Nicolas Boileau Despréaux, of Crême, near Paris (born 1636, died 1711), who displayed a critical and correct imitation of the ancients, and was conspicuous for correctness of style (*Œuvres*, Paris, 1809). Boileau was a man and a poet of a very different stamp from La Fontaine. He was a worshipper of common sense—of the sovereignty of reason in matters of taste. He was the spirit of Descartes transferred to poetry. His poetical life falls into three periods. In the first (from 1660 to 1668), he attacks violently and satirically the bad poets of the time, and tilts energetically against Italian and Spanish importations. His satires, in the judgment of Voltaire, are clever and biting, but inferior to his after-works.

In the second period (1669—1677) Boileau sought to reconstruct what he had thrown down in his satires. In 1674 he published the "*Art Poétique*," laying down the canons of good taste, and "*Le Lutrin*," a humorous work, and a masterpiece of versification. His nine epistles, especially the last, unite all the excellent qualities that secured the glory of Boileau.

After this time he was named historiographer to the king, and for sixteen years he published little. French historians describe him as an immense event in the history of literature. He formed the national taste, and placed in sharp relief its most vital character—ingenious and satirical common sense. He ennobled the old French spirit by teaching it the elegance of classical antiquity, and all the *bienséances* of the wittiest of courts. He was the Bourgeois de Paris in the great Galeries of Versailles. But he had defects, and his influence was even injurious. Regarded as the arbiter of taste, the legislator of Parnassus, the limits he defined were too rigidly observed. He was also too exclusively inspired by the spirit of society, and wanting in sympathy with nature.

CHAPTER XIX.

LYRICS SINCE BOILEAU, AND THE "HENRIADE."

A HOST of lyric poets, and writers of epistles and epigrams, appeared at this time, of whom the principal were Alexander Lainez, a humorous satirist (died 1710); Antoine Houdart de la Motte (died 1731), composer of idylls, fables, and sonnets; especially Jean Baptiste Rousseau, of Paris (died 1741), reckoned the founder of a higher style of lyrics, and more justly of epigrams, has many merits in language and rhyme (*Œuvres*, Paris, 1820). Louis Ramée (died 1764) was the writer of correct religious poems; Alexis Piron, of Dijon (1689—1773), wrote cheerful epistles, witty epigrams, and lively comedies; Ch. Pierre Colardeau composed songs, epistles, heroic cantos (1776); P. Jos. Bernard (died 1776) wrote lyrics, and imitations of Ovid; J. Baptiste L. Gresset, is remarkable for quaint capricious songs, epistles, and comedies; and the series brings us to Marie François Arouet de Voltaire, of Chatenay (1694—1778), the ruler and expounder of the spirit of the times, his influence extending even to the present day, for Voltaire is almost the type of the modern Frenchman, and it has been truly said: "Depuis Voltaire tout le monde rit en France."

Of Voltaire, the dramatist, the philosopher, and the historian, notice will be taken further on. As a poet he is remarkable, not only for his plays, but as having made the only real attempt at a French epic, the "Henriade." At the age of twenty, behind the bars and bolts of the Bastille, he had sketched out the first outline of his poem. An epic seemed to him then to combine the following recipe: the pompous recital of a warlike episode, preceded by an invocation, adorned with a retrospective narrative, with a dream, a journey to the infernal regions, and a love story. He projected an imitation of Homer, viewed through the medium of Virgil. The poem was completed in England, and touched up afterwards in France. Voltaire built his hope of future fame upon this poem. "It is," he wrote, "to become immortal that I have composed the 'Henriade.'" The name of Voltaire will be remembered, but not owing to the "Henriade."

The work could not be otherwise than a failure. The Homeric epic was the work of a young and a rising society; it was history sung before it could be written. Imagination, feeling, a frank and cordial admiration of noble deeds, united to a melodious language, developed all the treasures of tradition, kept from

oblivion and handed down by the bards alone. A French critic has said: "Books have killed song; we have history with its truth more beautiful than fiction." But it is a Frenchman who speaks, who forgets, or never felt Milton and Klopstock. He forgets that the poet is a seer, and sees deeper than other men. Boileau had killed the epic and truly poetic in France; the proper sphere of comedy could not be that of nature, or the supernatural.

Voltaire mistook the nature of epics. He made a clever tissue of external accidents; he only wanted the soul of the epic to fill it. Accordingly, how frigid are his recitals! He does not seem at ease; he compresses them, he cuts them short; he is embarrassed with the flowing drapery of the epic. It is only when his story starts a moral or political idea—a religious or philosophical dogma, or unfolds the wonders of commerce and industry, that he wakes up, warms to his subject, and thus makes the least poetical points the best in his poem. Of his allusions to Joan of Arc it is only necessary to say that so artificial and mocking a soul could no more conceive the grandeur of the French heroine than a mole represent the sun. She was far above the horizon of his highest flights, and it would have been well for France if more of her spirit and less of Voltaire's had coloured the mind of modern France. Voltaire's minor poems err, on the score of morality, like so much French literature in his age; but these shorter pieces are free from the stiffness and frigidity of the "*Henriade*," and show Voltaire to have been a great poet.

About the time of Voltaire appeared a complete flight of minor poets, of various merit. Thus, Marie Anne Lepage Fr. Dubocage (1710—1802), author of the "*Colombiade*," a lyric, 1756, etc. (Œuv. Lyons, 1770); J. J. le Franc. Marg. de Pompiignan (died 1784), a religious lyric, and author of the tragedy of "*Dido*," Ant. Léon Thomas (died 1685), noted for epistles and odes (Œuv. Paris, 1802); Ch. Fr. de S. Lambert (died 1803), composed "*Saisons*," 1769, and other works (Paris, 1795); Nic. Germ. Leonard, author of "*La Religion établie sur les Ruines de l'Idolatrie*," 1770 (Œuv., Paris, 1798).

About the end of the century occur Sel. Roch. Nic. de Chamfort (born 1741, died 1794)—who, besides his works in prose, composed a variety of songs, epistles, and dramas (Œuv., Paris, 1808)—and Pierre Claris de Florian (1755—1794), who attained considerable popularity by his fables, songs, tales, and novels in art of poetic prose (Œuv., Comp., Paris, 1824). Florian's

writings are qualified as "fadeurs champêtres," by modern French critics. But the fact is that the poetic spirit was killed out in the French nation at this time by the "Encyclopédie" and the philosophers—in short by the loss of all sense of the "ideal." Even when the reform came, it took rather the shape of prose in Châteaubriand, though of poetical prose; but of this further on.

Various attempts at the drama, especially comedy, were made after Voltaire, and by his imitators. Of this, notice also will be taken presently. Among lyric poets figuring about the time of Louis XV., occurs the name of Saint Lambert, who wrote "*Les Saisons*," in imitation of Thomson; but the French poet showed himself dry and frigid, like a grand seigneur who neither loved nor knew the country, where the Englishman breaks out in his sublime sympathies with nature.

Lemière produced an imitation of Ovid in his "*Fasti*," but, instead of giving life to his subject, he only gave a versified account of the different occupations of the year. The soul of the poet, instead of being the centre of a world of life and action, was deficient in unity, interest, and life.

In short, poetry, like faith, seemed to be dying out in France. The universe lacked enchantment to men who looked upon it as nothing better than a cold and clever mechanism—a lucky, but chance combination of matter. "Nature was dead in their eyes, as hope in their hearts."

Such was France, and such the state of letters embodying the popular mind under Louis XV. Then came a better influence, initiated by Jean Jacques Rousseau, principally in prose; and the terrible shock of the Revolution, with the stirring, rousing wars of the Empire, called forth a more energetic style of thought and writing, though the energies of the nation were chiefly directed to science and practical life.

In the Revolutionary period occur T. Fr. de la Harpe (1739—1803), principally dramatic; Ponce Denys Ecouchard le Brun (1729—1807), an admirer and imitator of ancient French poetry, a lyric of some merit, and successful in various kinds of poetry. Pierre Ch. Fr. le Brun (1739—1824) translated Tasso; Stan. Marquis de Boufflers (1737—1815) wrote pretty lyric caprices; and Jacques Montanier Delille (1738—1815) rose to higher distinction than most other poets of the period, in his lyrics and descriptive poetry.

But Delille, though he was placed on an equality with Homer by French writers during thirty years, was, in fact, the chief of

the classical school of decadence during the period we are considering. His manner was unpoetical and false ; but his elegance of language, and coquetry of thought, joined to his pretty style of versification, blinded the eyes of his readers. Delille showed the stuff of which he was made, by priding himself, in his later years, on his descriptive triumphs—having made twelve camels, four dogs, three horses, six tigers, two cats, a chess-board, a billiard-table, several winters, still more summers, a multitude of springs, fifty sunsets, and such a number of sun-rises that it would be impossible to count them.

A number of poets marched after Delille without attaining to equal glory. Thus, Fontanes, the correct and elegant author of the "Verger," with occasionally happy touches in his verses ; Castel, the poet of plants ; Gudin, of astronomy ; Esmenard, of navigation ; Ricard, on the sphere. The harder the theme for poetry, the greater the excellence of the poet in that age, in treating so arid and ungrateful a subject. Poetry was nothing more than prose lighted up with metaphors ; hence the circumlocution which makes many of the poems of that age a tissue of enigmas. All branches of poetry, odes, tragedies, epics, were reduced to descriptive poems, and descriptions were reduced to tirades and ambitious metaphors. The epic poets of the day were grand, as failures, Luce de Lancival Dumesnil, and the rest. It was quite a phenomenon that "Philippe-Auguste," of Parseval de Grandmaison, reached a third edition.

The romantic poets of the beginning of the nineteenth century are all on the same pattern, and fall into certain groups. The hundred volumes of Madame de Genlis are characterised by platitude of style and thought, covered with a varnish of morality. Pigault Lebrun is distinguished for gross pleasantry and licentious quaintness. The writings of Mesdames Cottin, Flahaut-Souza, and Montolieu are conspicuous for a noble and feminine delicacy, and a graceful feebleness. Madame Krudner has some of the sentimentalism of her age, coloured up with northern tints.

Poetry, like religion, seemed almost defunct, because the *ideal* was lost ; but a revival was at hand. Glimmers of its approach had been seen in Delille and in Michaud ("Printemps d'un Proscrit"). But René de Châteaubriand, a marquis and a Breton (1768—1848), brought back nature and the supernatural to France. He had begun with the dreams of Rousseau, and dreamt of the delights of savage life. Lafayette had related to France the wonders of the New World, and Châteaubriand went

to America, spoke to Washington, and visited Lexington, the American Thermopylæ. A new world of poetry had been revealed to the young poet, in the ocean and the desert. It was not in vain that the immense extent of the savannahs, the gigantic rivers, and the vast forests, untouched by the bushman's axe, and the savage populations in the rudimental stage of human existence, had passed before his eyes.

Then Châteaubriand, returning to Europe, had suffered the miseries of exile. In London, looking forth from the narrow window of his dismal lodging, without fire, and often without bread, in winter, he said, on viewing the poor in the neighbouring house, "I have brothers there." He had seen and suffered much, though young; but the divine spark was wanting: he had no religion, at first. It came to him through the heart; he saw his mother expire: he heard her last prayers for the eternal salvation of her son, and he came back to the Church. This was the principle of his writings; he did not strive to prove Christianity as true, but as beautiful, which, philosophically, is the same thing. This view bespoke the spirit of the revival he inaugurated; Voltaire had said, "Christianity is ridiculous;" Châteaubriand replied, "It is sublime."

The genius of Châteaubriand gave birth to perpetual, though brilliant, contradiction. He loved monarchy and liberty, reason and faith, classical regularity, and the dreamy inspiration of modern times. He was the advocate of all unhappy causes. His life was an eternal opposition. This defect is reflected in almost all his works, which will be considered under prose, though the man has been placed here, as he was virtually a poet, and revived poetry by reviving religion in France.

After Châteaubriand and the Empire, a new school of writers came up in poetry in France. Among the earliest occurs Marie Jos. Chénier (1764—1811), the author of epistles, satires, and tragedies; and, deserving of consideration, as a critic, Jos. Rouget de Lisle, author of the "Marseillaise Hymn." And soon appear among the contributors of the periodical, *La Muse Française*, the names of Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Casimir Delavigne; then appear Béranger and Lamartine, and what is best in modern French poetry has been enumerated.

Victor Hugo (born at Besançon, 1802) was twenty years old when he published his first odes, and twenty-two when his odes and ballads appeared (1824). But many of the pieces in his first collection were written when he was between fifteen and

seventeen. The great success of Victor Hugo has been in the drama, to which we shall revert.

Alphonse de Lamartine was the scion of a noble family, attached to royalist traditions, brought up in a Jesuit college. His retired education indisposed him to enjoy the materialist poetry of the eighteenth century. All in his character took a religious and mystical colouring. His mother had been brought up with the children of the Duc d'Orléans by Madame de Genlis. His education was philosophical, but corrected and softened by maternal influence. The impress of his mother's spirit is found on every page of his writings; but his youth wanted discipline and restraint. Placed for a time in a *pension* at Lyons, he could not bear its rules, and ran away; even among the Jesuits, he only sighed for the fields of his home. His studies were ill regulated. On his journey to Italy, he took with him a chaos of books, and sat down at the Forum and the Capitol: these were the last teachings he had in history; he had little taste for solid studies. He liked Ossian; but his best inspiration was nature—the Alps, Italy, the East; those glorious mountains, pearly streams, azure heavens—the immense vault of an Orient sky. No one has depicted more graphically, or understood better, the splendours, the sighs, the murmurs, the solemn silence of Nature; no poet has felt more vividly the breath of the Creator in the phenomena of the universe.

But the popular lyric of modern France has been Béranger, particularly because he sang of the glories of the First Empire. Pierre Jean Béranger was born at Paris, August 19, 1780 (died 1857), and was a genius of striking originality—"My songs are myself," he was wont to say. Then, again, he loved the people and his country religiously. He is identified with the French people; he is the most entirely French of all his contemporaries. He had, moreover, an exquisite *bon sens* and plain humour, the enemy of all tumidity and false grandeur. His education had been neglected; but he made up for it by hard study, and he cultivated poetical language with extreme care. Accordingly he attained a learned precision, an irreproachable purity, that seem no longer to belong to our time.

His democratic spirit kept him from pompous words; he knew how to be simple and true, even in grandeur. His form was that of the old ballad—short songs—even real odes, and sometimes quite in the classical spirit. Antiquity can scarcely show anything finer than his poems "*Mon Ame*," "*La Bonne Vieille*," "*Mon Habit*," "*Le Cinq Mai*," "*Le Dieu des Bonnes Gens*."

It was this delicacy of sentiment and energy of spirit that made Béranger so popular.

Béranger was inspired with at least one great and noble thought, special to the present age. He was convinced that the treasures of imagination and of thought ought to descend to the humblest classes of society. He remarked that "it was in the gravest style that the people requires its regrets and hopes to be told to it." Béranger spoke to it in a language worthy of its future, and, above all, recognizing in the people its right to poetry. This was a grand advance, and proves him in his way to have been a real social reformer; but he was no communist. He loved old France, too, and had projected an epic, "Clovis." Some of his songs were free in religious sentiment, and having been condemned, he avenged himself on Messieurs les Procureurs du Roi, and Avocats Généraux, by saying that, "when religion is made an instrument of polity, her sacred character is misunderstood." But his arguments are not conclusive here, and this is the shady side of Béranger.

Another poet of the time, Casimir Delavigne (born at Havre, 1793, died 1843), was chiefly a dramatist. He wrote some elegies, which, with his tragedies, show him to have been an excellent versifier, but with little fire and inspiration, though much industry and care.

VICTOR HUGO.—LAMARTINE.

Of Victor Hugo's and Lamartine's political life, a few words suffice. The former, as President of the Peace Society, as an eloquent advocate of democracy, when orator in the National Assembly, as exile at Jersey, and the author of a rather spiteful satire on the *coup d'état*, "Napoléon le Petit," has shown himself the consistent friend of liberty, though visionary, as becomes a poet.

Lamartine, thoroughly national and liberal, though a nobleman, showed too much of the dreamer, and too little of the statesman, in the Provisional Government of 1848.

Yet he bore himself bravely in rescuing the tricolor flag, when the *drapeau rouge* was put up as the symbol of the Red Republicans; and when Paris was all ablaze with the insurrection of June, 1848, and barricades were blocking every thoroughfare, he showed real vigour and practical sense in giving the dictatorship to General Cavaignac, the honest republican and able soldier, who restored order to Paris, and set aside for a time the dangers and disasters of a communistic rule.

Of the poetical works of Victor Hugo, it may be added that his fugitive pieces are, "Odes et Ballades," "Les Orientales," "Feuilles d'Automne," "Han d'Islande," "Bug Jargal," and "Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamné." The chief works of Lamartine are: "Les Méditations," "Nouvelles Méditations," and "Les Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses," his highest, purest work. "La Chute d'un Ange" is a little too dreamy and exaggerated; and "Jocelyn," though with fine touches, is less spontaneous and original. Béranger's works are chiefly chansons, published in five separate collections; the first in 1815, the second in 1821, the third in 1825, the fourth in 1828, the fifth, with a clever and instructive preface, in 1833.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DRAMA IN FRANCE.

TO VOLTAIRE.

RIGHTLY to appreciate the dramatists of the age of Louis XIV., it is essential to have a true notion of the age itself, the people, and the court.

France was at that time the most advanced nation of Europe in civilization, but its advance was that of artificiality, and confined chiefly to the court circle. Its beauty and refinement were like that of Le Notre in his gardens, and are reflected in the drama and language, which, though polished, are too stiff and subject to rule.

Artificiality was the spirit of that age—false hair, false promises, false pretences, false civilization, the age itself was a fallacy—though it closely followed on the chivalry of François Premier and Bayard. But justice must be done to this reign and to the French people. There was a certain greatness in the character of Louis XIV.; he never despaired in danger and disaster, and though he uttered the despot's watchword, *L'Etat c'est moi*, in glorifying himself he gave great glory to France. He had the same wisdom as Elizabeth in selecting able ministers and generals, Colbert, Louvois, Turenne, Condé, Villars, and others. His unwise measures were the expulsion of the Huguenots, the depreciation of self-government in local parliaments, and the crushing

of the class of gentilshommes into a band of court flunkys, a work begun by Richelieu. The result of these measures was to centre all France in Versailles or Paris and this centralization has weighed as a curse on France.

Nevertheless, literature, taste, and a certain refinement of manners were much cultivated in this reign. The culture was stiff and artificial, yet the loss of its influence would be an evil. The marquises of Versailles have set the *bon ton* to European society. Since his day French has become the diplomatic and court language of the Christian world.

Even French fashions and cooks became European necessities from the time of Louis. This refinement admitted a higher cultivation of comedy and criticism. Molière and La Bruyère came up together and grew out of the court circle. They were inspired by it; but its influence was prejudicial to tragedy, though the encouragement given to Racine by the court was favourable to the development of his talents. Molière, in "*Les Précieuses Ridicules*," "*Les Femmes Savantes*," and "*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," gives us useful pictures of the times, and chiefly of the times, in this differing from Shakespere.

La Bruyère in his "*Caractères*" does the same service, and his remarks, like the "*Maxims of La Rochefoucauld*," have a very extensive application.

Thus the contrast of the rich and the poor man, of the comedian in his carriage and the author on foot splashed by it, and the picture of the "*Distrain*" (the "*Absent Man*"), with his wig suspended to a chandelier, in a crowded ante-chamber convulsed with laughter at him, without his divining the cause—these pictures are universal, and given with inimitable epigrammatic grace. Similarly some of La Rochefoucauld's cutting maxims apply to humanity and especially court humanity; such as this one: "There is always a secret pleasure in hearing of the misfortunes even of one's best friend."

It has been seen that the tyranny of Richelieu had struck down the aristocracy, in this following the example of Louis XI., and weakening the influence of the local parliaments. The result was: *L'Etat c'est moi*. The king was France. This state of things prepared Versailles and the revolution. But it was compatible with a very high degree of culture, though of a special, studied, and affected kind, in which freedom was wanting.

The tendency of the day to correctness and rigid formalism, made the modern French tongue what it is, precise, clear, prosaic;

and made their dramatic literature slavishly imitative of the classic in style, while in spirit and substance French comedy especially is an excellent picture and critique of the affectations and artificialities of the day, and in particular of the court. The brilliant court of Louis XIV., surrounded in his earlier years with the splendour of victory, of wit, of art, of taste, was an excellent school of fine manners, in comparison with which Germany, Spain, and even England were in a measure barbarous.

This was just the proper sphere for genteel comedy, much of which relates to the shades of exaggeration found in a refined or over-refined people or court. But more dangerous elements were at work in the national character in this reign. Notwithstanding the affected pietism of the court in the latter time of Louis XIV., a strong spirit of mockery and unbelief was astir, as usual accompanied by fanatical excesses. It was the age when the Jansenist party, professing to work miracles at the churchyard of the Abbé Paris (effects probably occasioned by mesmeric phenomena), led to great *attroupements*, exciting the anxiety and fears of the authorities in those days of absolutism. Accordingly, a royal proclamation was issued and affixed to the walls, forbidding these assemblies, on which a pasquinade was put up alongside it by a wit: "*De par le roi défendu à Dieu de faire miracle en ce lieu.*"

Further remarks will be offered on this satirical vein which reacted on England.

France burst out into the bloom of literature later than most of the civilized European nations. In dramatic literature, especially, the attempts before the time of Richelieu were extravagant.

The drama follows romance and precedes the epic in France—in this running counter to the natural order of development. The French drama issued from the classics and from Spanish plays. Italian and Spanish literature had passed their fulness when French literature came to maturity. The drama, and particularly comedy, prospered in France through the chatty, sociable, dramatic character of the people, who have some points in common with the Athenians. A commencement is made with comedy, because it is their great excellence, and Molière is in many respects their greatest poet.

Before entering on the subject of French comedy, a few preliminary remarks on the characteristics of this branch of the drama will not be out of place. Comedy may be described as criticism in action; it originated in Greece, Aristophanes being

the first and the greatest comic writer—the great master of the art.

Of Aristophanes it may be remarked that with certain defects, resulting from the social state of paganism, he is full of wonderful points. His wit is so refined that he must have required a very refined audience to appreciate his plays.

Allegorical characters were sometimes introduced by Aristophanes, as in the case of the demagogue, Cleon, who was favoured by the mob, impersonated by the poet as Demos (in the "Knights"). His humorous sarcasms against Socrates in the "Clouds" were of no real injury to the philosopher. The freedom that allowed the use of this sarcasm was the source of all that was great in Greece, and when this freedom departed, the drama went too. The Latin drama, even in Plautus, was little more than an imitation of the Greek, and the French drama has been more an imitation than is generally supposed.* Molière has been

* In discussing comedy it is necessary to draw a distinction between it and dialogue. There are, in literature, many celebrated works in dialogue: some serious, some comic.

Thus, in Greece, "Plato's Dialogues" between Socrates and different persons, many of which may have been founded on fact, are models in the former style. Again, in Rome, Cicero is fond of the dialectic method, in discussing such questions as old age, friendship, &c.

In the comic a great example is seen in "Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead," a work in which he introduces a number of remarkable men among the shades below, and makes, for instance, great enemies meet, and talk, and quarrel, and great philosophers lose their temper and utter unseemly sentiments.

But dialogue is not comedy: for, in comedy, there should be, and there generally is, a plot, and the presence of actors. Criticism in comedy is as much in action as in spirit. Moreover, the amusing element ought to predominate in comedy. This gives again the true appreciation of comedy and of France. The Christian spirit is earnest. To it, this life is only a shadow of the next, and by it human actions are weighed by reference to the eternal, though, of necessity, commonplace natures do not live or act up to this high ideal. Yet this Christian spirit has coloured the modern world of life and thought.

Not so the ancient world, especially that of Greece. Beauty was its essential principle; but the beauty of this life only, though Socrates had discovered the infinite beauty. Joy, the brightness of this life, was to the Greeks the first thing. The future life was a shadowy and an uncertain thing. Hence, though the tragic and the solemnly sublime were quite at home in Greece—for the Greeks were men, and had many earnest men—yet the spirit of comedy was also at home there, issuing from the wish thoroughly to enjoy the passing moment, forgetful of past and future. Christendom is less prone to this, though modern times have a large element of the ridiculous; and when a Christian nation reverts, like France, to paganism, it takes up the comic, *con amore*, and succeeds in it.

exalted by the French, as the "very spirit of comedy," and as a great original genius. This is an exaggeration, as he was a great plagiarist.

In treating of Molière, it is expedient to consider first the man, and then his works. Jean Baptiste Poquelin Molière (1622—1673) was born in the reign of Louis XIII.; his youth was passed under Cardinal Richelieu, and his prime at the court of Louis XIV. He belonged to the humbler class, and in his intercourse with it, he acquired that knowledge of coarse humour and language which is seen in his works. Afterwards received at the court of Louis XIV., he was in a position to satirize the higher ranks.

He appears to have been an actor of no mere pretensions, particularly in extravagant parts, which were appreciated by Louis XIV. His great versatility of talent enabled him to turn every accident to account in his plays, and, like a true Frenchman, he knew how to extract drollery even out of the difficulties of his court life. Thus, if ordered to produce a piece at very short notice, he knew how to turn this into fun. He was also so ready to please the grand monarch, that he acted "*Le Malade Imaginaire*" when so ill that the performance hastened his end.

Molière's audience at court, like that of Aristophanes at Athens, was able to appreciate his witty allusions.

Of all the works of Molière, perhaps his "*Bourgeois Gentilhomme*" is the best known, and with some reason. The parvenu is a universal nuisance, and tuft hunters are always found. M. Jourdain is an excellent type of both characters. The ignorant simplicity of this class of people is well illustrated in his interview with the philosopher. After hearing what prose is, M. Jourdain remarks: "*Par ma foi, il y a plus de quarante ans que*

This is the secret of the success of the French comedy. Every Frenchman is born, not so much a soldier, as an actor. France was the country for the rise of genteel comedy, as it had only to mimic, and not to exaggerate every-day French life, where all is acting; and again, this reacted on French manners, as theatre-going became so much a part of modern French nature that the habit tells on daily life. Then, again, the language became very epigrammatic about this time, and no tongue in Europe has so many *double entendres* as the French.

A different world was that of Molière from that into which Shakespeare was launched, though Shakespeare's sphere was the hearty, merry England of Elizabeth. Far different was it from that of Milton, where the earnest was predominant, though it had a humorous side. But reverence was going out in France, and disappeared soon after Voltaire; and Thomas Carlyle has pronounced reverence the highest faculty in man. The great mocking phase had begun, and the serious corrective element of comedy was being overlooked in the pleasure of satire.

je dis de la prose, sans que j'en susse rien." Another excellent passage, is M. Jourdain's interview with his maid-servant, who cannot restrain her hilarity on seeing him ridiculously over-dressed. Above all, famous is the lecture from his posture-master, which he puts in practice on visiting the marquise : when he says, "Un peu plus loin, madame. *Dorimene* : Comment? *M. Jourdain* : Un pas, s'il vous plait. *Dorimene* : Quoi donc? *M. Jourdain* : Reculez un peu pour la troisième."

Molière came up in France, like Cervantes in Spain, when romance and chivalry were expiring, and in France the spirit of ridicule and persiflage was taking the place of the more earnest character of the Middle Ages. It was the time when irreverence was about to become the atmosphere of the court, and even of many of the higher clergy, and when Voltaire was about to appear as the impersonation of satirical unbelief.

Of the other comedies of Molière, those most strongly marked with his genius, and most useful as condemning abuses of the day, are his "*Tartuffe*," exposing the odium of hypocrisy; and especially his many genial plays directed against the pedantry and ignorance of medical men at that time. Perhaps the whole history of satire does not present a more telling hit than the well-known words of the "*Médecin Malgré lui*," who, when he places the heart on the right side, justifies himself and the doctors with the remark : "Nous avons changé tout cela."*

There is but one step, it has been said, from the sublime to the ridiculous.† For the present, it is necessary to pass from comedy to tragedy, from Molière to Corneille and Racine.

The great defect of the French drama and literature has been a slavish adherence to rule and antique models, casting off all elements from the romance. Corneille broke through this in his best piece, the "*Cid*," and, after doing this, he was ashamed of his work. England and Spain were freer, and their drama higher. The fixed idea of French tragedians was to observe the three unities, of action, time, and place. Yet to do this invariably in tragedy is impossible; nor is it desirable. Even the French tragedians break through this. Again, France has no blank

* Molière wrote thirty comedies. Of these, some are mere farces; others are real correctives, and deserve high praise, like the "*Caractères*" of La Bruyère, as efforts to destroy the follies of the day. To this class belong : "*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," "*Le Médecin Malgré lui*," "*Le Malade Imaginaire*," "*Les Femmes Savantes*," and "*Les Précieuses Ridicules*."

† Words of Napoleon I., on leaving the grand army to perish in Russia, and hastening to Paris.

verse or prose in her tragedies: and thus in historical dramas many parts are unnatural and tedious.

Normandy is in many respects an interesting part of France, especially to the English. The fine old city of Rouen stands grandly on the Seine, surrounded by picturesque hills and pleasant walks; and the cathedral of St. Ouen is a beautiful forest in stone, with the elegant tracery, the lace-like finish, the grand arches, buttresses and shadows of the best Norman style, and those pointed pinnacles special to Christian architecture, seeming to strive, like prayer, to reach up to the very throne of God.

Standing on the quaint old bridge spanning the Seine, the traveller accosts a plain, yet not untasteful statue, and pauses to look on the likeness of him who, with Joan of Arc, gave its greatest glory to Rouen. He is before the statue of Pierre Corneille.

Partly the product of Spanish and classical influence, Corneille is one of the few French poets who have grandeur; but he did not give full rein to his genius. Pierre Corneille was born in 1606, and died 1684; composing, in that interval, thirty-three tragedies. Racine was a native of La Ferté Milon; born in 1639, and dying 1699; he composed eleven tragedies. These two tragedians present certain contrasts. Corneille is grander, with more of the heroic, lofty spirit in his verse. Racine is more finished, with more of a tender idyllic spirit, producing a more refined versification, and a finer feeling, especially in his heroines. Racine has been generally considered the first tragedian of France.

These two great dramatists had great merits in doing so much, in spite of the stiff rules of the French stage and language, and the slavish adherence to classical models. But in their best efforts, though they go to antiquity, instead of to the romantic Middle Ages, for their plots, their heroes and heroines are Frenchmen and Frenchwomen. This is unfortunate. Achilles, Iphigenia, and the other great characters of the heroic age of Greece, dressed in bag wigs, buckle shoes, ruffles, and hoops, and dancing minuets, like Sir Roger de Coverley, would be little more incongruous.

Analyzing their works, the "Cid" is probably the loftiest, freest composition of Corneille, partly because it admits so much of the Spanish spirit of Guillen de Castro, though it is less simple. French critics have been apt to condemn the very best point in this play; *i.e.*, that a princess could forget her rank, in

her attachment for a simple knight, the Cid, a man of the noblest and most heroic character. The best feature of the "Cid" is, that it has a romantic character, and is not a slavish imitation of the ancient; and another of its merits is its being a tragi-comedy, of a mixed description, like some of the best pieces of Shakespeare.

The "Horace" is inferior to the "Cid." It has been thought to want unity; but this is an exaggeration of French criticism. The real defect of Corneille in this play is, that of reducing a great public and national question into a family matter and a private feud. Corneille is quite warranted by history to make a sister of the Horatii engaged to one of the Curiatii, but he represents a sister of one of the Curiatii as married to one of the Horatii, without any authority and foundation whatever.

"Cinna" is less ideal than the two tragedies just considered. Emilia is called by Balzac an adorable fury. Her heart is inaccessible to the softening influences of benevolence and generosity. The adoration of so unfeminine a creature is hardly pardonable, even in a lover. There are also other defects in this play.

Corneille was fond of portraying Macchiavellian characters, and thought he knew the world well; but his attempt is clumsy and unsuitable. Among those of his plays devoted to describe the Roman love of freedom, the "Death of Pompey" is the best. But the grandeur of this play is rather dazzling than solid. The plot is clumsy, with a mean side in many of the characters.

In Sertorius, Corneille has contrived to make Pompey ridiculous. A great fault in this author is, a certain frigidity of soul; and, as a natural result, his heroes and heroines *aiment par politique*. "Polyeucte" is a play expressing Christian sentiments; but this tragedy inclines to the comic. Corneille wrote a good many pieces, now forgotten; but some of which are composed with as much care as those of his works which are better known.

Racine was very fettered by limitations in his first two pieces; but he broke loose in "Andromache." His description of passion and its struggles was more natural than anything that had appeared before in France. The fidelity of Andromache to the memory of her husband, and her maternal tenderness are affectingly beautiful. The male parts are, as usual with Racine, not so advantageously drawn.

In "Britannicus," the historical characters, Nero, Agrippina, and the rest, are faithfully given; "Berenice" is an idyllic tragedy in honour of a living princess; "Mithridate" is, in its plot, very

~~These "pieces" of Molière~~—it has a comic side; and "Monime" ~~is~~ ^{are} most amiable creations. "Iphigenia" is rather ~~an attempt~~ ^{an attempt} to modernize a Greek tragedy, and ~~is~~ ^{is} inconsistent with mythological traditions. ~~Through~~ ^{Through} its plot is borrowed from the ancients, is a ~~feature~~ ^{feature} in the affected mannerism of the age of Racine, ~~in the~~ ^{in the} genuine tragic style. "Esther" is scarcely a tragedy. ~~The~~ ^{The} ~~characters~~ ^{characters} for well-bred young ladies in a pious seminary. ~~The~~ ^{The} ~~characters~~ ^{characters} of the play are personifications of living notoriety ~~in the~~ ^{in the} age. Ahasuerus was Louis XIV.; Esther, Madame de Maintenon; Haman, the minister, Louvois; but "Esther" is ~~the~~ ^{the} work of an elevated character. "Esther" is the last and most finished work of Racine. Of ~~the~~ ^{the} French tragedies, this is the freest from mannerism, and the ~~nearest~~ ^{nearest} approach to the grand style of the Greeks. In this play, ~~we see~~ ^{we see} ~~on~~ ^{on} earth the struggle between good and evil; in heaven, ~~the~~ ^{the} watchful eye of Providence, shedding forth rays of constancy ~~and~~ ^{and} resolution. There is an inspiration about this play, wanting ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ many French works. Nevertheless, scruples of conscience ~~delayed~~ ^{delayed} its entrance at St. Cyr; it was cut up in the press, and, ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~that~~ ^{that} juvenile was the age, that this condemnation survived Racine.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DRAMA SINCE VOLTAIRE.

VOLTAIRE, who has been already noticed, marks an era, and deserves more than a passing notice. His prose still ranks as model French prose, like Fénelon's, with whom he forms a complete contrast. For, while benevolence and sweetness were the speciality of Fénelon, bitterness was that of Voltaire. It has been seen that the great mocker, who is not properly understood in England, to the great regret of M. Taine, was born at Chatenay, 1694. He was educated by the Jesuits, the great instructors of the day, in France, and, though he departed widely in after life from the doctrines of his teachers, a certain impress of his early teaching may be traced in some of his works. Voltaire visited England, and the result of his visit seems to have been the encouragement of a sceptical spirit, and of a free political instinct. He could not, however, understand the national genius of Shakspeare better than Taine, describing the great English tragedian as a barbarous

genius, and his horror of our language made him wish half the English nation to have the plague, and the other half the ague.

Voltaire visited Holland, but he did not appreciate the Dutch spirit, and was glad to depart with an epigram, conveying his disgust: "Adieu, canaille, canards, canaux." Voltaire resided in France, where a sceptical writer, Bayle, led the way, at this time, in issuing sceptical prose productions, a tendency taken up by Voltaire, who produced a series of flippant, cutting prose works, of which more anon. The free, unbelieving nature of these prose works, led to the necessity of his residing most of his time at Ferney, in the midst of that lovely scenery, of which even his satirical, artificial genius felt the charms, expressed in his sentiment: "Mon lac est le premier." The grand episode of the life of Voltaire, is his visit to Frederic the Great of Prussia, with whom he corresponded most of his life in a style of sentimental coquetry, amusing to read. But has not the intercourse of the monarch and the wit been duly chronicled by the pen of Macaulay? how the great Frederic sent his bad verses to be corrected by Voltaire, who objected to have to clean the "dirty linen" of the king? how Voltaire was almost caned for his impertinence, and, after these intellectual sharpeners had come to a furious quarrel, how Voltaire and his niece were shut up, by orders of Frederic, in a guard-house at Frankfort? It has been seen that Voltaire wrote one epic, the "Henriade," the only one in French, and avowedly a failure; for how could the very spirit of mockery appreciate chivalry and Joan of Arc?

The dramas of Voltaire have real merit. He used his best efforts to introduce more scenic effect on the French stage, by decoration. His earliest tragedy is "*Œdipe*," in which he borrowed much from Corneille, and shows a fettered spirit. "*Merope*" is an attempt at a real Greek tragedy; it failed as such, and was, moreover, borrowed from Maffei. Yet the character of the mother is admirable for heroic constancy, triumphing over all things; it is a picture of great truth and beauty. "*Oreste*" violates historic truth, and the customs and manners of the ancients. It is unnatural, because fettered by the frigidity of French rule.

"*Brutus*" is the only one of Voltaire's Roman plays that is sensibly written. It breathes, throughout, the genuine sentiments of freedom, pronounced with a grave and noble eloquence; but part of the plot is unnatural. The "*Mort de César*" is, in some measure, taken from Shakespeare—a bungling piece, throughout most unnatural.

"*Catiline*" is full of inaptitudes, but better than the "*Mort de César*," though the characters are beneath what they appear in history. "*Zaire*" is throughout a fine piece, but "*Zaire*" is wanting in Oriental colouring. The Christian knights in the piece are highly interesting, and probably show an after-glow of Jesuitic influence. The scene of "*Alzire*" is laid in Peru. The plot of this piece is impossible; yet the last scene of the dying Guzman is overpowering in pathos, and the play has noble lines on differences in religion, the sentiments being ascribed to the Duke de Guise, as addressed by him to a Huguenot soldier, who wished to kill him. "*Alzire*" is perhaps the most finished of Voltaire's plays.

The philosopher of Ferney makes the round of the world in his dramatic productions. "*Mahomet*" is an exaggerated attempt to make religion odious; "*Semiramis*" is a patchwork, the ghost of Ninus being a ridiculous travesty of Hamlet's spectre. "*Tancred*" has a fine chivalrous plot, but many imperfections.

Voltaire made the drama a vehicle of his opinions. In France it has remained much as he left it, till the romantic school; nor has any French dramatic writer attained the same finish and excellence since his time. Tragedy showed nothing worthy of note from Voltaire to Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, and Delavigne. J. Ant. Ducis introduced Shakespere, and is thought to have had some beauties of his own (1733—1816); another name is that of L. Sebastian Mercier (died 1814). More recently occur Fr. Jean Guill. Stan. Andrieux, T. J. Marie Raynouard (born 1761), Nep. L. Lemer cier (born 1770), E. Jouy (born 1769), and others.

Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, and Alfred de Musset had made a great success in the "Lyrics of the Romantic School." Its drama was not so successful. Its fatal error was a noisy negation of tragedy; it sought not the beautiful for its own sake, but contradiction: hence each of its representations was a combat.

Dramatic scandals—shocking plots—were the rage; and they had not to go far for them. Timid imitations of German plays had led the way in this. Schiller was first travestied; then Shakespere was misunderstood. Shakespere had softened off the barbarism of a rough age; he was taken by the romantic school as the type of those who give roughness to an effeminate age. Alfred de Vigny gave a true version of Othello, which had been veiled by Ducis; but Iago was too much for the *habitués* of Rue Richelieu. The piece was hissed. This time the public were wrong, and the poets took their revenge.

Victor Hugo composed two of his dramas before the end of the Restoration: "Marion Delorme," and "Hernani." These pieces disclose much of the errors common to this author, from "Cromwell" to the "Burgraves." The chief fault is too little resemblance to Shakespeare. The place is not too often shifted; the time of the plot is not exaggerated. But a mixture of the grotesque with the serious is a vulnerable point. The pathetic is disfigured by buffoonery; yet all this might have been pardoned. The chief defect of Victor Hugo's dramas is, that they are too lyric. Antitheses become ridiculous when carried from words to parts and actions. Victor Hugo himself has criticised his own works! "Who is Hernani? A bandit full of honour. Who is Marion de l'Orme? A mercenary woman, full of love." Then, in other pieces, such as "Le roi qui s'amuse," he has qualified and condemned the parts himself. "Take the most hideous physical deformity. . . . light up this miserable creature on all sides, in the dismal light of contrasts, and then throw into him a soul, and give to this soul the purest sentiment that can be given to man—fatherly love: this deformed creature will become beautiful." Who is Lucretia Borgia? "Take the most hideous moral deformity. . . . place it where it stands in the best light, in a woman's heart. . . . and now mix up with all this moral deformity a pure sentiment, the purest that woman can feel—maternal love. . . . and the monster will interest you—the monster will bring tears to your eyes—she will move you to pity; and this deformed soul will become almost beautiful in your eyes!" Maternal love, purifying immorality—such is Lucretia Borgia.

Here are the merit and the defect of Victor Hugo. He paints truth and nature, there are charity and beauty in his conceptions; but he exaggerates dangerously, to the confusion of our moral sense—he accumulates repulsive elements. No doubt the human heart has plenty of contradictions, and the drama of Voltaire did not feel this enough. But these contrasts lie within, in the soul, and do not enter it violently from without. His reactions are excessive, and while, with the pseudo-classic drama, persons become abstractions, with Victor Hugo they become wonderful gymnastic feats.

Alexandre Dumas (born 1803, died 1870) also started a new style of drama. Novelist, plagiarist, dramatist, oriental satrap in his fabulous villa near Paris, Dumas was too successful, too wealthy, too pleasure and self seeking, to reach the first order of creators. He was the son of a brave general in the revolutionary armies, bearing the same name, and partly Creole; for his father

was a man of colour, the son of a Frenchman settled at San Domingo, and who married a mulatto. The burning blood of the tropics seemed to circulate in the veins of this young poet, and to give a certain fiery and insubordinate character to his writings. His first essay was "*Henri III. et sa Cour*," an historic drama in prose; rather a feeble production, having nothing historical but costumes, names, anecdotes, and some details of manners. The only character in the piece that was dramatically portrayed was the king, Henry III. Stockholm, Fontainebleau, and Rome, a trilogy on "*Christina of Sweden*," conceived in the same spirit, was worked up with more art. The murder of Monaldeschi offers a dramatic interest; but all poetical impulse and moral affection were wanting in the piece. There was no soul; it was body speaking to body, as Buffon expresses it. Yet the author showed a profound understanding of scenic effect, and the science of producing it, which few understood better than he. Dumas introduced a new period. A moment of repose arrived. The romantic school had gained the liberty of fame, and, after doing so, disbanded like a victorious army. Public attention was called to graver objects; the new revolution of July, 1830, called forth the energies of the nation, and directed them to religious matters, industry, political economy, or constitutional government, &c. Literature had done a good work in the earlier years of the century; and now the people went to work to apply its teachings.

The century was divided into two parts: the first, to the men of thought; the second, to the men of action. Literature was, however, lowered to a trade: romance took the place of poetry; feuilletons of romance; the drama was supplanted by the vaudeville.

The light dramatic literature of France gave the tone to Europe—not always for its advantage; and among this class of writers, Eugène Scribe (born 1794, died 1861) launched an inexhaustible supply of vaudevilles, containing sparkling, stinging wit, and a spice of mischief. Great writers rose to oppose this tendency, and adorn French prose, but the spirit of the age was too strong for them. The reading public only sought a more or less honest distraction and amusement in letters; and England seems fast gravitating to the same low level of frivolity.

CHAPTER XXII.

FRENCH PROSE.—TO PASCAL.

IN describing the progress of French prose since François I., the mind is conscious of the importance and dignity of the theme. The style of prose writing has been cultivated in France with a care found nowhere else among modern nations. For clearness, precision, and epigrammatic brevity and propriety there is nothing to compare with it.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, French prose had little to show, save tales of chivalry and didactic works—all maturity of form was wanting. The language was ennobled and enriched, in many ways, about the latter half of the sixteenth century, especially by the works of F. Rabelais, gifted with a satirical genius, Montaigne, a quaint writer and deep thinker, saturated with the ancient classics, Henri Etienne, Th. Beza, and Jacques Amyot, of Méhun (1513—1593), remarkable for learning and originality, and by a series of histories and memoirs, attractive alike in contents and tone.

In the seventeenth century, the French Academy had a decided influence; prose gained in grammatical purity and correctness of style, not without loss of free natural power, as may be seen in Voiture and Balzac. A more independent spirit is seen in Cl. F. de Vaugelas (1585—1649), valued as a grammarian, and translator of Curtius. Pascal's and Arnauld's originality and moral purity worked on the mode of thought and expression with beneficial effect. Racine, Bossuet, Fénelon, La Bruyère, Bayle, Hamilton, Massillon, and others presented models of excellence to posterity; and the age gave birth to a considerable number of good histories, memoirs, tales, and romances. A highly ornamental style, introduced by Fontenelle, hardly maintained itself twenty or thirty years in the eighteenth century. A greater precision and clearness of style, with superficiality of thought, were developed by the encyclopædists; but the writers who brought French prose to perfection were Voltaire, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Buffon, Montesquieu, and others. The subject of French prose must be classified under heads treated chronologically. Beginning, first, with pulpit eloquence, we have the following orators and writers standing out as pre-eminent for power and beauty:—Jacques Benigne Bossuet, of Dijon

(1627—1704), Bishop of Meaux, moving and deeply engaging in his "Discourses"—the leader in the path of the philosophy of history, a clever logician in controversial works—remarkable as uniting fervour with charity and toleration; Louis Bourdaloue (1632—1704), a Jesuit, satisfies the understanding by profound analysis and classification; Esprit Flechier (1632—1710), Bishop of Nîmes, noteworthy for his correctness of thought and style; François de Salignac de la Motte Fénelon (1651—1715), Archbishop of Cambrai, a man every way admirable as prelate, Christian, and writer, spared even by the enemies of France when their armies entered his diocese in the time of the prostration of France under Louis XIV. The writings of Fénelon are replete with deep and fine feeling, powerfully moving the heart, clear and penetrating in his works of piety, sweet and idyllic in many of his descriptions, particularly in the celebrated "Aventures de Télémaque," written for the Dauphin, son of Louis XIV., to whom he was tutor at the time, and who was carried off by an early death.

Jacques Saurin, of Nîmes (1677—1730), was a Protestant preacher at the Hague, admirable, simple, and gifted almost with prophetic language; Jean Baptiste Massillon, of Hières (1665—1742), Bishop of Clermont, was a great orator, biblical in language, rich in thought, and powerful in expression. His "Funeral Orations" are models, and morally grand, as venturing to present all truth in a fearless spirit, even to the court of Louis XIV.

The eloquence of the bar has been well represented in France. Its style was ennobled by A. le Maistre (died 1658), Paul Pellison (died 1693), especially by Oliv. Patru (died 1693), noted for a rigidly critical mind. It was promoted by many excellent advocates in the parliaments: Den. Talon (died 1698), Chrét. F. de Lamignon (died 1709), H. Cochin (died 1747), H. Fr. d'Aguesseau (1667—1751), a man of a cultivated scientific spirit, and a model in language and in his mode of presenting a case. P. J. B. Gerlier (died 1788) and Sim. Nic. H. Linguet (1736—1794) were bold men, and prone to innovation in political matters.

A grand sphere was opened for eloquence at the beginning of the French revolution, which produced, among other orators, Gabriel Hon. Riquetti, Count Mirabeau of Egreville (1749—1791), a genius of a high order, clouded and warped by a dissolute life—the genius of modern eloquence, as French critics have styled him—incorrect, powerful, and sometimes sublime; uniting alone popular passion and political intelligence.

In recent times we have the admirable Berryer, and, as orators

in the *Chambres*, Louis Blanc, Lamartine, M. de Falloux, M. Thiers, and Jules Favre.

No people have excelled more in letter-writing than the French. This results from the sociable polite spirit, the talent for airy nothings and decorative art, conspicuous in the nation. Vincent Voiture (born at Amiens 1598, died 1648) was hyper-artificial; T. L. Guez de Balzac (born 1588, died 1654), an able letter-writer; Babet (died 1661 or 1665), remarkable for a tender, epistolary style; Marie de Rabutin, Marquise de Sevigné (died 1696), composed letters still regarded as models, especially of motherly love, addressed to her daughter; yet they contain some strange allusions and advice, according to the estimate of the present age. The letters of Rousseau and Voltaire partake of the defects and excellences of those master writers.

Memoirs and descriptions of manners are a special excellence of French prose, in which it far surpasses other modern literatures. The lively, sensitive French race, overflowing with wit and fire, gifted with exquisite tact, has had a wonderful facility for seizing easily on the peculiar features of character, and portraying them with graphic power. Marie Cureau de la Chambre (died 1669) led the way in this branch; but its great ornament, under Louis XIV., was J. de la Bruyère (1639—1699), translator of the Greek Characters of Theophrastus, and author of an original work on the "Manners of the Age of Louis XIV."

La Bruyère is a charming author, who is read through many times with pleasure. What a rich picture is the book of his "Caractères!" how finely drawn! what brilliant colours and delicate shades! what a stir there is in all that comic world which he has evoked! His persons are a busy crowd, running about, tricked out with pretensions, originalities, and the ridiculous. The reader would think he was in the great gallery of Versailles, and that he saw pass before him dukes, marquises, financiers, bourgeois-gentilshommes, pedants, and court prelates! In one place the reader listens to a pungent dialogue, with all the zest of a little comedy, and excellent sound sense to wind it up. In another page he finds a maxim conceived like those of La Rochefoucauld, but without his bitterness; familiar images ennobled by his wit and original way of viewing them, and a quiet inoffensive phrase, terminating in a sharply armed and aimed missile.

La Bruyère was a close observer, but not exactly a philosopher. He did not dig down to principles; he kept on the surface

among the growth of passions and vices. He is an artist, rather than a thinker; his writings, like the biting maxims of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, belong to satire more than memoirs. The Duc de St. Simon (born 1675, died 1755), following Sully, the favourite of Henri IV., gives us the exact type of memoirs—gossipy, rather scandalous, but polite as courtly Pepys. Since his time the number of memoirs is legion. Among others Ch. Duclos (1705—1772), a moral, unsparing writer, composes “*Mémoires sur les Mœurs du XVIII. Siècle*,” “*Mémoires Secrets sur les Règnes des Louis XIV. et XV.*” But though modern French literature has been inundated with memoirs of different degrees of merit—the best being the “*Mémoires d’Outre Tombe de Châteaubriand*,” those of Guizot, and the “*Confidences of Lamartine*”—the real age of memoirs was from the death of François I. to the capture of Paris (1547—1594). There exist 26 works of this class bearing on that period, though it has no history; and De Thou, the noblest thinker of the time, wrote in Latin. Of that period are Fleurange, the companion of the childhood of François I., called the “*Jeune Aventurier*, son of the Boar of Ardennes—Robert de la Marck, prisoner in the citadel of l’Ecluse—Fleurange—*S’est mis à écrire ses mémoires.*” Chivalric in style, as in his life, he has left a recital full of interest and of originality. The great interest found in these memoirs consists in the various temperaments of the authors. We seem to see a moving scene, where a crowd of actors are performing their parts in infinite variety of costume and character. History lives again, as the individual life of man. On the one hand, we have the terrible Blaise de Montluc, a savage Catholic, and a brave Gascon, the most solemn of French chroniclers, who gave the name of commentaries to his memoirs, that were styled by Henri IV. the “*Soldier’s Bible*.” Then the old “*Maréchal de Vieilleville*,” portrayed by his secretary, Carloix—a man as calm as he was brave, resisting the raging passions of the day, showing moderation, sweetness, and generosity amidst civil strife. Then again the two Tavannes—one a frondeur and satirist, the other a gentle, modest spirit; while in the Huguenot camp, great purity of soul and “heroism are found in the brave, irreproachable La Noue”—“*Un grand homme de guerre et un grand homme de bien!*” as Henri IV. said of him. Coligny, too, wrote his memoirs. Brantôme tells us that: “*L’amiral ne passa un seul jour, que devant de se coucher, il n’eût écrit de sa main, dans son papier-journal, les choses dignes de mémoire, qui étoient arrivées dans les troubles.*” *Bought to Charles IX.*, the book was condemned and burnt,

at the instigation of Maréchal de Retz, and we have only his "Discours sur le Siège de St. Quentin." Of later memoir writers the most celebrated are Brantôme, a courtier, impartial, by corruption indifferent to vice and virtue—excellent witness to the turpitude of the sixteenth century; also Pierre de l'Estoile, king's counsellor, handing down faithful, invaluable journals, putting down scrupulously the events of each day. Lastly, Marguerite de Valois, first wife of Henri IV., speaks almost exclusively of herself in her "Mémoires." Her soul appears in every page—learned, without pedantry; quaint, sympathetic, clear, delicate in expression.

France has been rich in satirical prose: it is the genius of the people; and here we meet the name of Rabelais. It is difficult, indeed, to class this writer, so many characters does he combine in his writings. The life of Rabelais is the image of his book. Born at Devinière, near Chinon, 1482, in a cabaret, and always retaining a predilection for such places, he became a jack-of-all-trades—cordelier, Benedictine, physician, librarian, secretary of embassy, and curé—he went on his way drinking, enjoying life freely. Versed in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Italian, Spanish, German, and Arabic, and speaking, on occasion, the most popular French of the Trouvères, laughing at all authorities, calling forth all reforms, protected by prelates and ministers, dying in his presbytery quietly, with a jest on his lips, while the stake was ablaze and the torturer in vogue, Rabelais is a phenomenon in the sixteenth century.

As to his character as author, Rabelais was at once a scholar, a philosopher, a journalist, a romance writer, a reformer. He was a kind of buffoon with genius—a strange alliance of instruction and coarseness, monstrous union of a fine and ingenious morality with a foul corruption. When he is bad, he goes beyond all bounds: "C'est le charme de la canaille."

The life of Gargantua and Pantagruel is an epic gone mad, the orgy of reason and genius. Mixing Erasmus with Boccaccio, he produced an unexampled work, combining science, obscenity, the comic, the eloquent, and high flights of fancy, a book unlike anything else, that intoxicates and disgusts, and which it is doubtful if it be understood after being read and re-read with admiration.

The joyous curé of Meudon, who has been called the French Shakespere in the comic vein, anticipated all modern reforms, political and religious liberty, the organization of finances, the destruction of privileges. What common sense

eloquence in the speech of Grandgosier against the sanguinary folly of aggressive wars! Rabelais is inexhaustible in his attacks on abuses in religion and its ministers. He would like to take "une grosse pierre et dé ferir par la moitié tous ces oiseaux sacro-saints," but a prudent voice stops him, whereupon he takes gaily to drinking and banqueting. Seeing "ces diables d'oiseaux, we do nothing but blaspheme, but emptying les bouteilles et pots ne faisons que louer Dieu." He had some of the asperity of the German reformer, but more French gaiety than Luther, and was far inferior to Shakespere in the grand calm judgment of the highest genius.

A man of very different order came up in France about the same time, Michel Montaigne (1533—1592), who proclaimed in his great work the liberty of thought already advocated by Ramus. Born in Gascony, he kept the lively sallies and movable temperament of his country through life. His childhood was free and happy: in the morning, music roused him from sleep; study, lost all its thorny sides in his case; he learnt the classic languages like his mother tongue by conversation, the true method. This hothouse education would not have suited most boys; it succeeded with Montaigne. His Gascon vivacity kept him from apathy, but he had a love "du bien être," which was preserved from gross egotism by his strong common sense. He had no ambition, especially for the sad occupation of a narrow and perfidious political life. His profession was to live easily, to enjoy life twice as much as others. He wished for happiness through wisdom—not a sad and sour-faced wisdom, but sweet, agreeable "the nursery mother of human pleasures." There is nothing more gay or playful in the opinion of Montaigne, but it must be admitted, he seems sometimes a little epicurean.

The reader may fancy he sees him in his château, fortified by his ancestors, but having for all defence in his time only a porter, who is not so much occupied in guarding it as in opening it graciously to visitors. There amidst the terrible civil war he seeks a retreat and repose; he will not stir. He pities the heroism of the soldiers storming cities, famished, wounded, perishing in the breach, or the scholar who is resolved to die in mastering the measure of Plautus. Yet Montaigne could not set aside all the duties of a citizen. At the age of twenty-three his father bought him the office of counsellor in the Cour des Aides de Perigueux, and after in the Chambre des Enquêtes of the parlement of Bordeaux. The young magistrate did not much like this profession, into which "his father had plunged him when quite

young, up to his ears." He mocked at his pedantic colleagues and found most of the laws and customs barbarous. At the age of forty he resigned the office.

Court life was more agreeable to him. In 1575 he sought the office of gentilhomme ordinaire of the king, and two years after that of gentilhomme de la chambre of the king of Navarre, but though Montaigne became a courtier, he was never servile.

He travelled in Italy, and was named citizen de Rome, 1581. On his return to France he was elected and re-elected maire. His book was like his life and character. It seems objectless, incoherent, yet one idea prevails throughout, it is himself; it is man as he was, is, and will be, and this has secured him immortality. He judges himself with wondrous impartiality, and analyzes himself with extreme finesse; and he combined so many human features and acquirements, that in analysing himself he seems to analyze humanity. To this analysis he associates the study of great questions. His fertile scepticism awakened the reason of his contemporaries. In religion, politics, and literature the world then said: "I know all;" Montaigne took as device: "What do I know?"

Yet, with all his Pyrrhonism, he never doubted God or virtue. These august thoughts, the grand forms standing alone amid so many ruins of belief, inspired him with sublime eloquence. How grand his eulogy on the man of courage, who does not lose heart for any approach of danger or death.

Antiquity renascent breathes through this language of the 16th century. His two masters were Plutarch and Seneca. One is full of things, the other of jests and sallies, suiting his lively humour, but the brightest light shining in Montaigne is his imagination. This is reflected in his style, and makes it as clear and quaint speaking on paper as it would be in the mouth; succulent, muscular, short and abrupt, vehement and brusque, rather than delicate and well-worded, far from affectation, even bold and incoherent. The language of Montaigne is still studied, and a treasure compared to the impoverished French prose of the 18th century.

Satire and Montaigne bring us naturally to philosophy, to Descartes, Pascal, and Malebranche, the encyclopædists, Rousseau and the school of De Maistre, Cousin, Jouffroy, and modern French thought.

The seventeenth century, from its very outset, announces itself as a thoroughly organic period. All sciences and arts seem to meet there in a harmonious unity. One thought, one soul

alone seems to speak through these different organs. It is the Christian feeling in all its truth, spirituality circulating throughout French society, and giving it life. Philosophy and poetry seem to be two dialects of the same language. Descartes is the Corneille of prose. French tragedy had something abstract about it; it was psychology in action. Philosophy was about to prescribe as law what poetry had divined by inspiration.

What a contrast between the philosophy of the seventeenth century and the noble but vague aspirations of the sixteenth. This was a revolutionary epoch, a tumultuous insurrection against the Middle Age! All systems were in an immense ferment: Montaigne learned, sceptical, Lucinio Vanini (1619) divinising the forces of nature, and Giordano Bruno (1600), the Pantheist, dying on the stake at Rome!

René Descartes was born at La Haye in Touraine, 31st March, 1596. At sixteen he had exhausted contemporaneous science, but if he discovered that science did not exist, he found out that truth existed. He gave up books, and studied men in journeys and in war; he studied the only science that satisfied his mind by its certainty, mathematics. He improved algebra, and applied it to geometry. But all these studies were only the apprenticeship of his genius. Descartes sought the *method*, the great high road leading the human mind to truth. What was required was not an abstraction, but a certain reality, a fulcrum to raise the world.

He went apart, he lived retired at Nuremberg, "without care or passion," shut up "*dans un poêle*," then at Paris, where he was discovered by his friends, after two years; again in Holland, whose foggy climate made him turn his thoughts into himself. Then subjecting himself to an austere life and diet, the anchorite of philosophy, he prepared himself for the worship of idealism.

Descartes began by rejecting all received creeds from his soul, to receive them again or other better ones, when settled on the basis of his reason. To do this he invented a method taken from his favourite sciences—to admit nothing but what was evident; to divide difficulties in order to overcome them; to go from the simple to the compound. Such was his method. He thought to find in all things falling under our ken, a concatenation like that in geometrical propositions.

His method was a revolution. By it Descartes placed certitude in evidence, reason alone being judge. It was at one blow dethroning authority and the creation of true philosophy.

His method was sanctioned by its first results. He found in

it, himself, God, and the universe. "I think, therefore, I am" (*cogito ergo sum*); therefore God is; therefore an external world exists.

True he lost himself later on in vain hypotheses, but he had found the laws to correct them. A great geometer, great in physics, and even in physiology, he directed his chief efforts to psychology, the analysis of the soul. His school was metaphysical and idealistic; Spinoza and Malebranche were his pupils; even Leibnitz felt his influence, though grandly original; but Bacon had preceded him and proclaimed before him the true mode of inquiry in natural science—*induction*. France and England seemed to divide the modern world between them.

The "Discours de la Méthode" (1637) is the first *chef d'œuvre* of modern French prose. Majestic and simple, it reveals the fine French of the seventeenth century. Appearing almost at the same time as the "Cid" of Corneille, the language of these two works was henceforth the French of the future.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FRENCH PROSE.—FROM PASCAL TO ROUSSEAU.

THE French of Descartes was only addressed to the intelligence. It wants warmth and animation. "Oh, flesh!" he had exclaimed, speaking contemptuously of the body; to which Gassendi had replied, "Oh, idea!" There was room for the soul between the flesh and pure reason. Pascal completes Descartes. As lofty as Descartes is by the height of his genius, he attaches men more to his person. It is felt that passions and suffering have passed through him. "His head reaches above us, but his feet stand on the same level." On opening his book, "The Pensées," the reader is charmed to find that looking for an author he finds a man.

He was a terrible child, whose mighty genius alarmed his father; born at Clermont, in Auvergne, 1628, dying 1662. At the age of twelve, he invented, as a recreation, the elements of geometry, at sixteen he composed his "Treatise on Conic Sections," but his organisation gave way early under such efforts: from the age of eighteen he did not pass a single day without suffering.

Yet his early years had a gleam of joy. Being forbidden to

study by his physicians, he immersed himself for a season in the pleasures of the world. This did not last long, however; an accident placing his life in danger, brought him back to serious and religious thoughts; he threw himself into the austere life of Port Royal.

At the gates of Paris, at three leagues from Versailles, the seventeenth century beheld a last and memorable repetition of the Thebaid of the early Church. The monastery of Port Royal, of the Cistercian order, founded 1204, fell under the direction of the great Arnauld family, who reformed it, about 1594, but it was in reality the abbey, which conquered the family. Angelique Jacqueline Arnauld, named abbess, when quite young, and by worldly influence, but afterwards, touched by grace, undertook the reform of the convent. The whole family, including her mother, became her spiritual daughters. Soon after, Saint Cyran, a Jansenist, became director, and inspired the community with his sombre spirit. A crowd of penitents gathered round him, including Nicole, the great Antoine Arnauld, and Pascal.

It was the time of the great struggle of Jansenism and Jesuitism. Jansenism aimed at a kind of reform inside the Church. The sacraments were to remain, but the Protestant view of grace and predestination was to be allied with them. The doctrine was chilling and joyless as Calvinism; it proscribed the flesh and all enjoyments; sciences and arts were to it vanities, if not crimes; good works had no merit; the world was debarred the presence of a terrible God. The church of the Jansenists is an aristocracy of grace.

Opposed to this exclusive party was the broader, more genial teaching of Bossuet, of Francis of Sales, the indulgent prelate, the charming writer, truly broad and catholic in spirit. But Jansenism had other opponents—the Jesuits, who, while they had many merits, fervour, learning, virtues, had gone far in accommodating themselves to the wishes of princes and to the spirit of the times. To gain all men they had exceeded the bounds of discretion. There is reason to think that in France they were too tolerant towards the court and the prejudices of the time and place. Amidst this strife Pascal entered the lists, throwing his powerful pen on the side of Jansenism, against the Jesuits. His "*Lettres Provinciales*" constitute a kind of controversial work in the form of a comedy. He guessed the nature of sound comedy before Molière. Pascal is not so happy in treating the thorny question of grace, but he carried common sense along with him in his attacks on the casuists. Here Pascal displays all his irony, his

fire, and his eloquence. His "Satire" recalls the best passages of Plato, Demosthenes, and Cicero. His tendency led him to misconstrue many of his opponents, but the casuists had left themselves open to criticism.

This, however, was not his work of predilection. His "Pensées" will remain as the great monument of his genius, though unfinished. He wished to go beyond Descartes, taking the reader from indifference and doubt to lead him up docile and faithful to the feet of religion. His procedure is singular: he destroys fundamentally, to rebuild on a surer foundation, but he leaves much in ruins.

To him reason, justice, truth, and natural law are gone; nature is radically corrupted since the fall; grace is the only resource; but in every page we see the history of his own soul, the painful conviction of a soul in desolation. His physical infirmities gave a darker colouring to his views—his "Pensées" seem written with his heart's blood. What lightnings of thought and poetry flash across the dark abyss of his desolation; what a painter, what a poet is this man who despised poetry and art! Every page reveals the flight of a great soul towards God, and his life and work become a long religious drama, in which the reader anxiously follows the hero in his struggles and efforts, in his broken and enigmatical utterances. It is *soul* that makes Pascal a great man and a great thinker, and his soul gives incomparable beauty to his style when he *annihilates* man between the *two infinities*, or describes him as the thinking reed (*roseau pensant*) raising its head nobly in the universe that crushes it, or when turning his eyes aloft, he is frightened by the eternal silence of those infinite spaces!

Of Malebranche less need be said (1631—1715). He was a Descartes gone astray; yet his wanderings are grateful, for, taking the wings of his master, he soars to God, and leaves off all intercourse with earth: truly an angelic spirit like Berkeley, and more healthful than the downward gaze of Locke, or Diderot, or Büchner.

The spirit of Descartes hovered over the whole century, and lives in all works, particularly in France. But the strict orthodoxy of the time was in doubt respecting the propriety of his system, till Malebranche gave it a religious and poetical colouring. Endowed with a powerful imagination, he experienced strong palpitations when he read Descartes; he seemed to fear the empire of his imagination. His characteristics were excess and temerity; he was narrow, yet extreme, but always sublime; expressing only

one side of Plato, but in the angelic language of a Christian soul. Malebranche was still, however, a follower of the method of Descartes; his doctrine was the result of analysis and discussion.

Montesquieu was the contemporary of Voltaire, but while the latter belonged to the bold, destructive class of reformers, the great jurist was the essence of sound sense, the impersonation of moderate reform—an English mind with a French dress. No passion, no ideal, no dreams—a close observer of the facts and realities of the past, fond of explaining the causes of things as they are—conservative, reflective—a rare character in France.

Montesquieu's character is reflected in his works. Curious, not dogmatical, intelligent, not impassioned, without any strong convictions, he looks at the moral world as Newton looked at the physical, seeking the principles of things. He carried his professional habits into history and in his travels: "When I am in France," he tells the reader, "I make friends with every one; in England, with no one; in Italy, I pay compliments to every one; in Germany, I drink with every one." He was the Alcibiades of literary men, and showed the same suppleness in his works. "I do not write to censure what is established in any country whatsoever. Every country will here find the principles of its maxims." To explain is everything; he even shows indulgence to abuses, and traces the ideal of despotism; but his writings are a mine of sound principles. He gives honour as the mainspring of monarchy, virtue of republics, in this, perhaps, confounding cause and effect. He had a divining power in detecting the spirit and merit of other governments and people; thus his description of the English Constitution is superior to that given by most Englishmen; it was his ideal; his "*Esprit des Lois*" was inspired by his experience of England.

Montesquieu stands immeasurably above the shallow innovators of his time. Patient, historical, impartial, what a contrast to Helvetius, who, however, had sense to do justice to his merits in words that seem to contain a slight satire: "*Je ne sais si nos têtes Françaises soient assez maures pour saisir les grandes beautés de votre ouvrage.*"

The influence of the "*Esprit des Lois*" was immense in France, but not immediate; it heralded the constitutionalism now universal in Europe, but its principles were at first received rather coldly.

Attention has been already given to Voltaire as a poet ; his great influence was due to his prose.

Voltaire represents the eighteenth century. Incredulous, but a Deist, he gave to France what Protestant countries lacked—toleration. His spirit, as that of the nation and age, is superficial. He attacks abuses rather by irony and ridicule than by argument. He makes authority itself the accomplice of his pleasantry ; a man of the world more than a philosopher, he glides over surfaces for fear of meeting darkness below ; an artist, and above all, a clever man, he aimed at success rather than the ideal. To him art, philosophy, and polity were but means ; influence was his aim. He penetrated deep into his generation by his thought, and left his character imprinted on the nation.

His two dominant qualities were passion and a rare common sense ; the result was a sparkling, universal, irresistible wit, the genius of wit which was the power of Voltaire. His aim was to set free thought. To do this, he struck at religion, and obtained partizans even among crowned heads—Frederic of Prussia, Catherine of Russia, Gustavus III. of Sweden, Christian VII. of Denmark, Joseph II. of Austria. He did not aim at a political revolution, though he helped unconsciously to make one.

His persevering, unrelenting attacks on the Church can by no means be excused. Catholicism was the life of the world in the middle ages, and Voltaire was quite unable to appreciate it ; but criticism must not be unjust to him ; even the power to judge and speak freely of him and all things is partly the result of the toleration he helped to establish.

Unfortunately, especially for France, the general result was to be indifferent, and a religious and moral atony prevalent in Europe in the present day. He aimed at too much ; he sought to grasp more than a man can master. Unlike the German genius that gives a lifetime to elucidate a verse, and settles it for ever, Voltaire strove to cover all inquiries, and did not cover one. His histories are full of wit, and models of style, but mere romances in point of accuracy.

Before attention is directed to Rousseau, it is proper briefly to notice the Encyclopædists, a school of semi-philosophers and demi-historians. Yet the idea of the "Encyclopédie" was grand ; nothing less than to embrace all human knowledge in a vast work, to view the past through the light of modern science, to unite in a confraternity of literary work the most various and the most brilliant talents. But the spirit that was to animate the work was that of the eighteenth century, a hatred

or contempt of the past, a distaste for spiritualistic doctrines, a preference for arts, sciences, and industry emanating from experience. The form of the book was to atone for the want of unity, that was certain to attend a work built on such principles.

The "Encyclopédie" was a dictionary. The natural connection of sciences, the classification of ideas and facts—synthesis, in short—was replaced by alphabetical order. The edifice of science was thus broken and reduced to powder.

The eighteenth century saw its likeness in the "Encyclopédie." All parties saw in it the centre-point of the battle, round which the struggle would be hardest. It consists of twenty-two volumes, folio; 4250 copies were printed; the first edition was immediately exhausted; the last copies were bought up for 1800 livres (£90). Another edition was called for; the circulation of the first editions of the work, in the first few years, brought in 80,000,000 francs.

Vain was the alarm excited by it in the Church, and at court; it was protected by the Duc de Choiseuil and the most eminent of France were among its subscribers.

The head of this colossal enterprise was the most patient and enthusiastic man the eighteenth century produced in France—Diderot,* who has been justly called "the most German head of France." A strange man, with strange contradictions—artist and scholar, a sceptic and yet impassioned, sublime, and immoral in turns, the herald of Atheism, yet impelled to faith by all the powers of his soul, loving nature, life, and beauty, and yet denying their Author—he alone, by his strange inconsistency, was fitted to edit such a work as the "Encyclopædia." His was a quaint, but generous nature, too great an intelligence not to be incomplete, too careless of future glory to have left much of his own, though his burning writing is found everywhere in the pages of his friends.

Associated with the ardent Diderot was the calm and prudent D'Alembert,† a great geometer, a *savant* of the first class, an exact and elegant writer, tempering by his moderation the fire of his friend. He strove to mitigate the tone of incredulity in the "Encyclopédie," and in his "Discours Préliminaire" he endeavoured to supply the want of method. This preface is a masterpiece of neatness, simple elegance, and modest elevation. In it he takes Bacon's "Instauratio Magna" as his model, and views it specially in its tendency to sensationalism. He presents the

* Born at Langres, 1713, died 1784.

† Born at Paris, 1717, died 1783.

picture of our knowledge in successive views, first subjectively, and then objectively—that is, first in the order the sciences have followed in the human mind, then in the logical dependence natural to them; but he was not a servile Baconian; his style and language are almost poetical.

Alongside the "Encyclopédie" appeared several men more distinctly philosophers; for Voltaire, Diderot, and D'Alembert were rather men of action. Condillac strove to give unity and a symbol to the principles of the eighteenth century. He took Locke as his model, but strove to be more methodical, vigorous, and transparent than Locke. Eliminating, as in the exact sciences, all conditions of reality, he arrived at pure abstractions, and made a conventional human soul. He tried to give a basis to his system, and sought it in sensation. Thought, with all its developments, was nothing more than *transformed sensation*; even reflection disappeared with Condillac; the soul became extinguished under his hand.

The Encyclopædists lauded a metaphysical system, of which they preserve the consequences. The "Encyclopédie" was the official and cautious work of the philosophical party; Condillac only laid down principles that seemed innocent. Two writers of the same camp went further.

Helvetius, a fermier-general, an honest, benevolent man, named Atticus by Voltaire, was fond of shouting out paradoxes and hints in the gatherings of philosophers, he invited to his table. The result of his discussions was his book, "De l'Esprit," that is, in metaphysics, materialism, and in morality, personal interest.

According to Helvetius, man only differs from the brutes in the shape of his organs, and virtue is only a cleverly-understood egotism. The same story has been repeated to satiety in our day; but even the associates of Helvetius were afraid of his plain speaking and his paradoxes.

They were still more frightened at Baron d'Holbach, who assembled all the elect among men of letters at his evening gatherings, and was called the *maître d'hôtel* of philosophy, for Holbach published as complete a code of Atheism as Auguste Comte. Happily it was a logical absurdity. Göthe styles it "so chimerical and cadaverous that we almost fear it as a spectre." The "Système de la Nature" was the terminus of the sensationalism of the eighteenth century, was the cold negation of all that is great, noble, and true in the heart of man. The eighteenth century could not descend lower.

A strong reaction against such detestable doctrines was sure to follow; society was alarmed; King Frederic tried to refute the fatal book; Voltaire uttered a cry of alarm. The philosophers had struck first at religion; they soon after attacked royalty: "*Plus de prêtres*!" was the first cry; "*Ni prêtres, ni rois absolus*!" was the next.

Voltaire was alarmed at this, and wrote: "All that I see throws the seeds of a revolution that is certain to come. . . . Young people are happy, they will see fine things."

Rousseau expressed the same prevision with graver eloquence: "Do not trust the existing order of society. We are approaching a critical state, and the age of revolutions."

But Rousseau was himself a reaction against the discord and fallacy of the Encyclopædists; he pointed to a healthier tone of thought and feeling.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FRENCH PROSE.—FROM ROUSSEAU TO OUR DAY.

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU was prepared by birth and education for the part he had to play. Born at Geneva (1712—1778), in a republic, amidst the poetic scenery of the Alps, son of a poor and intelligent *ouvrier*, his dreamy intelligence was early awakened by reading the great men of Plutarch, and the heroic romances of the seventeenth century. Life was presented to him under a romantic aspect, at once sublime and false. The tenderness he first experienced in poverty only made him the more sensible to the cruel trials of a life begun in indigence and contempt. Apprentice, vagabond, seminarist, lacquey, music-copier, he was obliged to inscribe in his memoirs the last day on which he suffered hunger; yet he was one of the elect of Nature, and having an admirable intelligence, he bore in him the thing that prompts to revolutions—the disagreement of capacity and position. From the midst of academies and salons, he uttered the shout of that ardent and energetic barbarism, that was murmuring in suppressed tones round the foundations of societies.

He gave five or six years to study style and writing, associated with men of letters in Paris; he read Racine and Voltaire; he studied Cicero and Horace; he tried to translate Tacitus. At the age of forty he was often seen pacing up and down his

garden, Virgil in hand, trying to master his Eclogues. He was at the same time completing the education of his mind. His language, formed at Geneva, improved by the classics, had something frank, pungent, popular, and democratic about it.

Armed with his eloquence, Rousseau struggled against the corrupt society surrounding him. Jean Jacques condemned the arts and the sciences in the name of virtue, making them unjustly responsible for the corruption that abused them. In condemning instruction it was because men, brutified by a vain knowledge, had closed their minds to the voice of reason, and their hearts to that of nature. He combated especially "that philosophy of a day, springing up and dying in the corner of a great city, and wishing to stifle the cry of nature and the universal voice of the human race." In his second discourse, he struck at social order, and maintained that civilisation makes man unhappy and guilty; that the savage alone is good, free, and happy.

The fact is that society was ill at ease in a too elegant and factitious civilisation, and this dream of a pretended state of nature was common to the eighteenth century. Fontenelle, Florian, and Gesner, chanted insipid idylls; a queen of France made a farm at the Trianon, but Rousseau expressed this longing most completely.

His propositions were threatening and redoubtable: the democratic flood is seen to rise as you read his works. He destroys the pretended right of the stronger, turning it against the possessor; he views *émeutes* to strangle a sultan as a just and justifiable act; he proclaims the folly of the multitude submitting to an imbecile or a handful of people gorged with superfluities.

The "*contrat social*" is his creed, and contains his articles of faith. Precise in style, imposing in language, closely reasoned in propositions well linked together, compressed, and therefore doubly commanding passion, these qualities make it a model of philosophical writing; but it has the defects of the age. All issues from an exclusive principle: "*L'homme naît libre.*" All society is a voluntary contract, the state reposes on an arbitrary convention, the people alone is sovereign, its decision is without appeal. He affirms what Roman lawyers had laid down: "*Ut i populus iusserit, ita lex esto.*"

This conception of human nature is generous and proud, but incomplete. The eternal order and law of things is here before

man; the Sovereign and Divine Reason and Lawgiver is above individual liberty, and man cannot withdraw himself from that jurisdiction. The legislator is only the expositor of eternal principles anterior and superior to positive laws.

Rousseau only considered half the social problem; Montesquieu had developed the other half. Rousseau did no more than repeat Hobbes; he saw that his views led him to the impossible, and that a real democracy had never existed, nor could it exist.

In morality Rousseau exaggerated the principle of liberty; it is in his consciousness of liberty that he places man's specific distinction, the most striking proof of the spirituality of his soul. His "Emile," a splendid monument of his original thought and eloquence, is full of this principle: "L'homme est un être naturellement bon;" ordinary education depraves him; and he establishes negative education as the best and the only good one; accordingly, he isolates Emile from all influence, and would make him invent religion, the arts and sciences. Rejecting tradition, he would endow an individual with the force of humanity. Emile is not to be taught religion till eighteen; but then how grandly eloquent Rousseau becomes in taking Emile to a hill at sunrise and showing him the distant Alps, surrounded with all the sublimity of nature.

If eloquence means reaching the heart of man, Rousseau was very eloquent; his morale is Christian, and rather Calvinistic. He condemns learning, letters, arts, though excelling in them; here far inferior to Voltaire, who said: "We must nourish the soul with all we find most precious." Rousseau was also very inconsequent. While proscribing the passions, he wrote a book full of their wanderings and intoxication. He was the greatest French poet of the eighteenth century, yet he never wrote a verse. By the light of his burning pages he threw into pallid shade the frigid poetry of the day, that would only condescend to look at the country through gilded casements.

Brought up far from Paris, his works revel in Swiss scenery, its beautiful lakes, its enchanting mountains. A word, a feature in his pages touch and move us. The black fir trees, the majestic lakes, the rocks of Meillerie, a simple flower—what poetry in his touches! He loves to collect his thoughts and meditate in delicious dreams in his boat on the Lake of Bienné, in a silence only broken by the eagle's cry, or by the roar of the torrents on the mountain's side.

This shows the germ of the poetry of our age. Shelley,

Wordsworth, Lamartine are prefigured in this profound passion for nature : the insipidities of the age of falsity were departing. Rousseau stopped the materialistic and sceptical movement of the eighteenth century, but he could not stop the fall of monarchy : his works even promoted it.

The philosophical movement following the revolution will be noticed in the Appendix. To complete our survey of French prose, it is necessary to add a brief notice of French historians and romance writers. France and England are the historical writing countries of Europe, in point of style, Germany in point of matter. In sparkling, brilliant, clear, precise style, France carries off the palm ; English prose histories are generally graver and sometimes more dignified.

The first proper historian of France was Rollin, painstaking, credulous, and readable. Among his predecessors, rather essayists in this branch, were Th. Agrippa d'Aubigné (died 1630), "History of his Time" (1550 to 1600) and "Autobiography;" and Bernard de Girard, Sieur d'Haillan (died 1610), "History of France." In the seventeenth century occurs Henry, Duc de Rohan (1638), author of "Memoirs," from 1611—1629. Of him and of the other writers of this age, it may be remarked in general, that the order, representation, and language are much more perfect. This is seen in J. Fr. de Gondi, Cardinal de Retz (died 1679), "Memoirs on the History of the Fronde;" Fr. Eudes de Mézéray (died 1683), "Histoire de France;" above all in Bossuet, who led the way in the philosophy of history, which he developed with a magnificence of style that has never been surpassed ("Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle").

About this time, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century, appears Cl. Fleury, the Church historian (died 1723); René Aub. de Vertot (died 1723), remarkable for descriptive power, and, above all, J. Ch. Rollin, already noticed (died 1741), simple and quaint, writing in a rather antiquated style. Of Voltaire notice has been already taken, and it suffices to add that his historical works are in model French, full of wit and full of inaccuracies. Among the lesser historical lights, or rushlights, it is proper to notice in the eighteenth century, Gabr. Bonnot de Mably (died 1785), treating specially of the forms of government; Th. Raynal (died 1796), "Anecdotes Historiques;" Ch. de Brosses (died 1777), "Histoire de la République de Rome, par Salluste;" Cl. Fr. Xav. Millot (died 1785), and others. A little later comes Abbé J. Barthélemy (born 1716, died 1795), "Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis en Grèce," a semi-historical work in classical French;

P. Bruno Daru, "History of Venice," 1819; Seroux d'Agincourt, "History of Art," 1811, &c.

A host of illustrious historians came up in France under the Restoration, and have continued to our time. Among the lesser writers are Ch. Lacretelle, "History of the Revolution;" Count Segur, "Napoléon et la Grande Armée en Russie," a graphic writer in the dramatic style, and others. Above them tower Chateaubriand, philosophical and eloquent; A. F. Mignet, exact and picturesque; Lamartine, a fine portrait painter—semi-historical; Louis Blanc, admirable for style, but not always impartial; till the constellation of great writers appears, many of whose works were crowned by the Academy, and who may be classed as critics and philosophers rather than historians; Villemain, Cousin, and Guizot.

Of bonâ fide historians, the present century since Napoleon I. has offered many in France who have inaugurated a new style, patient, profound, more impartial and German than those of the past. To this class belong Augustin Thierry and the lamented Ozanam, whose early death cut short a career full of promise.

To another and a different class belong M. de Barante and Thiers. The former is rich and wonderful in description, the Walter Scott of French history, but not always exact. Thiers is more a reasoner and painstaking; but though noble in style, he has serious defects. He draws from sources almost exclusively French, and is thus far from impartial and reliable, when national defeats and disasters are in question, and he commits the vulgar fault of making a kind of apotheosis of Napoleon I., while his star was in the ascendant, and of passing heavier judgment on him when he fails. The same unworthy treatment awaited Napoleon III. after Sedan.

Of French romance writers little good can be said. The whole class is perverted by a false morality, or rather by immorality. Victor Hugo's "Nôtre Dame" has some fine painting, but only one natural character, Quasimodo; Alfred de Vigny's "Cinq Mars" is better, the best historical romance in French. Balzac's novels are unworthy of notice; Alexandre Dumas, a great plagiarist, deals insufferably in crime, sensation scenes, and the horrors; George Sand (Madame Dudevant) is probably the most original novelist of France; but her works are far from blameless, judged by the code of English propriety.

CHAPTER XXV.

ENGLAND.

POETRY IN THE ELIZABETHAN AGE, AND SUBSEQUENTLY.

THE general and literary culture of Great Britain (united under the same sovereigns, from 1603 to 1706) were the final result of their severance from foreign and Papal influence at the Reformation, together with the development of political and social freedom inherited in a measure from early Saxon times, or wrested from the crown by the brave and independent action of the Church during the reigns of the Norman line and Plantagenets. The capricious tyranny of Henry VIII. (1509), and the interested motives actuating the regents under Edward VI., together with the intolerant reaction under Mary (1553), generated a dislike of violent measures and persecution under Elizabeth (1558), though she inherited the fierce temper of her father, and showed it in frequent outbreaks of severity and even cruelty.

The national mind in the time of Elizabeth was in a transition state. No longer Roman, nor yet Protestant, it hovered in a middle region like the "Tracts for the Times," and this state of things was favourable to a certain moderation of views and equilibrium of belief. Shakespeare has no abhorrence of monks, and Bacon said of the Jesuits: "Being what ye are, would that ye were of us."

In the reign of Elizabeth the foundations were laid of the essential conditions of British life, industry, trade, navigation, civil activity, and self-sufficiency. Literature, not deviating from the proper track marked out for it, developed in youthful vigour, according to the examples of ancient classical models, and under the influence of Italian writers.

The tendency to despotism incorporated in the Stuart dynasty (1603), was incompatible with the new spirit of inquiry and freedom awakened in the nation, and the struggle culminated in a civil war stained with blood and disfigured with fanaticism and political extravagance (1639—1659), till the war of opinions and of parties resulted (1687) in the establishment of a firm administration and certain securities of liberty, while the strong national faith in the value of its rights and constitution has preserved it in its best and essential features to the present time. Public life and literature show a necessary reaction on each other since the beginning of the eighteenth century, which was, on the whole, a period of prodigious literary and scientific activity in England.

The English literature of modern times bears a strong impress

of national individualism, sometimes strongly coloured with a conservative love of old ways, then breaking out into a genial love of freedom, frequently showing a deep under-current of earnestness—though often sparkling with wit and life; at times, too, measured and restricted, even frigid, or exceeding all bounds in prurience. To be rightly judged, it needs the sympathies—the affections of the English heart; the instincts of English life; and Taine shows how difficult it is, especially for a dramatic, town-loving Frenchman, to judge the English mind and letters, when he identifies the Englishman's love of country and nature with barbarism.

Of learning and science we have not here to treat; but it may be added that this was a glorious age for England in these highest walks of the human mind. The earlier years were the time when Newton and Locke sounded the depths of physics and metaphysics, and Bentley led the way in the grand researches into the spirit and style of the classics. It was the age when Adam Smith founded "Political Economy," Priestley discovered oxygen, Watts first utilized steam power, and while David Hume was leading astray the legitimate march of thought by his sophistries, he encountered the calm and healthy refutation of Reid, the philosopher of common sense.

POETRY.—1. LYRICS.

Taking a general survey of British poetry since Henry VIII., it should be remarked that, in the first half of the sixteenth century, the interest taken in Church controversy was so great, that little scope was left for poetical development. A few poets appeared, imitators for the most part, and translators of Petrarch's sonnets, and given up to an allegorizing and mythologizing spirit, which extended to the reign of Elizabeth. But her glorious era was enriched by productions of a far higher order, and adorned by the genius of Spenser and, above all, of Shakespeare.

In the seventeenth century, whilst the nation was under the influence of exaggerated fanaticism, Cowley and Waller gave the tone in Lyrics, and Milton produced the great national Epic. After the Restoration, Butler was conspicuous for caustic satire, and Dryden for scholastic regularity and correctness; but his influence was eclipsed in the eighteenth century by Pope, while the artificial and stiff formalism of Pope was corrected by the rugged humour of Swift, by Thomson's sweet intuitive love of nature, and by Young's melancholy mysticism. Then, again, a love for the old ballad tone was awakened, towards the end

of the century, and dominant in Scott and his followers, colouring even all English poetry till our day, while an admirable natural freedom broke out in the spirited effusions of Burns. British poetry has latterly shown an extraordinary opulence in lyrics, ballads, historical and descriptive poetry, and in Byron and Tennyson, probably the greatest modern English poets, is a combination of all these styles and of all excellences, while America has added some sweet effusions from Longfellow, and the terrible has found a mouth-piece in Poe.

2. LYRICS AND EPICS.

Reverting to the sixteenth century, the first prominent names we encounter in poetry are those of Scotchmen : Gawin Douglas (died 1521), W. Dunbar (died 1530), David Lindsay (died 1567), Alexander Scott, and others. The principal English lyrics and imitators of Petrarch were Thomas Wyatt (died 1541), especially H. Howard, Earl of Surrey (died 1547), the first English writer of blank verse, and D. T. Heywood (died 1565), author of epigrams and dramas.

Arriving at the reign of Elizabeth, we have a constellation of superior poets, especially the admirable Philip Sidney, a pattern of every chivalrous virtue (born 1554, died 1586), author of sonnets in the style of Petrarch, and of a pastoral romance, "*Arcadia*," which, with certain defects of the time, tumidity of style, and an over-abundance of classical allusions, is a noble production from the respectful, delicate tone in which it treats woman, in this forming such a contrast to the odious dramatists of the Restoration. The great poet of the Elizabethan age in other works besides the drama was Edmund Spenser (born 1520, died 1599), author of "*Eclogues*," but above all of a romantic epic, in some degree after the fashion of Ariosto, but of a higher and nobler tone, uncompleted but world-renowned as the "*Faërie Queene*."

Edmund Spenser had to encounter the usual troubles attending a great poet, and his end, like that of so many sons of genius, was darkened by deep clouds and sorrow. His early life was disappointment ; his appointment as secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, Lord Deputy of Ireland, ended in a fire destroying his house and one of his children, and he died broken-hearted, a premature death, in an obscure lodging in London, but cheered by a faithful wife. His great work, the "*Faërie Queene*," is an allegory of which the characters are virtues, but so realized as to interest us as much as real personages. The special beauty

of the work is its courtly chivalry and moral purity; the rhyme is almost the most musical in our language. Among the secondary poets of the age, from Henry VIII. to Charles I., are the admirable Sir Philip Sidney, already noticed, a pattern of all the virtues and graces that can adorn the English gentleman; Michael Drayton (died 1631), author of "Satires;" H. Howard, Earl of Surrey (died 1547); then Will. Waller (died 1687), Abr. Cowley (1618—1667), rich in thought, formed on Pindar and Horace, a great elegiac and lyric poet; and W. Browne (died 1645), author of "Idylls."

The great master of the drama in the Elizabethan age, and with Newton, the special glory of England, was William Shakespeare, also prominent as a lyric poet in the exquisite sonnets he has left us.

Warwickshire, now so defaced and darkened by smoke in the black country, still presents, in its southern districts, much of the well-timbered home scenery that gives its special charm to rural England. The banks of the Avon, near the lordly walls of Warwick Castle, are rich in picturesque scenery; the fine old spires of Coventry are surrounded by a nimbus of medieval poetry, and Stratford, the home of the great genius of English literature, still retains many of the good points of our old English country towns, notwithstanding the invasion of railroads and telegraphs and tourists.

Reverently has the writer made on foot the pilgrimage from Warwick to Stratford, and, as he paused to take in all that rich champaign scenery on which the eye of the young poet first opened, he has peopled it with the magic creations of the great dramatist, and fancied he saw the glades and meads where Oberon and Titania held their court, or the very bank on which the wild thyme grew, and where the moonbeams rested so lovingly.

Reverently has the writer entered and visited the lowly dwelling where the great poet was born, has seen its narrow rooms, its white-washed lath-and-plaster walls, and its steep, dark, uncouth stairs, and with interest has he paced the humble garden where Shakespeare, when a joyous, playful child, must have stopped to pluck the bright, fair roses, and drink in their perfume with his early poet's sense of beauty and of sweetness.

Reverently has he entered the humble parish church, by the placid waters of the Avon, and stood, with head uncovered, before the spot where the dust of England's greatest genius reposes, and, as he has mused before that "dull, cold marble," he has thought of the deep instincts and utterances of the great poet,

descanting on the mysteries of human being; how justly he had said: "*We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded as a sleep*;" and then, again, how deeply and truly he had expressed man's longings and his doubts, when saying: "*To die, to sleep, perchance to dream; for in that sleep of death what dreams may come, must give us pause.*"

THE DRAMA.—SHAKESPEARE.

A proper comprehension of Shakespeare is itself an education.

No writer has been so studied and commented on, and none deserves so careful a survey. To him, as much as to the version of James I., England owes modern English, and to him the world owes the most extraordinary, almost superhuman combination of intellect and imagination, of philosophy and poetry.

A proper treatment of Shakespeare involves three points:

1. His biography; 2. a classification and criticism of his works; 3. an estimate of his genius.

Though so great a man, and so near to us in time and space, we know little of his life, and the little we know is half legendary.

He is thought to have been born on April 23 (St. George's day), 1564, at Stratford-on-Avon. His father, John, was a draper or glover, mayor or bailiff of the town, and married to a respectable lady, Mary Arden, daughter of a knightly family in Warwickshire; William Shakespeare attended the grammar school, and is supposed to have assisted in his father's shop, and even in a lawyer's office. In his latter days John Shakespeare had to resign his post as alderman, from poverty, and was supported by his son.

The legend about Sir Thomas Lucy's park and the poaching at Charlecote is uncertain and doubtful; the poet seems to have had a grudge against the family from allusions in the "*Merry Wives of Windsor*." He probably left Stratford for London at twenty-two (1586), owing to his early marriage with Anne Hathaway, a small farmer's daughter residing at Shottery, near Stratford.

Shakespeare's eldest daughter Susanna, his favourite child, was born 1583; in 1584, twins, Judith and Hamnet. His only son, Hamnet, died at the age of twelve; his daughters survived him, but though Susannah married a physician of repute, there are no representatives of the family left.

Shakespeare's union does not seem to have been well assorted, for though he lived from 1586 to 1611 almost entirely in Lon-

don, his wife resided at Stratford with her parents, and in the poet's will he leaves her his second best bed with furniture.

The greatest tragic actor of the day, Richard Burbage, was a Warwickshire man, and Thomas Greene, a distinguished member of the troop of the Globe theatre, a native of Stratford. Shakespeare's name appears as twelfth (out of sixteen) on the list of shareholders in that theatre in 1569. He began as an arranger of pieces and actor, like Johnson, Fletcher, and Ford, adapting old plays to the exigencies of the theatre. His connection with the Globe lasted twenty-five years, during which he produced thirty-seven dramas. The Globe Theatre was situated on the Bankside in Southwark, near the Surrey extremity of London Bridge, but the company removed afterwards to a smaller building—the Blackfriars playhouse—on the site of the "Times" office. This was in the forbidden precincts of London itself, and was effected through the favour of the Lord Keeper Egerton and the accomplished Earl of Southampton.

Shakespeare's career in London appears to have been a very prosperous one. He understood perfectly the theory of acting, and was an actor of some merit, the chief parts he chose being the Ghost in Hamlet, the faithful old servant Adam in "As you like it," and old Know-all in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his own Humour." Burbage was the favourite performer in his great tragic pieces, "Hamlet," "Othello," &c. Shakespeare must have early risen to repute in the Globe, as he called down bitter allusions from envious rivals, one of whom speaks of his "bombasting out a blank verse," while another speaks of "whole Hamlets, or handfuls of tragical speeches." He is also styled "Johanna's factotum."

His name was at length fifth, and at last second in a list of eight shareholders; and Chettle, one of his opponents, was made to apologize for a scurrilous pamphlet upon him, with the title "Greene's Groat'sworth of Wit." In short, the Globe company prospered, and steered clear of all the difficulties in its way, it is supposed mainly by the prudence and good sense of Shakespeare, avoiding collision with the puritanic opposition of the London corporation, and with the susceptibility of the court and the censorship.

When thirty-three years of age, in 1597, he bought New Place, a landed estate near Stratford; in 1602 he purchased 107 acres of land; in 1607 Susanna married Dr. Hull, and finally in 1611 the great poet retired to New Place, where he lived with Dr. Hull and Susanna. His second daughter, Judith, married Thomas Quincy. The poet's death was in 1617, in his fifty-

second year ; and it is supposed that when suffering from fever, he imprudently rose from bed to entertain Ben Jonson and Drayton, whereupon a relapse carried him off. He was buried in the parish church of Stratford.

SHAKESPERE'S WORKS

may be first divided into *dramatic* and *undramatic*. The works that give him his name are the *dramatic*.

His dramas may be classified in various ways :—1st. The order of production. 2nd. The character of the dramatic works. 3rd. The sources of the dramatic works.

The first classification is difficult, because we cannot quite ascertain dates ; the second, because many of his works are mixed tragedy and comedy, and this is one of his excellences. The third is in some respects preferable. We shall give a short account of the last two classifications.

His works may be analyzed into tragedies, comedies, and historical plays. Some of his pieces are undeniably tragedies, *e.g.*, "Othello," "King Lear," and "Hamlet." Others are evidently comedies, the "Taming of the Shrew," "As you like it," the "Merry Wives of Windsor," and "Twelfth Night." Others partake of both characters, especially two (the "Merchant of Venice" and the "Tempest").

Numerically they may be grouped thus in this classification : eleven tragedies, two tragi-comedies, ten historical plays, and fourteen comedies. These historical plays, to which we shall revert, are a special feature of Shakespere and the treasure of the English drama. The epic and the dramatic fact and fiction enter into them, and they help to dramatize history in a way that has nowhere else been attempted or effected.

A classification from different sources gives a great subdivision into *fact* and *fiction*.

Fact is derived from chronicles, legends, and semi-legends. His historical dramas are based on Hollinshed, an old annalist. Hamlet was taken from "Saxo Grammaticus," "Macbeth," "Lear," and "Cymbeline," from legends of British and Scotch history.

In the case of fiction, Shakespere used chiefly Italian novelists and imitators, such as Boccaccio's "Novelle." These tales were short, the characters not developed much; the poet had scope to invent and develop and show his art and genius, in working out the parts, exhibiting human nature and passion in his masterly style.

In no one instance did Shakespere invent a plot ; he gave all his genius to picture character. Eighteen of his works are derived from fiction ; mostly Italian.

Of his historical works, the following are from legendary sources: "Hamlet," "Lear," "Macbeth," "Julius Cæsar," "Coriolanus," and "Antony and Cleopatra." (Classical pieces from Plutarch.)

To authentic history belong Henry IV., V., VI., VIII.; Richard II., III.; and King John, founded on older plays or chronicles: Hall, Fabian, and Hollinshed;

To fiction, "Midsummer Night's Dream," which is from Chaucer; "Much ado about Nothing," "Love's Labour's lost," "All's well that ends well," "Measure for Measure," "Othello," and the "Tempest" (Italian); the "Comedy of Errors" is from a piece of Plautus; the "Taming of the Shrew," "As you like it," and "Winter's Tale" are English in origin.

Greene and Marlowe afforded Shakespere a good deal of matter. Robert Greene was a distinguished dramatist, believed to have been born 1566. Though a graduate of Cambridge, 1578, he did not do much credit to himself at that University, and after a wild youth passed in travels in France and Italy, he came to London and wrote plays, the first in 1580, and before his death (in 1592) forty other dramas.

Amidst a good deal of bombast and extravagance, there is real good poetry in his verses. "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" is his best comedy. The friars are conjurors, and are carried off with one of their pupils on the back of one of Friar Bacon's devils to hell. The "Winter's Tale" was taken from him.

Christopher Marlowe, 1563, was the son of a shoemaker, graduated at Cambridge, 1587, and first introduced for the stage a high-sounding varied blank verse. His play, "The Life and Death of Dr. Faustus," shows a wide range of dramatic power, and the "Taming of the Shrew" has many passages found in Marlowe, who died 1593, a victim to an obscure and unworthy brawl.

SHAKESPERE'S GENIUS.

The power with which Shakespere seized the individual peculiarities of an age and country, *e.g.*, as in "Romeo and Juliet," is the more extraordinary as his scholarship was limited. His characters are, first, true to all humanity; secondly, to the details of the country and time. This clairvoyance is startling; his Romans are first men, and then Romans, either of the time of Coriolanus or Brutus.

His historical plays, with all their variety of time and place and character, had an individuality true to universal and particular nature. This power of throwing himself into an epoch

is almost superhuman ; nor do his anachronisms mar the effect, for they are often intentional. His glimpses into private life of great characters evaded by others succeeded with him ; the sublime and comic are also blended in a way true to life and to nature.

His creative power is most extraordinary ; in his historical plays the invented characters live as really as the true ones.

No other writer has succeeded like Shakespere in joining his pure fictions to real characters, so as to make the former live as truly as the latter ; even Scott shows the joint. Idealizing the real, and realizing the ideal, Shakespere is equally solid ; Othello and Shylock are persons as real as Coriolanus or Wolsey, and these remarks on his ideal characters apply with full force to his supernatural beings.

This is not the place to enter into a long analysis as to whether some of these ideal characters have a real side, though it would appear absurd to deny it, for if these inventions contradicted all experience, they would lack all value. Therefore, it must be assumed there is a certain foundation for all of them, though what this foundation is, may be disputed.

In the case of ghosts—1. Dr. Pepper and Sir D. Brewster would say they are optical delusions ; 2. Dr. Simpson, they are electro-biology or submesmerism ; 3. Mr. Crooks, they are Psychic force ; 4. Dr. Carpenter, they are reflex action, or unconscious cerebration. It is most expedient to leave the Royal Society to determine this great problem.

Witches present the same phenomena from the witch of Endor to some poor old woman with three cats and a broomstick. Sorcery and magic are human, and are explicable in part : they are founded on fact.

Certain beings, such as fairies and the like, are slightly more difficult to verify. These seem borrowed from "Old Norse" beliefs, but Shakespere is true to the traditions, and if there be little men in the moon, they must be as his fairies.

It has to be shown that Shakespere stands apart from all in delineating passion. His characters are no mere impersonations of virtues and vices ; they are living men and women ; thus these characters show mixed qualities : Othello is no mere impersonation of jealousy ; Falstaff of selfish gaiety ; Timon of misanthropy.

No writer paints the master passion as Shakespere, but his characters are not mere revenge and ambition in human forms, they are men with mixed motives.

Then his variety and complexity are bewildering. Again, he never mirrors himself; he seems to have had the power to identify himself with all characters; moreover he never repeats a character because it has been a success (*Othello*). His female characters are also often wonderfully refined, partaking of the spirit of Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney.

In expressing pathos and strong feeling, he exceeds all others; nor has he ever given us, like Victor Hugo and Dumas, moral monsters.

He has been criticised for his subtlety, a fault of the age, but in him his exuberance of fancy and intellect made him revel in metaphor; thoughts rose so fast in his rich mind that they chased each other, as his pen dropped the words. The intimate union of reason and imagination is in fact the special character of Shakespeare and Bacon, giving them a fulness of profound and practical observation found nowhere else.

Even the great dramatist's descriptions of the degrees of madness are said to agree with the latest discoveries of physiology and psychology.

A few instances may be added of the

BEAUTIES OF SHAKESPEARE.

Terrors of an Evil Conscience.

(MACBETH.)

"Is this a dagger which I see before me?
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee;
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind; a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?"

(*Passion and Pathos.*)

Fear of the Supernatural.—Filial Piety.

(HAMLET.)

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us!—
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee; I'll call thee, Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me:
Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell."

Oratory to stir a Crowd.

(MARK ANTONY.)

"O masters! if I were dispos'd to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,

I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong,
 Who, you all know, are honourable men.
 I will not do them wrong ; I rather choose
 To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you
 Than I will wrong such honourable men."

Life and Death.

(HAMLET.)

"To die ;—to sleep ;—
 To sleep ! perchance to dream ;—ay, there's the rub ;
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 Must give us pause :
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The insolence of office ?
 But that the dread of something after death
 . . . puzzles the will."

End of Earthly Glories.

"Our revels now are ended : these our actors,
 As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
 Are melted into air, into thin air :
 And, like the baseless fabrick of this vision,
 The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve ;
 And like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack behind : We are such stuff
 As dreams are made of, and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleep."

Shakespeare was so great that the other great dramatists of the age seem little by his side, though in any other time they would be very great.

Ben Jonson (1574—1637) was a more erudite writer than Shakespeare, and as such almost eclipsed the great dramatist in his life time. He shows a great striving after regularity in his comedies and tragedies. Ben Jonson's best pieces for pure fancy are "Cynthia" and the "Sad Shepherd." It is in the ideal conceptions of character that he is specially beautiful, while his language and imagery are all grace and finish ; but the characters in his Roman tragedies are often stiff and unnatural, and his common characters are often exaggerated and repulsive. He wrote sixteen tragedies and comedies.

Beaumont and Fletcher were joint composers of many plays of high merit. Francis Beaumont (1585—1615) studied at Cambridge, and entered the Inner Temple. J. Fletcher (1576—1626)

wrote with Beaumont thirty-eight plays, and alone fourteen. Their best productions were their comedies, but they are all tainted by a coarseness, making them unfit for our age and for all refined minds.

Philip Massinger, found dead in his bed (1635) at Bankside, Southwark, was original and powerful, but often coarse as Ben Jonson. "A New Way to pay Old Debts" is still a popular play (comedy). His tragedies are so good that by Hallam they were considered only second to Shakespere's.

John Ford (1588—1639), another great dramatist of the age, excelled in pathos, but had not much comic power: the "Broken Heart" is reckoned his finest tragedy.

PROSE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH'S REIGN.

The glory of the prose of Queen Elizabeth is Bacon; but as he was specially a philosopher, we have reserved a summary view of his spirit and works for the Appendix (F).

CHAPTER XXVI.

POETRY OF THE AGE OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

MILTON (THE EPIC).

THE social and literary culture of England and of Scotland in modern times has resulted from the transformation and revolutions in the state, and the peculiar, firm spirit of independence and self-government developed in the people.

These struggles involve the shaking off of foreign influence in religion, and the limitations of the power of the crown, and in Milton's day, of the peers.

A hatred of tyranny was developed by the capricious despotism of Henry, and by the violent measures on opposite sides under Mary and Edward. Much of the stability of modern England issued from Elizabeth's skill and prudence. Literature had taken the highest swing in her reign, and as the Puritanic and freedom-loving spirit, with general advance in trade and industry had greatly increased, the attempts of the Stuarts to rule despotically came too late, and of necessity failed.

This state of things led to civil war in England, as the antagonism of evenly balanced sects in Germany led to the Thirty Years' War. A time of retrogression in literature seemed to

ensue ; as war and letters are not compatible. Moreover, the exaggerated fanaticism dominant under the Commonwealth was not conducive to a free development of action and taste.

Yet the period was one favourable to nerve and strength, and the literary men issuing from it have a power wanting to the relaxed spirit of inaction under Charles, James, William, and Ann.

The influence of French is not yet fatally felt in our literature. What Milton borrowed was from the Italian ; nor was his fine mind averse to admit even a pagan element in his poetry, though so well tempered by Christian feeling, that as in Dante, it is Christianized and utilized for Christian ends, instead of being made uppermost, as in Pope, and almost in Dryden.

The influence of the age of Elizabeth had not departed in the time of Milton, and that of Louis XIV. had not yet reacted on England. Moreover, the mind of England was imbued with the Bible, and the age of unbelief had not yet appeared.

It was the right time for the appearance of England's great epic. Never had the nation stood out stronger among the nations, than under Cromwell. It was the time of strength, power, sublimity rather than beauty, grace, or refinement ; and, although there is much grace and beauty in Milton, power and sublimity are his characteristics.

MILTON'S LIFE.

The treatment of Milton falls into his life, works, and spirit.

John Milton was born in London, 1608, and died 1674. The house in which he was born was standing lately, but is no more. His tomb is thought to be in Cripplegate church, but the exact spot is not known ; nor is this of much importance, because his monument is his poem.

His life is more varied than Shakespere's. His father had made a fortune as money-scrivener, and retired to Horton, Bucks ; he was a republican, and gave Milton his political and religious sympathies. Milton was most carefully trained for letters, at St. Paul's School, London, and Christ's College, Cambridge (M.A., 1632) ; he left Cambridge, disliking the doctrines and discipline of the University, and he pursued his studies five years at Horton, where he studied every variety of subject at this time ; and his mind showed great refinement and nobleness. He was also in his person very beautiful—the type of one of his own angels.

When thirty years of age, in the year 1638, he travelled through Italy, Switzerland, and France, and became acquainted with Galileo and Manso, expressing his religious convictions

rather freely. After an absence of fifteen months, he came back to England, which he found amidst the storms of revolution, and where he engaged in controversy with royalists and prelatists. He was married (1643) to Mary, daughter of Richard Powell, a cavalier of strong monarchist principles in Oxfordshire, but Milton being a republican, and a man of studious habits, did not agree with his wife, who fled soon after marriage to her father's house. A year later, a reconciliation took place. In 1649, Milton was named Latin Secretary to the Council of State, with a salary of £300, and he continued to serve Cromwell after the Protector's rule degenerated into a tyranny, being joint secretary with Philip Meadows and Andrew Marvell.

For ten years his eyesight had been failing; in 1652, it failed entirely, and he became totally blind—"dark, irrecoverably dark." His first wife died about the same time, and in November, 1656, Milton married, secondly, Katharine Woodcock, who died in 1658. At the Restoration the great epic poet was included in the Amnesty, and now he gave himself up entirely to the composition of "Paradise Lost" (the work was begun 1658 and completed 1665). After this, Milton returned to Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, where he contracted a third marriage, with his cousin, Elizabeth Minshull, at that time twenty-four years of age, daughter of a yeoman of Cheshire (1663), who survived him fifty-three years.

Milton had three daughters, who survived him, and who are said to have treated him harshly. At the time of his death he was sixty-six years old.

MILTON'S WORKS.

Milton was a voluminous writer. His writings must be classed in poetry and prose works. His prose works are mostly controversial, Latin and English, and of various merit. Though we are here treating of poetry, it will be more convenient to consider all Milton's works, prose and poetry, as a whole, particularly as his prose writings are much less important and renowned than those in verse. Milton's latinity is thought to be very good; his English is almost overfull of metaphor, imagery, and muscular power. His principal prose works are, first, "Areopagitica, a Defence of the Liberty of the Press;" another noted prose work of Milton's earlier days, was his "Defensio Populi Anglicani," to meet an attack brought against England by the Queen of Sweden, on account of the murder of Charles I.

A third work was the "Reason of Church Government against

Prelaty;" a fourth, "A Ready and Easy Way to establish a True Commonwealth." Fine outbursts of enthusiasm are found in some of these works, amidst drier matter, unfairness to, and exaggeration of, opponents. These prose works are useful in conveying information about the life and character of Milton, as this poet (unlike Shakespeare) speaks largely of himself, and thus throws much light on his studies and experiences.

But Milton's greatness depends on his poetry, and his poetical career falls chronologically into three epochs: (1) that of his youth; (2) his manhood; (3) his old age—(1, 1623—1640; 2, 1640—1660; 3, 1660—1674). At the age of twenty-one he wrote his "Hymn to the Nativity;" then came his "Arcades," a mask, written for the Countess of Derby, and "Comus," a mask composed at Ludlow Castle; and further, "Lycidas," a monody on a college companion—Edward King—drowned at sea.

The subject of "Comus" relates to events that happened at the time. The Earl of Bridgewater was then living at Ludlow Castle; his sons, Lord Brackley and Mr. Egerton, and Lady Alice Egerton had been benighted in passing through Haywood Forest, in Herefordshire, and Lady Alice had been lost for a time in the wood. Milton, at the request of Henry Lawes, the musician, wrote the mask; Lawes set it to music, and the brothers, the young lady, and Lawes acted parts in it.

"Lycidas" is an exquisite poem; in it are found combined a rural description, a mythological allegory, and theological allusions, but the poet has fused these different elements into a harmonious whole.

The "Allegro" and "Penseroso" were composed about this time. "L'Allegro" is a description of occupations and amusements of men of cheerful mood; "Il Penseroso" describes those of men of an opposite temperament. The "Allegro" contains a wonderful description of the sights and sounds of early morning; also a charming picture of rural life; then the reader finds a description of the courtly pleasures of town, and music is beautifully portrayed, for Milton had an intense love of the art, and was no mean proficient in it.

In the "Penseroso" there are fine passages on the nightingale, on moonlight in a forest, on the curfew, and the ocean's roar. The riches of description contained in these two poems cannot be easily surpassed or even equalled.

The second period of Milton's literary career is devoted chiefly to prose. In the first period he had produced, as we have seen, "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," hitherto his principal poetical

effusions, and full of stores of imagery ; but his great poetical glory is his "Paradise Lost," which must be referred to the third period.

"Paradise Lost" was originally written in ten books, but afterwards extended to twelve. In taking a brief survey of this immortal poem, it is expedient first to analyze its contents, and then to trace its principal characteristics.

Book I. contains an account of the fall of man, represents Satan in council, and gives a description of Pandæmonium. Book II. is filled with debates in hell, after which Satan goes to tempt man, travelling to the gates of hell. Book III. has a description of heaven. The Son is here described as offering himself a propitiation for man ; Satan descends to earth, clothed as an angel of light. Book IV. contains a beautiful picture of the innocence and happiness of Adam and Eve. Satan endeavours to tempt Eve in a dream.

In Book V., Eve relates her dream to Adam, who comforts her. The archangel, Raphael, is sent to warn them ; he relates the story of the disobedient angels. Book VI. is a continuation of the archangel's story. Book VII. gives Raphael's account of the creation of the world. Book VIII. contains the conference of Adam and the angel ; Book IX., the temptation of Adam and Eve, their penitence, and their petitions for pardon. In Book XI. their penitence is accepted ; but they are expelled from Paradise ; the archangel, Michael, announces their fate to them, and reveals the future to Adam. Book XII. contains a continuation of the prophetic picture ; Adam is comforted at the announcement of the redemption ; then the reader arrives at the end of the poem, when our first parents wander forth from paradise.

This poem was written in peculiar blank verse, first employed by Milton for epic poetry, though consisting in the same elements as those used by Shakespere ; but Milton gives them a different rhyme and time. The language of "Paradise Lost" is solemn and dignified, with great flexibility, and ever-changing cadence, so that it is hardly possible to find two verses of like structure and accentuation throughout the poem.

CHARACTERISTICS OF "PARADISE LOST."

Milton had projected, originally, a dramatic poem ; but his genius was not dramatic, it was essentially epic. The subject of his great work, the fall of man, and the origin of evil, is connected with the whole of human history, accordingly he yokes

on paganism to his Christian theme. The first two books are full of grandeur. Satan and the angels are astonishing pictures, made grander and nobler than is usual in the portraiture of evil powers. Alexander Pope censures the dialogues in heaven as too subtle, but the age of Milton was prone to argumentation. Another objection that has been made is, that there is a want of human interest in the poem; yet no living agents could win more sympathy than Milton's Adam and Eve. The poet's style is perhaps occasionally stiff, but in describing the opening scenes and paradise it is beautifully tempered.

The allegory of sin and death has been considered, by some critics, to be far-fetched, but all admit that it is very sublime. The discourses of Raphael and Michael possess great pathos and calm dignity, and Christian feeling predominates at the end of the poem.

"Paradise Regained," the sequel of "Paradise Lost," is a solemnly grand composition, seeming to be the work of a ripe genius, possessed of much self-restraint, but it is not so attractive as "Paradise Lost."

Book I represents Jesus in the wilderness. In Book II., Satan tempts Our Lord. Book III. represents the temptation continued. In Book IV., is a picture of the grandeur of Greece and Rome; a storm in the wilderness follows, and ultimately Satan is silenced. The poem concludes with the triumphant hymn of the angelic host. "Paradise Regained" contains many contemplative beauties, but it seems to lack brilliant colouring.

In "Samson Agonistes" (1671), Milton gives an exact reproduction of a Greek play. The character of God in this drama is a touching reproduction of Milton himself; but the drama as a work of art, is somewhat of a failure.

CRITIQUE OF THE SPIRIT OF MILTON.

In the great admiration felt for his wonderful genius, the critic must not overlook his defects. 1. There is at times a slight touch of what may be called pedantry or mannerism. 2. The style is, in places, either Frenchified or affected. 3. Milton had too much learning, and displays it too much in his dialogues; yet this may be, perhaps, excusable in an epic; he has also been thought too profuse in learned illustrations, as in his long catalogue of names and cities.

On the other hand, some critics appear to see no defects in Milton, and consider no one equal to him in exuberance. It

may be permitted to remark that, though his heroes, Adam and Eve, are beautiful and difficult characters, the "Beatrice" of Dante, is, perhaps, a still more beautiful conception. Again, Satan is noble, and in several respects truer, than the old view of the Evil One, represented as a picture of deformity, with his hoofs and horns; but he is, perhaps, slightly too much of a hero with Milton.

Nevertheless, the sublimity and beauty of this great poet are of the highest order, and his great poem is almost equal to anything the mind of man has conceived.

Some of the sonnets of Milton are most exquisite gems, especially those on light, and on his own blindness; nor was anything he conceived more noble or touching than the passage on his own privation of sight, forming the opening of Book II.

Milton so fills the seventeenth century with his glory in English literature, that he eclipses all lesser lights in our country; we need therefore only notice the diversified, timid, time-serving Edmund Waller.

Waller (1605—1687), a lyric poet, cousin of Hampden, related to Cromwell, was greatly over-estimated by Pope and Dryden; for though endowed with some vigour, he was inferior in feeling and imagination, notwithstanding considerable polish.

Andrew Marvel, closely connected with Milton (1620—1678), trained at Cambridge, and attached to the embassy in Turkey, is chiefly remarkable as a writer of pungent, witty, vigorous controversial prose.

Among the minor poets of the time may be noticed Henry More (1614—1687), Joseph Beaumont (1615—1699), and Thomas Stanley (1625—1678).

CHAPTER XXVII.

POETRY OF THE AGE OF QUEEN ANNE.

In a literary point of view, the age of Queen Anne falls into three periods from 1660 to 1725: First, Introductory, the Restoration; Second, William and Mary, and the reign of Anne; Third, George I.

Two currents of feeling and opinion run through the age, more especially contrasted in period the first.

The reaction against Puritanism, coupled with irreligion,

levity, and laxity, in word and act, characterise this period, but it has also an undercurrent of grave, rigid Puritanism, correct in life, stiff in language, but Biblical, Quakerish in dress strong and dignified. The lax and frivolous spirit was adopted by the court, and the cavaliers who returned under Charles II. ; the stern, stiff, Puritanical spirit was taken up by the burghers, and part of the lower classes.

The age is one of singular contrasts. It presents the observer with the levity and looseness of French wit and ways, in what are styled the upper classes, associated with downright infidelity, frequent Deism, and rapid transitions from impiety to fanaticism. Representatives of this stamp are : (1.) Samuel Butler, author of "*Hudibras*," a satirical poem directed against the Puritans, associated with a wonderful amount of learning ; (2.) The comic dramatists of the age, Congreve, Wycherley, Farquhar, Dryden, etc. (3.) A little later occur Alexander Pope, Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, Dean Swift, and others, representing French wit and free-thinking, united with much originality.

In the undercurrent occur : (1.) John Bunyan, the son of a tinker, author of the "*Pilgrim's Progress*," the greatest allegorist of the age, saturated with the Bible spirit, an earnest, serious, Saxon-speaking man ; (2.) Richard Baxter, author of the "*Saint's Everlasting Rest*," another man of the same spirit, but a good scholar. To this Puritanical movement belonged also George Fox and William Penn, though the good Quakers coquetted with the court.

Two subjects deserve consideration here : the strong Calvinism of the Puritans ; the frivolity of mind of the court ladies, as contrasted with the solid, correct taste of the age of Queen Elizabeth.

All strong doctrines make a strong age, and strong characters ; the Church of Laodiceæ is the type of weakness and reprobation. England was great and respected under Henry, Elizabeth, and Cromwell ; it was held in contempt under the Stuarts.

The stern doctrine of Cromwell and of the Independents, with all their sour-visaged dark sides, did much to give strength and greatness to England ; but a strong conviction is not necessarily Calvinistic. Under the Tudors, in the time of Shakespeare, the nation had a strong belief, a correct taste, and average morality ; yet it admitted of the brighter side of the drama and the classical element. Both periods, however—the Tudor and the Cromwellian—contrast well with the Stuarts. Under the latter a strong pagan and infidel element came in, partly from natural

causes, and the spirit of reaction. Belief was weakened ; the heart and manners of the court and of the lower classes were corrupt, and the literature was debased, full of levity and impropriety. Even in its highest flights, as with Pope, it does not rise near *Shakespeare* or *Milton* ; it is second-rate, the production of refined manners and a cultivated taste, but lacking nature and pathos. It is too *Frenchy*, and, unfortunately, in the inferior writers, the merits of the French school (*Molière*) degenerate into grossness and profligacy.

The undercurrent of Puritanism in the time of the Reformation, culminated in Quakerism—*Fox* and *Penn.* *Macaulay*, overweighted with Whiggery, has tried to depreciate these men, but they are a very respectable side of English thought and character, and a great German critic has even gone the length of saying they are the most consistent of reformers.

But the vices of the court, and of the drama of the day, were not only combated by these men ; *Collier* wrote a most cutting satire upon them, so unanswerable that a reply was impossible. *Dryden* and *Congreve* did indeed attempt a reply ; but they were defeated in their efforts.

Another subject has to be considered before we enter on a biography of the great men of the age of *Queen Anne*—that of female education.

There is a strange contrast between the cultivated, classically-trained ladies of the court of *Elizabeth*—albeit herself addicted to beer-drinking and swearing—and the frivolous women, who gave the fashion in the time of *Charles II.* and the succeeding reigns.

Queen Elizabeth was a good scholar ; *Lady Jane Grey* wrote Latin elegantly. These accomplishments were usual with ladies of rank at that time, nor did they exclude others, for *Queen Elizabeth* was a good musician ; but in the time of *Charles II.* court ladies were a mass of affectation and levity, their conversation twaddle, about dress, cosmetics, and any small gossip, and themselves profoundly ignorant. There were, no doubt, exceptions ; but this was the prevailing tone, and nothing is more curious than an insight into English life of that time, as displayed in the quaint diary of *Samuel Pepys*, lately decyphered, and giving a minute account of petty scandals, such as his bickerings with his wife, and showing the small nothings that filled the mind of that frivolous age. The mind of woman was uncultivated in the court circle, and therefore generally ; but out of Puritanism and the Quaker sect was to emanate the cure. By dropping

what are called accomplishments, as sinful, the Quakers directed their thoughts to solid matters: first, to the Bible; later, to history, language, science, philosophy, till in this age the Quaker women have become the most cultivated of the day. It may be granted that they neglected the more graceful side, but they have not proved that the two are incompatible.

This leads to the question of "Blue Stockings." The ideal of a Blue Stocking is odious. The imagination combines a slatternly, sluttish person, untidy in attire, occupying a comfortless home, harsh in manners, and devoid of the special gifts and amenities of the female character. But it is false to suppose that a clever and a learned woman need be a *blue*. It is as false as the conceit that a lady fond of country life and exercise, must be in at the death, tramp about with a double-barrel, or go out deer-stalking.

Even in the reign of Louis XIV. occurs Madame Dacier, who helped her husband to translate the classics, but was no less womanly on that account; and Mrs. Somerville, in the present day, deep in astronomy and science, to educate the minds of her children, is the impersonation of what is noblest and best in the wife and the mother.

The solid and the graceful can be united in female education, and the satire about Blue Stockings has been probably invented by narrow-minded critics, who wished to retain literary and scholarly merit for men, and to keep women in the dependent position of amiable dolls.

Only a few of the poets of this age demand a lengthy notice.

In the first period (the Restoration) the prominent poet is Dryden. To him succeed Pope, Swift, and Addison (second and third periods).

It is expedient to commence our survey with the Restoration, the period of reaction against Puritanism, when a fondness for plays was conceived to be an evidence of loyalty. The court was, at this time, addicted to extravagance; the dissipation of the French royal *entourage* was imitated in England; all that was natural was extinguished, artifice reigned triumphant. What was witty and refined, though vicious, in France, became grotesque and coarse in England, and in imitating French *esprit*, the English acted a part that did not sit naturally upon them.

There could be no real sense of poetry in such an age. Italian decorations and opera music were introduced in England by Sir William Davenant, and marked the advent of a great change in the national taste.

Dryden long remained the hero of the drama at this time, and we shall view him in this character presently.

John Dryden (1631—1701) was quite an English type of the period, polished and running as steel, classical, correct, University-bred, wedded, though not happily, to the peerage, himself of a highly-respectable family, the friend of the *littérateurs* of his day, who formed a chorus round him, he combined all the requisites to constitute the great poet, except the greatest—nature.

Dryden was the most respectable Englishman of his day. He enjoyed a sufficient fortune to pursue his studies at leisure, in an orderly, well-to-do family, but he was too regularly trained, and had too little conflict in life to be a real son of genius. Issuing from Dr. Busby's excellent school, attending Cambridge for seven years, learning and judgment were the chief qualities infused into his mind. Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal are his familiar Roman acquaintances; he is at home with Corneille, Racine, Boileau. He is familiar with Chaucer, and dresses him up in the lace and finery and fallacy of Charles II. Going in the afternoon to Will's Coffee-house, the literary rendezvous of young poets, he drew a delighted crowd round his chair, carefully placed near the balcony in summer, by the fire-side in winter, the chorus of admirers thinking it a high honour to get in a word, and receive a pinch of snuff from his snuff-box.

He lived among great men and courtiers; he was poet laureate and historiographer; he often saw the king, and had married the daughter of the Earl of Berkshire. He received a purse of gold for each dedication; yet he had some of the troubles that fall to the lot of men, and especially literary men. He was involved in petty private quarrels, then much in fashion. The Duke of Buckingham wrote a parody on Dryden, "The Rehearsal," and made the actors mimic his tone and gestures. Rochester took up the lance, and tilted against the laureate, and supported Settle against him; he even hired a band of ruffians to belabour him. Dryden had quarrels with many others, including Shadwell, and even Jeremy Collier; his argumentative existence was not a favourable atmosphere for a true poet, nor had his life the heroic features of Cervantes and Camoens.

His translation of Virgil has been much esteemed; but German critics style it a manneristic paraphrase, and they consider his political allegories wearisome.

The satirical pieces of Dryden, though admirable for the perfection of the versification, are envenomed with controversial bitterness. First, "Absalom and Achitophel," in which he

criticises living characters under fictitious names, in a Biblical allegory; then the violent diatribe of "The Medal," written after Shaftesbury's acquittal from the charge of high treason, on which occasion a medal was struck in his honour. Again, the "Religio Laici," and "The Hind and the Panther," after his conversion to Catholicism, in which all heretical sects are represented as beasts of prey, worrying a white hind of heavenly origin.

His epistles are often wearisome, but, then again, lighted up with touches of real poetic feeling. In short, though Dryden lacked the true sacred fire of the poet, his facility for pure versification was so wonderful as alone to entitle him to a high place among English poets. Of his dramas notice will be taken presently.

Of the other poets of the time not dramatists, it is desirable to notice Th. Parnell (died 1717), who wrote songs and ballads; Matthew Prior (born 1664, died 1721), author of masterly tales, ballads, and didactic poems; T. Gay (born 1688, died 1732), who wrote pleasing fables, eclogues, and ballads; and some others of less note. But the glory of the age, Byron's poet of a thousand years, was Alexander Pope, deformed, irritable, a Papist, and then a freethinker, on whom the mantle of Dryden had descended, but who led Dryden's school to the highest pitch of excellence of which it was capable.

Pope (born in 1688, died 1744) had a mixed character, with large elements of vanity, irritability, ambition, and an implacable spirit against critics, &c., as exhibited in his "Dunciad." But his defects were mixed with good qualities; he had a veneration for his mother, and his home at Twickenham was the centre of wit, and laid out in a style which became the model of English landscape gardening.

Born in Lombard-street, the son of a linendraper, he saw the light, or twilight, first in London, a little, sickly, wizened thing. In youth his life was books; he was a very book-worm, and lived and had his being among quartos and folios. He was a precocious child. By the age of fourteen or fifteen he had composed a long epic of 4,000 verses called "Alexander," but all his worship was reserved for style and form.

He had been told by Mr. Walsh that there was only one way to become famous, "There had never been a great English poet who was correct;" accordingly he studied to become the most correct of English poets, and in this succeeded, but his person was very unpoetical. He was a dwarf, four feet high, distorted, hunch-backed, meagre, sickly, wearing three pair of stockings,—so thin

were his legs,—a fur doublet, for he shivered in a summer's breeze, and, finally, a thick linen shirt with fine sleeves, and very warm. He wore over all a black garment, a little sword, a tie-wig, and thus fitted out he dined at the table of Lord Oxford, his friend. But here his position was still more humiliating. Being very small, he had to be raised on a special chair; his baldness was so complete that he had to wear a velvet cap in company; again, he ate too much, and insisted on highly-seasoned dishes that oppressed his stomach. If cordials were offered him he was incensed, but did not refuse them. He was a creature of caprice, with the whims of an old invalid and old bachelor. He often went off and left Lord Oxford without any reason assigned, and ladies had to go and fetch him back. If he and Lady Mary Wortley were at table it was unbearable; they could not fail to peck at each other. He scarcely drank tea without a stratagem.

His life was neither heroic nor noble, for much of his time was taken up in writing libels and then disavowing them; he was always acting a part; and never was a writer so weakly sensitive to censure. One day he was found by Richardson reading a pamphlet of Cibber written against himself: "These things," he said, "are my diversion;" but he was closely watched, and his friends saw his pale features convulsed with anguish.

Nevertheless, he was a favoured man; his income was £800 a year, and he never wrote for pay. At Twickenham, in his grotto and pretty garden, he had time to file and polish his writings. His devotion to work is also touching. "In the terrible winter of 1740 a domestic was called four times from her bed in a night to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought."

Pope was a union of good qualities and defects. "The Rape of the Lock" has been called a buffoonery in a noble style. The whole is often wearisome, but each verse by itself a masterpiece. Pope's greatest work, his "Rape of the Lock," was written to reconcile Lord Petre with the family of Lady Arabella Fenton, from whom he had abstracted a lock of hair. This graceful poem is full of beautiful allusions to gnomes, sylphs, and other appropriate supernatural machinery. It was Addison who characterized this poem as a delicious little thing.

It is a dwarf epic in five books, all sparkling with the flash of diamonds, all a-flutter with hoops, brocades, and powdered wigs.

Pope's "Imitations of Horace" are very successful; and his translation of the "Iliad" is wonderful for grace and rhyme; but

it was of this work that an eminent contemporary made use of the following expression : "It is a very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." His "Essay on Man" is now admired, not for its philosophy, but for its language. The "Dunciad" contains a sketch of the corruption and learning in Europe at that time, and is one of the noblest outbursts of genius, though the French critics have styled it insipid, and even disgusting—truly harsh, mischievous, and clumsy ! His writing is qualified as paving stones to crush flies, and the following instance is given :—

"See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of casuistry heap'd o'er her head !
Philosophy, that lean'd on heaven before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
And Metaphysic calls for aid on sense !
Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
And unawares Morality expires.
Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine ;
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine !"

The third great poet of the age was Jonathan Swift, Dean Swift, an Irishman (1667—1745), born at Dublin, in many points the converse of Pope, and more noted in prose than in poetry. In political sentiment he was attached to the Tories, and yet an ardent Irishman. His early life was one of constant dependence, which probably left an impress of bitterness on his after years. Being an orphan, he was attached to the house of Sir William Temple. Entering the Church, he did not obtain much Church preferment, and as his selfish, unhappy temper led him to try to thwart the affections of those most attached to him, he passed a joyless life, and died unpitied, attended by menials, in the eclipse of his reason.

He used all the venom of his pen against the Whigs, and writing powerfully in favour of Ireland, was idolized by his excitable countrymen. His principal prose effusion is after "Gulliver's Travels," his "Tale of a Tub," a clever satire on Catholics, Calvinists, and the Church of England ; but in his poetry he is wanting in the great transports of imagination, and can neither attain the sublime nor the agreeable. To a calm inquirer it appears that his unhappy frame of mind was the source of his failure. He was too much saturated with the spirit of bitterness. Some have said what is most wanting in his verses is poetry. He employs mythology wearily and disdainfully. He degrades classical beauty by a travesty, and has much facility, conciseness, is incisive, witty ; but to pass from his verses to better poetry is

like comparing vinegar to wine ; yet, as we shall soon see, his power and truth are prodigious in prose.

Before a view is given of the poetry of the last hundred years, it is expedient to keep to the age of Queen Anne, and treat separately the question of the drama.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE DRAMA OF THE AGE OF QUEEN ANNE.

A REMARK of an able foreign critic is entitled to consideration, that English literature runs into extremes ; it is either correct, almost puritanic, serious and moral, or breaking loose from all restraint, it plunges into excess. The remark extends in some degree to the nation ; happily the moral extreme predominates.

The Restoration was a reaction against puritanic, straight-laced propriety. The court and upper classes ran into excess of license, and literature followed the tone. The spirit of the times reacted on the stage ; brilliant decorations, foot-lights, ladies on the stage (the female parts were played by men before), the inauguration of the opera, bespoke a quiet change in the national taste. This change was in very bad taste, and let in elements inconsistent with a high Christian ideal. Nevertheless it prevailed for a time unopposed, till, chastised by the unanswerable censure of Collier, it gradually disappeared. The works of the dramatists of the age of Queen Anne are not an honour to English literature. Many of the comedies were in prose, and might be treated under that head, but we prefer to consider them with the drama under the head of poetry. The principal dramatic writers of the reign of Queen Anne were George Farquhar (died 1707), remarkable for wit, merry and coarse, successful in the portraiture of character and in dialogue. William Wycherley (died 1715), a clever painter of the manners of the day, but censurable in matters of morality ; J. Vanbrugh (1726), whose plays are remarkable for complicated plots ; William Congreve (born 1671, died 1729), the most successful of the tribe, writing with much sparkling vivacity, fine touches of wit, and power of humour, noted from having written one of the first English operas, the "Mourning Bride."

Dryden was also known as a dramatist, though not free from the defects attaching to his age, and falling under the lash of Collier. He wrote twenty-seven dramas, and signed an agreement with the actors of the King's Theatre to supply them with *three every year*.

Dryden aimed at founding a new tragedy. He criticised the old free school of Shakespere, and was extolled by his contemporaries as far above the great Elizabethan. Dryden strove after unity of action, solid knowledge, and lofty reason. He admired and imitated the French stage; yet he admits the defects of stiffness and scrupulosity attaching to the French school, and thought he avoided them; moreover, the refinements in Dryden were above the reach and comprehension of the low gamesters and profligates of Charles II. Dryden again is too finished, too accurate, too full of rhyme for tragedy.

Yet Dryden produced some remarkable dramas, and among the best may be noticed his "All for Love;" he has even some of the merits of Shakespere, and breaks through his fetters into freedom. Of his comedies it may be added, that they are objectionable, like all those of his age; and his drama, like that of the period, has fallen into the obscurity it deserves.

Far higher, nobler, purer, was the spirit of the best dramatist of that time, Nicholas Rowe. Rowe was the poet-laureate in the beginning of the reign of George I. (1673—1718). Among other merits, he was the first editor of Shakespere, and collector of facts relating to him. His translation of Lucan's "Pharsalia," and minor poetical works, are not very remarkable; but his tragedies, "Jane Shore," "Lady Jane Grey," "Tamerlane," and "The Fair Penitent," are purer than most in that age, and full of pathos and tenderness.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ENGLISH POETRY SINCE QUEEN ANNE.

PURSUING the course of English poetry through the eighteenth century, and beginning with lyrics, including elegies, didactic and descriptive poems, we encounter James Thomson (1700—1748), a kind of Schelling in verse, the expounder of man's identity with nature, drawing and painting her in words with the vivid tints of a true landscape painter, immersed in her, attuned to her, the real poet of rural England. Admirably noble, moral, and natural is the spirit displayed in his writings, but especially in his great work, "The Seasons." W. Collins, who died 1756, was distinctly a lyric. J. Dyer (died 1758) wrote "Grongar Hill," and "The Fleece" (pastorals); the Scot, Allan Ramsay (1686—1758), almost reverted to the old ballad style. W. Shen-

stone (died 1763) was a copious author of elegies, songs, and ballads; and Edward Young (1684—1765), with many serious defects, pedantry, affectation, and a morbid tendency, was English, and earnest in many of his "Night Thoughts," rising at times to the sublime. His other works were satires and tragedy. Among the poets of the time occur the names of the Scot, David Mallet (died 1765), who wrote tales, ballads, and tragedies; and Michael Bruce (died 1767), elegies and "Lochleven;" James Grainger (died 1767), who wrote "The Sugar Cane," odes and ballads; and Mark Akenside, who obtained considerable repute by his "Pleasures of Imagination."

But the latter part of this century was marked by several poets of superior excellence, especially Gray, Chatterton, Goldsmith, Burns, Beattie, and Cowper.

Thomas Gray (1716—1772), was a poet of a genius pre-eminently English, or more justly, Teutonic, and as such almost incomprehensible to the modern Latin mind. The older Italian poets, the Franciscans of the thirteenth century, and St. John of the Cross, in Spain, would be the nearest approximations to him in South Europe; but Gray is too reflective for a Southerner. He was born in Cornhill, London, and his father, like Milton's, was a scrivener. His home was unhappy, but he had the advantage of an Eton and a Cambridge education, owing to his mother's exertions, and her death appears to have given a melancholy colouring to his character. He passed much of his life at Cambridge, amid libraries and learned societies, and though he travelled through Italy and France, he was thoroughly sympathetic with the charms of rural England. His "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" is like a peal of evening bells coming on the breeze, and bringing up sobered and sweetened, though sad memories of early years and faces long departed. It conjures up one of those idyllic scenes of rural England, with the greenest of verdure, with a broad horizon fringed by a drapery of funereal elms, and a canopy of dappled sky, streaks of blue, and an alpine ridge of towering clouds, each relieved by its silver lining. Thus sadness and a solemn tone form the ground tint of the poem, but lighted up and coloured here and there with brighter tints and glows.

Though having a mind completely filled with classical lore, and enriched by classical studies, he was one of the first to hail the imitations of the Celtic strains of Macpherson, and he was a successful translator from the Norse. His qualities were a brilliant imagination, quick sympathy, an exquisite ear, and a

harmony of versification found in few authors. His Pindaric Odes have never been surpassed for minstrelsy and sweetness.

Poor Chatterton was a genius too susceptible, and cut off too young. Born at Bristol, the son of a sexton and schoolmaster, he showed enough poetical power before the age of eighteen, to prove that had he lived he would have been a poet of the first order. Born in 1752, he died 1770. A shadow rests on his greatness, in his equivocation when he tried to pass off his poems as originals, found in "Cannynge's Coffre," a chest kept in the muniment room of the ancient church of St. Mary's Redcliffe, at Bristol.

The work gave rise to much controversy, but poor Chatterton, with a-soul of fire, condemned to an attorney's office, and to obtain a starving by writing for magazines in London, became addicted to drinking, aggravated his naturally morbid temperament, tore up his papers, and taking arsenic, destroyed himself.

Chatterton's special features are, occasionally much satirical power, great luxuriance of imagination, and richness of invention that remind the reader of Spenser.

This series of portraits brings up the happy, placid face of Oliver Goldsmith, born in Ireland, 1728, at Pallas, county Longford, and son of a country curate. He studied and graduated at Trinity, Dublin, and at Edinburgh, and narrowly escaped shipwreck going to Leyden. In 1755 he started on a pedestrian tour, provided with a shirt, a guinea, and a flute. His journey led him to the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland, and he came back to England penniless, but with dreams of wealth and fame. His professional life shows him to have been almost a jack-of-all-trades. He began as physician; afterwards he appears as usher of a school; eventually as a reviewer. Failing at an examination at Surgeons' Hall, he gave himself up to literature, and became noted as a poet and a prose writer.

His best poetical and prose productions, some of which were written in the period of his greatest depression, were—"Letters from a Citizen of the World" (1764); the "Traveller," a work that raised him from obscurity (1766); the "Vicar of Wakefield," gentle, humane, and full of human tenderness (1768); the "Deserted Village," prompted by scenes he had witnessed in Ireland (1773); and a comedy, "She stoops to Conquer," which has retained its hold on popularity. In 1774 his brilliant but feverish career was brought to a close.

Of the more recent constellation of English poetical writers, the limits of this work prevent any lengthy notice. Robert

Burns, the poet of the people, like Hood and Béranger, has been perhaps too partially judged by his countryman, Carlyle. Yet he was undoubtedly a genius of a high order, however rough; and although his want of early culture interfered with his appreciation of art, and proper development of the æsthetical faculty. Born Jan. 1759, in a cottage of clay, of a poor farmer of Ayrshire, among bare hills, his early life was poverty and want. For several years butcher's meat was a thing unknown in the house. At the age of thirteen, Robert assisted in thrashing. The family scarcely ate; they worked too much. Burns was brought up to his sixteenth year in ceaseless gloom, with the toil of a galley slave. His shoulders were bowed; his mind a prey to melancholy; his father broken down; the factor threatening and cruel. They took another farm where Robert had £7 a year for his labour. He is a type of a large class in Britain, in our modern days of white slavery. Troubles came apace—he thought of going in exile to Jamaica, when the success of his first writings gave him a gleam of hope. Such was life till twenty-seven. He, again, was an illustration of the losing game of genius in its lifetime here—touching are his struggles, with a spoon in one hand, a book in the other, at his homely meals. A certain culture was conquered, in defiance of all things, by his hard Scotch head. He studied particularly the old Scotch ballads; he began by driving the plough, but at last he made some way in another walk. He was feasted, caressed, in drawing-rooms at Edinburgh, and helped by subscriptions. Then he affected a polished style, and failed; his reputation lasted one winter. He hired a small farm with his gains, and failed also; then he became exciseman at £90 a year, and gauged casks, while his spirit was on fire with poetry; he even turned grocer, and took to drinking, nor was he ever thrifty. Having drunk too deeply one night, he sat down in the street, and caught the rheumatics. His friends wished to fetch a doctor, but he would not see one, and shortly died, at the age of thirty-eight.

Burns led a sad life in a false position, forty years ahead of his age. Like genius generally, he was too free for his time, in some points too free to be just, because his sense of freedom wanted culture and depth; but with all his defects, and his coarseness, and his wandering passions, he remains a great poet.

He appreciated many of the just sentiments enunciated at the beginning of the great French revolution. "A man's a man for a' that" is a grand poem of true Christian equality. Then

he was a true lyric, and lived amid the glorious muirs, and drank in the heathery uplands of Caledonia with all the inspiration of his soul. "Ye banks and braes" is among the sweetest of idylls; but he is bitter and incisive, as might be expected of a great genius, full of ambition, out of tune with his time and position. He can be very satirical on Church and State. The largest work of Burns is "Tam O'Shanter."

It is a matter of regret, that so great a poet should have combined tap-room effusions with his highest flights. What a contrast is poor Cowper, the incarnation of the delicacy of family affection and refined feeling.

William Cowper (1731—1800), son of a rector of Berkhamstead, begins the line of modern English poets reaching to our day—though he is not of the romantic class—Southey, Shelley, and Byron. Always the victim of over-wrought nerves, he attempted suicide when appointed to a clerkship in the House of Lords. After being in confinement for some time, he passed the rest of his days in seclusion with his brother at Huntingdon, and afterwards with his friends, the Unwins, employing his time in gardening and poetry. A large part of his life was passed in sadness, coloured no doubt by his morbid temperament. His genius often bordered on madness; but he has bequeathed a rich legacy of beauty to posterity in his poems.

The "Task" is styled by Southey one of the best didactic poems in the English language, and by Burns, "a glorious poem." Cowper's last poem, the "Castaway," written when nearly seventy years old, is one of the most touching in the English tongue. He, too, was most lovable, affectionate, full of freedom and innocent raillery, with a natural and delightful imagination, exquisite refinement, and a most graceful fancy.

It is time to pass from Cowper to even lesser poets—J. Woolcot, the Peter Pindar satirist (1738—1819); Robert Bloomfield (died 1823); even the Scot, J. Beattie, another of the "Minstrels" (1735—1803). But a word must be given to George Crabbe, born at Aldborough, Suffield, 1754, a wonderfully true painter of nature; indeed truthfulness is his characteristic. A clergyman by profession, he passed his life chiefly as curate or vicar of Aldborough and Tunbridge. Crabbe died in 1832, leaving as his principal works, the "Village" and the "Parish Register." His power of landscape painting is unsurpassed. But it is expedient to hasten to Scott.

Walter Scott (1771—1832), born at Edinburgh, most of his life a lawyer, is immortalized rather by his prose than his poetry; yet the latter, till eclipsed by Byron, was the best of

the day, and is still welcomed with pleasure; for chivalry and purity breathe in every page of Scott. Nor is he ever bitter. Fundamental honesty and wide humanity were his great features. He had weaknesses, but they were lovable. His extravagance at Abbotsford was to help him to live again in the feudal magnificence of that age of chivalry he painted so well. Ruined—bankrupt at fifty-five—he set to work with admirable courage to pay off his debt, and in four years paid £70,000, till he was struck down by paralysis.

Of his prose works anon; at present, suffice it to say that his poetry had the immeasurable merit of bringing back the taste and love of the exquisite old ballads of the past. "Marmion," and the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" have the perfume of the "Chevy Chase" about them; a healthy, manly tone pervades his verse; it will always live in British hearts.

Alongside Scott grew up several poets of the romantic school, as poets perhaps his superiors, but far below him in morality. To this class belong Southey, Coleridge, Byron, and even Shelley. Robert Southey (1774—1843), born at Bristol, was expelled Westminster School for writing against flogging. Intended for the Church, he took to literature, and kept himself by his writings, supported, moreover, by his friend Cottle, till he married, passing some time in visits to Portugal for his health. In 1807 he received a pension from the crown of £200 a year. His best poetical works are "Thalaba, the Destroyer," an Arabian tale, the excellence of which is in description. The others are the "Curse of Kehama" (1810)—a story founded on Hindoo mythology, most excellent, almost surpassing in scene-painting, but failing in character—and "Roderick, the Last of the Goths," also with glorious descriptive passages. In 1813, Southey was made poet laureate.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772—1834), born at Ottery St. Mary's, in turns a Unitarian parson and a dragoon, was a wild genius. He is qualified by some as a philosophic theologian and a dreamy poet. England was too positive for his German views; he finds or lends a sense to the smallest object; his philosophy appears behind all his ideas and images. Coleridge and Southey, both fiery republicans in their youth, sobered in after-life into moderate men and lived together in peace by the lakes. Coleridge was fragmentary, but often beautiful, splendid, and colossal. He had grave, eloquent, and critical power, marred latterly by opium eating. His poems are mostly lyrical, and his measure counted by accents. "Christabel" is one of his noted pieces.

CHAPTER XXX.

ENGLISH POETRY.—FROM SHELLEY.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792—1822) is undoubtedly one of the greatest of poets. His education, or mis-education, explains the man. Sent to a public school in the worst days of bullying, flogging, and tunding, he was outraged at the oppression of tyrants. His mind was indignant, and in revolt against injustice, which he saw everywhere associated with authority. A fine, delicate nature was warped and diverted by a brutal system of training, now happily passing away; and how many fine natures have not been thus irretrievably ruined! English biographers have rarely done justice to this poet, one of the sublimest and most original we have. The son of a baronet, he committed the crime, in English eyes, of marrying far beneath him in station. No doubt he had weaknesses, but he was nervous and sick to the end of his life, which concluded at the age of thirty, by shipwreck off Spezia, in Italy. The false turn given to his passions and imagination by tyranny at school, led him, or rather drove him, to be a republican and a communist, a pantheist, thinking that the abrogation of institutions would make earth an Eden. Such sentiments in England, uttered by a baronet's son, under High Church and king rule, were high treason and blasphemy. Expelled the University, banished from his father's presence, the Lord Chancellor took his children from him, as unworthy, and in the end Shelley had to leave England. But, now, deep is the sympathy felt for this noble and true poet, beautiful as an angel, of wondrous precocity, generous, tender, sweet, possessing in full all the gifts of mind, heart, and fortune, perverted by a false position and false training. He, too, lived before his age. Posterity now knows his worth. Notwithstanding his eccentricities, England will soon agree to the foreigner's verdict: "Has any one since Shakespere and Spenser lighted on such tender and such grand ecstasies?" Has any one painted so magnificently the cloud which watches by night in the sky, enveloping in its net the swarm of golden bees, the stars?

"The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead . . .
That orbéd maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn."

Shelley passed most of his short life in the free air of heaven, much of it in a boat on Lake Leman, the Arno, and the Mediterranean. He loved retirement, the ocean, the infinite. "This love was a deep Germanic instinct," and gave birth to a poetry, pantheistic, pensive, almost Greek, yet English.

He had not a knowledge of life. He lost sight of it; he lived above it. Rarely has a mind been seen where thought rose to sublimer regions, or remoter from reality. His world is beyond our own, its beings float in a kind of fantastic cloud-land, undulating and changing capriciously their vestments of snow and gold. Like all great poets, he was an adherent of a philosophy of identity. He felt the great heart of nature beat. To such there is a soul in everything; in the universe there is a soul, and their poems are the expressions of their longings and their efforts to reach it.

Though the characters in "Queen Mab," the "Prometheus," and the "Revolt of Islam" are unsubstantial phantoms, all his poems are penetrated with great sympathy with nature, and show the consolation he found in it.

But attention must be now given to the greatest complete poet of the nineteenth century—at least, in England—Byron.

His was a sterner and more worldly stuff than Shelley's; but his beginnings were also unfortunate. Madness and sin marked his family. His father was a bad man, his mother at times almost a fury, and he, with the same blood in his veins, grew up an ungovernable child. Yet at Harrow he showed his grand, generous heart by offering to a big bully to take off half the beating from his friend Peel. He displayed the same generous heart in after life, giving away £1000 out of every £4000 he spent in Italy.

But what a contradiction was his character, and what a perversion his life? Taking a wrong turn at Cambridge, and in the whirl of a London season, surrounded with bad examples, yet disgusted with narrowness and shallowness, and aspiring to a grander, higher ideal, vaguely present before him, he broke through proprieties and restraints, outraged at the hypocrisy and false pretensions of his age and country. An uncongenial marriage confirmed him in his wrong drift, and he continued to the end a wayward man, combining hard reading and hard drinking, long fasts, prolonged watches, and debauchery.

Such a course of life wears out the organs. But his generous, liberal sympathies brought his life to a close in Greece, where he *had hastened* to aid the downtrodden victims of Turkish and

Mahometan oppression. This termination of a shady life was glorious, and it is in his splendid lines on Greece that some of his most glorious effusions were uttered.

Bitterness is one of the defects of Byron: it oozes out in every stanza, and is not compatible with a genius of the broad and lofty stamp of Shakespere and Cervantes. But it is easily explained by the fierce onslaught made upon him and his poems in the periodical press, and by some of his most eminent contemporaries, such as Southey. Another defect was his egotism; depicting, praising himself in all his poems. A further defect was his prompting unnatural poetical ideas by the aid of opium. This aggravated the morbid tendency naturally formed in his writings.

When "Childe Harold" appeared, the world awoke to the consciousness that a great poet was abroad. Whatever he touched, he made palpitate and live. There were tempests, avalanches in his soul that found issue in writing. He loved powerful emotions, rousing actions; he sought them, and expressed them, as a man living among the spectacles he describes. When he writes,

"Most glorious night, thou wert not made for sleep,"

it is launched on the moonlit waters of Lake Lemn, soon to be lighted up by the mysteries and terrors of a midnight storm, that invited him to fee a boatman to dare its dangers, that he might revel in the war of the elements. So, again, when he swam across the Hellespont that he might write of Leander.

Byron delights in the image of the terrible, in anguish, in torture, and death. He likes to write of the "Hell of waters" at Turin, or again, in the "Siege of Corinth"—

"And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall,
Hold o'er the dead their carnival;"

or passages like the death of Lara.

"Manfred" is styled by Taine twin-brother of Göthe's "Faust," the greatest poem of the age. Yet he considers "Faust" mediocrity and platitude compared to the character of "Manfred."

Then, in Taine's judgment, "Don Juan" is Byron's masterpiece, and so it may be, in power of expression and verse; but in no work is his perversion and opium-drugging more apparent, and the creations of a diseased mind can never be harmonious. Conceive a drunken Perugino, or an opium-eating Beethoven!

The unfortunate influence of foreign society, in its dubious aspect, is seen in this poem. He had said,

"England, with all thy faults I love thee well,"

but he had forgotten the best side of England—its noble, holy, family life—when he wrote that poem. Needless to add that some of the passages in *Don Juan* are admirable, and unsurpassed for power, especially the "Shipwreck."

As a describer of the passions, and of the pathetic, he has rarely been surpassed—in power of versification, never.

Of Wordsworth, his contemporary, it is expedient next to speak; and here it is proper to combat the remarks of certain French critics, who are quite unable to appreciate his sweet, calm, English spirit.

William Wordsworth (1770—1850) was born at Cocker-mouth. He attended Cambridge in early life, and was rather disposed to hail the French revolution, at first. His life was devoted to literature, and he lived at Crewkerne, on the interest of £2000. He made some visits to the Continent, but passed a large part of his life in a kind of idyllic retirement at Grasmere, having a most congenial wife and friends, and living happily and unostentatiously, illustrating Horace's Epode:—

"Beatus ille qui procul negotiis . . ."

Wordsworth was in some sense a metaphysical poet. Thought predominates in his poems, especially in his great work, the "Excursion." But he is quite mistaken by French critics, who charge him with over-estimating the vulgar commonplace of every-day life, and of the country. This is the very merit of Wordsworth, to combat that false view of life, nature, and human nature, which only sees greatness in showyness and the extraordinary. Then he is accused of sermonizing, and of grave moral didactic tone; and the critic may be asked, What else should be the highest poetry? Had not Shakespere said

"Sermons in stones, and good in everything?"

"Wordsworth was a wise and a happy man—a thinker and a dreamer, who read and walked." An irony is couched under these words, yet they are his highest praise. It is added that "listening to his thoughts, he could perceive in and around him the imperceptible;" and this, too, is meant to be ironical. Yet what else is the poet, and the best poetry? For when the thoughts are happy and holy, Nature responds to them, and

* "Happy he who far from business . . ."—Horace, book v. ode 2.

tells man truly, "We then look up through Nature unto Nature's God." Evil thoughts were the real fall of man, and perversion of nature. Critics allow purity and elevation of thought, and an austere beauty in Wordsworth. It need only be added that his lyrics are sweet and finished as Horace, with the illumination of Christian feeling—throughout an honour to English poetry, while Byron is, in places, its disgrace.

A host of other poets, many of great merit, has adorned this century in England. Most of these can only be enumerated; such as Samuel Rogers, a banker (1763—1855), author of "*Pleasures of Memory*," a graceful and pleasing work; James Hogg, the "*Ettrick Shepherd*" (1770—1835), who wrote a greatly admired "*Ode to the Skylark*;" H. Kirke White (1785—1806), an early victim to overwork, author of plaintive, but pleasing lyrics; Mrs. Hemans (1795—1835), who composed many poems showing a tender spirit, and a thoughtful, earnest nature. To these may be added Robert Pollok (1799—1827), author of a popular poem, "*The Course of Time*," rather harsh in language, but powerful and beautiful in conception; James Montgomery (1771—1854), who wrote several longer poems, with passages of much beauty, and hymns characterized by deep and earnest Christian feeling; Bishop R. Heber (1785—1826), also the author of some of the most beautiful hymns in our language; Thomas Hood (1798—1845), a great master of humour, born in London; and John Keats (1795—1821), author of "*Endymion*," displaying much quiet, pensive beauty.

Thomas Moore requires a slightly fuller notice, though not belonging to the first class of poets. Moore (1779—1852), born at Dublin, had a very successful life as a literary man, showing a plaintive tone, rich fancy, and much wit; but bordering on the morbid and sickly. His earlier works are wanting in delicacy, but he corrected this defect later, and wrote among other works charming odes, called the "*Irish Melodies*," finished and beautiful in thought and style. His longer works, "*Lalla Rookh*," and "*The Loves of the Angels*," have powerful passages, and many beautiful descriptions, especially of Oriental scenery. Gracefulness is the chief feature of Moore's poetry, united to great music of verse.

Of living poets it is a delicate matter to speak. England still rejoices in the delightful verses of Alfred Tennyson (born 1809), uniting strong natural feeling and great finish, and America boasts a Longfellow, charming every one with all that is noble and lofty in conception, and sweet in language.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PROSE SINCE QUEEN ANNE.

WE have still to notice the prose writers of romance, and the critics of the eighteenth century, in England. Beginning with Richard Steele (1675—1729), a writer of correct taste and style; then John Addison (1672—1719), one of the purest writers in our language, indeed almost our first classic in prose (contributor to "The Tatler," "Spectator," &c.), passing to Richardson and Fielding, both novelists, admirable in portraiture of character, on to Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, also classical for his day, though doubtful in tendency, the series brings us to Junius (Ph. Francis) (Letters, political satires), almost unequalled in pungency, and we arrive at Samuel Johnson (1709—1784), Frenchified in style, but solidly English in feeling, and delightful as a believer in ghosts, amid the levity and frivolity of his age. His biography, by Boswell, has made him a familiar friend with posterity.

To the class of novelists of the eighteenth century may be reckoned Daniel Defoe (1661—1731), son of a London butcher, one of the most popular of writers and unfortunate of men, immortalized by his "Robinson Crusoe," a wondrous fiction from its minute truthfulness, and interesting to all classes of readers; Dean Swift (1667—1745), a prodigious but wayward genius, as displayed in his "Lilliput," and "Brobdingnag," bitter, merciless satires; and Laurence Sterne, mild, sentimental, and graphic (1713—1768), a churchman, but not over strict, and very popular in his day. His noted work is "The Sentimental Journey."

RECENT NOVELISTS.

Of more recent novelists these pages can only notice the two who combine the greatest merits in the first half of this century.

Walter Scott will always be the king of novelists from his purity, healthy humour and love of chivalry. His "Ivanhoe," "Kenilworth," "Quentin Durward," and "Antiquary," are the perfection of romance writing, and he is as true to history as most historians, and more than many.

J. Fenimore Cooper is a delightful American writer, also pure and generally healthy in tone. His sea pieces are admirably natural, and his pictures of Indian life charming. But "The Trapper" is his master conception, and as much an old friend as "Don

Quixote." The latter works of Cooper are a great falling off from his earlier style.

Of the living or recent English prose writers these are too early days to speak at length. Continental philosophy has entered England since the peace of Waterloo, and tinctured all great English writers for the last fifty years. This is seen in the sarcasms of Sydney Smith against the apathy of the clergy and the oppression of the Catholics, in Dr. Arnold's broad church writings, to which may be added Kingsley's, and Dean Stanley's, even in Macaulay, the great panegyrist of Liberalism, which he erroneously identifies with Whiggery; in Grote, the great historian of Greece, coloured by his profound reading of German criticisms; in Carlyle, saturated with Germanism in thought and style to such an extent, that, like Kant, he creates a new language, requiring a dictionary; in Emerson, his American imitator, and Sir William Hamilton, the last exponent of Scotch philosophy. Indirectly the broader views imported across the Channel are seen in the living and recent poets and novelists of England, but happily purified by contact with the powerful English moral sense.

Thackeray showed the spirit of modern Liberalism in attacking the nobles, in the interest of the middle classes; and Charles Dickens, in attacking the wealthy and proprietary classes, to the profit of the poor. Mrs. Browning has taken up the advocacy of the independence of women, and John Stuart Mill has attempted to introduce some side of French positivism in England.

Of some of these writers a brief account will be given in the Appendix (F). All that can be attempted at present is a short notice of Dickens, Thackeray, and of Bulwer Lytton.

Charles Dickens, the son of a petty naval officer, born at Portsmouth (1812—1870), had much trouble and trial as a child, was employed as a short-hand writer, and made his reputation by the "Pickwick Papers." After a career of wonderful success, only broken by family feuds and extravagance, he died 1870. His spirit is thus summed up by Taine: "Be good and love; genuine joy exists only in the emotions of the heart; sensibility is the man. Give over science to the wise, pride to the noble, luxury to the rich man, but have thou compassion on lowly misery, the most despised of beings may have the worth of the most powerful. Do not bruise delicate souls in any condition. Have faith in humanity; mercy and clemency, tenderness, sympathy, the overflowing of the heart, are the best things in man." But Taine has not understood Dickens; to a

Frenchman this is difficult. The great novelist's criticism and correction of abuses and prejudices, are his lasting legacy of benefit; but his delicate appreciation of the holiness and beauty of family love and ties, is what makes his books dearest and best to the English heart. In this respect, certain scenes in "David Copperfield," "Dombey and Son," and "The Old Curiosity Shop," are equal to anything ever penned. The chief criticism to which he can be exposed is that of exaggerating characters; yet, with our knowledge of life, can certain characters be exaggerated?

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811—1863) rose slowly to distinction, and never reached the popularity of Dickens. A greater bitterness pervades his works, and his female characters are generally unlovely, but some of Thackeray's *men* are most beautiful conceptions. Taine is more just in his estimate of Thackeray than of Dickens: "A moral reflection raises his historical novel, 'Vanity Fair,' to the height of the finest productions, while spreading a tone of vulgarity and falseness in his contemporary novels." Thackeray has changed novel into satire, and no writer was better gifted than Thackeray for bitter satire, adopting the passion and common sense leading-strings of Englishmen. The lash is laid on heavily in this school; it is the English taste. Taine winds up his remarks by saying, that "Among Swift's pupils Thackeray is the first." But Thackeray was a Swift with a sound mind, though coloured by family discomforts.

Lord Lytton's name (Bulwer) must be added as one of the most finished novelists of the day (died 1873). His prose is unsurpassed for beauty; some of his works have even a high moral tone, but others, unhappily, are too tinged with French defects, and false principles.

The best English prose histories of the sixteenth century were those of Walter Raleigh, quaint, but muscular; Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury; and W. Drummond. A freer spirit breathes through the historians of the seventeenth century: Butler, Cowley, James Harrington, and Edward, Earl of Clarendon (died 1674). Prose history obtained a riper form and more finished style in the eighteenth century, but was still partial in tone, represented by Henry St. John, Bolingbroke (died 1751), Tobias Smollett (1721—1771), Goldsmith, George Lyttelton, especially W. Robertson (born 1721, died 1793), writing a correct, pleasing style, but feeble in representation; David Hume, a little Frenchy, very flowing, too partial to the Stuarts; and Edward Gibbon, who at Lausanne, on the shores of the beautiful Leman, wrote his *Decline and Fall*, but dangerous, "Decline and Fall," full of insidious and sarcasm against revealed religion (1738—1794).

Later on the series leads to a truer, simpler, more English school. J. Lingard, admirable for impartial learning; Mitford; W. Roscoe (1795); Lorenzo of Medici; Thirlwall; the fundamental and elegant Grote; the sparkling, dramatic, but partial Macaulay; Henry Thomas Buckle (1822—1862), perverted by a false theory; and in America the delightful Prescott.

It is generally unwise to treat in detail of living writers. We have, therefore, avoided a close analysis of Carlyle, and it has seemed best to abstain from all notice of James Anthony Froude (born 1809), though it may be permitted to remark, that in his "History of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth," he appears to mitigate the ascertained immorality of the king, and to aggravate the levity of Mary Queen of Scots. Yet his work is full of traits of light, and a valuable contribution to English history. Carlyle is more properly a philosopher, and will be considered again.

It appears, however, right and fit to give a somewhat closer attention to the great historians who are of the past, and there is only space for these, from David Hume to the present time.

These great historians may be reduced to three or four: David Hume, Edward Gibbon, T. Lingard, George Grote, and Lord Macaulay. Minor names appear, Sir James Mackintosh, Middleton, Robert Henry, and Ferguson, but we pass over these.

David Hume (1711—1776) was more remarkable as a philosopher. "Hume's History of England" is no longer of high authority in matter, but very elegant in style: for Hume, who was born in Scotland, but passed much of his time in Paris, amidst the unbelieving society of Louis XV., had acquired the graces of French style, with the taint of French unbelief, and almost overloaded his pages with ornament, and words of Latin and French derivation.

The same remark applies with partial force to Gibbon. Edward Gibbon (1737—1794), in the first case a Roman Catholic, became afterwards an unbeliever, in some degree also by contact with foreign influence, and wrote his great history as a neighbour of Voltaire, in Switzerland. His "Decline and Fall" shows immense reading, and a certain power of generalization, with the faculty of representation, but he wrote with too evident a bias against Christianity, and is not reliable when his prejudices are concerned. His style is very flowing and beautiful, but too flowery and too Frenchy.

Of Dr. Lingard it suffices to say that, with deep learning, he united great impartiality, that his "History of England," though unfinished, is probably the best in point of accuracy, and that his style is always correct and chaste.

George Grote (1794—1871) is admirable in matter and style. He always shows a deep love of his subject, immense research, correct judgment—except perhaps in his paradoxes about the sophists—and a lofty, dignified, and often eloquent style.

Lord Macaulay (1800—1859) wrote his "Essays" and his "History" in model, modern English. It is difficult to be clearer, impossible to be more graceful, finished, and appropriate. His defect is a tendency to overpraise the Whigs, and extenuate all their faults; thus to him William III. is a faultless hero.

Before concluding, it may be added that Mr. Gladstone will evidently stand high in the list of England's critical historians, from his profound, just, and eloquent treatment of the Homeric poems, and of early Greek history.

CHAPTER XXXII.

GERMANY.

POETRY TO GÖTHE.

GERMANY, long lagging behind the rest of Europe in modern times, suddenly burst into a glorious prime, like the spring of the north. Modern German and modern German literature start with Luther, one of the most popular of modern writers, who stamped a character on the speech and thought of the following generations.

Nevertheless, Latin was still in use among the learned, and afterwards French, till the time of Klopstock. Even the learning, to which the nation was early devoted, did not produce great effects till our time, when the people have been more classically thorough than any other in Europe.

Among the writers preceding Lessing, Leibnitz stands pre-eminent, but he wrote chiefly in Latin and on philosophy; * Frederic II., of Prussia, was committed to French.

POETRY.

German poetry is beneath contempt till Klopstock. Fr. Gottlieb Klopstock (of Quedlinburg, 1724—1803) was a man glowing with Christian belief, love of humanity and country, and wrote the "Messias," the best German epic, and lyrics of an in-

* See Appendix F.

ferior stamp. His defect is unevenness and a certain want of power. He led German poetry in healthier channels. Gesner and Kleist also appeared about this time. Then Christoph Martin Wieland, author of "Oberon," too Frenchy and pretty, but graceful and popular.

The man who gave the true tone to German and the German drama, was Gottlieb Ephraim Lessing, of Kamenz (1729—1781), noted as a correct critic, also as a philosopher and author of a few model dramas, but better as a guide and teacher. Göthe, Schiller, and the great modern poets followed in his wake. Johann Gottlieb Herder, besides uniting large philosophical views, was a fine lyric, with certain defects. Then follows Johann Wolfgang Göthe, of Frankfort (born 1748), one of the greatest of modern poets, great in the drama, in description, in lyrics, and as a philosopher. Yet Göthe had too much of the man of the world to be a poet of the highest order; he was more as a philosopher.

Fr. Schiller, of Marbach (1759—1805), is their great dramatist and most popular writer, unequal, but always great, especially in pathos; his lyrics are also of the sweetest.

Among lesser poets of this age are Körner, Kerner, Tieck, Bürger, Freiligrath, Uhland, Schwab, the Schlegels, and Matthiessen. Kotzebue's plays are quite inferior in tone and style.

PROSE.

In German prose appears after Luther, Jacob Böhme, of whom more anon. Among historians and critics, Lessing and Herder stand foremost in the last century, then the two Schlegels, Raumer, Schlosser, Ranke, Mommsen, and many others in the present time, more remarkable for solid learning than brilliant style.

The novel writers of Germany are inferior. Among the soundest may be named Countess Hahn Hahn, Auerbach, Zschokke, and perhaps Hackländer.

In mental philosophy Germany occupies the first rank. Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel have reacted on the whole thought of modern Europe; but it is to be regretted that, of late, German philosophy has done little, except repeat foreign scepticism in Büchner and his school. Ulrici and Fichte, the younger, are exceptions to this in their revival of a spiritual philosophy.

MINUTER ANALYSIS.—POETRY.

From Luther to Lessing, or rather Klopstock, poetry was prin-

fully depressed in Germany. Mannerism was the defect of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in Germany all national literature seemed defunct. We pass over this blank and dreary period, merely remarking that the poets of the time, such as Martin Opitz von Boberfeld, of Bunzlau (1597—1639), attempted all branches, but were mere imitators of foreign models, forming what is called the first Silesian school of poets, which was also grouped round Paul Flemming and Andreas Gryphius.

The chief merit of this school was a new metrical form, now first introduced, but only in narrative poetry, as lyrics remained untouched by it. Opitz and Gryphius wrote plays, especially the latter, but they are poor in character and in a tumid style; except some of his comedies, which are better. It must also be admitted that Opitz, though a foreign imitator, awakened a love for the early heroic poetry of Germany. The second Silesian school founded chiefly by Christian Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau, was more under the foreign influence of Guarini and Marino, though Hofmann had known Opitz in his youth. Accordingly, he abounds in dulcet, tumid, impure poetry, written chiefly to tickle the ear. The matter of these poems (epistles, &c.) was generally gross; yet Hofmann and his compeers were honourable men of exemplary lives.

Germany was at this time split up into schools of poets, one of which was the "Water Poets," bold, frigid, mechanical rhymesters. A host of petty poets lay scattered about, not belonging exactly to any class, sharing the tumidity of the Silesians, and the frigidity of the "Water Poets."

At length the deplorable depression of German poetry at the beginning of the eighteenth century provoked a reaction. The best representatives of this reaction were Christian Wernicke (about 1697) and Friedrich Rudolf Ludwig, Freiherr von Canitz, imitating in his didactic poems the beggarly scholastic poetry of his day in Germany (died 1699).

The Hamburger, Barthold Heinrich Brockes (born 1680, died 1747), pursued this course, and wrote a successful poem, in nine volumes, "Earthly Delight in God," of which the chief faults are monotony and its over-wrought efforts.

The present survey now approaches the second bloom of German literature since the fading of the first after the "Fall of the Minnesang." The new bloom was won by hard fighting and long preparation, by pruning and rooting out the stuff that had *encumbered the ground*.

Bodmer and Gottsched were two of the best men in this work. Johann Christoph Gottsched (about 1737) (died 1766) introduced the rules of the French drama into Germany. Johann Jacob Bodmer (died 1783), of Zurich, on the other hand, imitated English authors, and especially Milton. This led to a deadly war between the Saxon and the Swiss schools, between intellect and imagination, as the dominant faculties in poetry.

In the midst of this strife appears Klopstock, the first great modern poet of Germany, leading the way in the second bloom of its literature. Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock was born at Quedlinburg, 1724, and died March 14th, 1803. He came up with Frederic II. of Prussia, the worshipper of French literature. Yet this very Frederic had set on foot researches and movements to promote the study of German antiquity and literature, but he neglected Klopstock, who stood almost alone in his spirit and efforts, above all, in having a lofty idea of a new and specially German poetry.

He tried to realize his ideal in the "Messiah," a poem which marks the first flight of German poetry to higher regions. The theme was too sublime and difficult for him or any man to do justice to it. The richest parts of the poem are its elegiac passages. It is full of fine elegiac feeling. But his rhetorical refinement is sometimes excessive and makes him obscure. The speeches are too frequent. The second half of the epic is also a great falling off from the first. The same defects apply to his play, "Hermann." His influence was also injurious in trying to substitute measure by syllables instead of accent. He thus tries to banish rhyme, thinking that the old German poetry was rhymeless. But in this he was in error.

Nevertheless, with many faults, Klopstock was a great poet. He was, above all, and heartily, German; German in his love of family and country, German in his simplicity and truth, German in the strength of his natural feeling and elegiac tone, inseparable from German instinct. Another element of Klopstock is his Christian, believing instinct, and this feeling had become dormant in France and Germany since the sixteenth century. Christian souls there were many, but the Christian sense of the masses was reduced to an almost lifeless state. Klopstock was the poetical Wesley of Germany.

A third merit and creative power of this epic poet was, that he filled with German stuff and spirit the measures and forms of classical antiquity. Till his time, the old classics had strings of words, and were studied merely mechanically in Germany. New

life had been infused into them by German feeling, and modern Germany has, by sympathy, got a fuller insight than any country into the old classics.

Of a very different stamp was his contemporary, Christoph Martin Wieland, of Biberach (1733—1813), who passed much of his life at the circle of literary refinement collected at Saxe-Weimar.

Wieland is admired by Frederick von Schlegel more than by recent German critics. As Klopstock was the creator or reviver of genuine German feeling in German poetry, so Wieland is a representative of the attempt to import the joyous spirit and musical rhyme of the Provençal poetry into Germany. But Wieland did more than this. Lessing drops the Christian and the antique element to bring up a German element; Wieland not only drops the Christian and German elements, he is even anti-classical. He used all his influence to introduce what Klopstock and Lessing combated with all the powers of their soul, a false, imported culture, selfish, epicurean, gay in the enjoyment of life, without a thought of higher things—the culture of sensationalism and frivolity. The expressed object of Wieland's poetry was to show that there is no ideal—nothing worthy, noble, and great. He was the representative of the age of Louis XV. in Germany.

He was the hero of circles to which Klopstock and Lessing were intolerable. Wieland's "Oberon" has been called a travesty of Voltairian philosophy and modern French vanity and frivolity in classical forms.

It is said that, as with Byron, his early training explains his poetry. A precocious boy under a severe discipline, he became first a pietist, then a hypocrite, lastly he broke loose from all restraint. From 1760 to 1770 he wrote his worst books, but when removed to Weimar, in a nobler circle, he wrote "Oberon" and his finest productions. His education gave a false turn to his mind and taste.

The great defect of Wieland is, that he misunderstood the noblest affections, and, instead of chivalry, saw only low passion. He is also thoroughly un-German; his poetry is too dulcet and enervating. His merits are a cheerful happy tone, attractive grace, and a musical verse.

But it is necessary to hasten to treat of Lessing, the genuine founder of improved literary taste in Germany.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, of Kamenz (1729—1781), wrote *didactic poems*, sonnets, epigrams, dramas, and philosophical

works in prose ; but his chief influence was that of a critic and teacher of taste and style to Germany.

The life and many of the writings of Lessing do not at first produce a favourable impression. He appears in the light of an unquiet spirit, and of a man grasping at many things and profound in none. In his outer life we find him flitting from Leipzig to Berlin ; then from Berlin to Leipzig ; next at Breslau, afterwards at Hamburg ; lastly at Wolfenbüttel, and always restless. But amidst this external movement his mind and will were immovably fixed, and his soul dwelt in perpetual calm—the calm of a strong, superior spirit. His merit and utility to Germany can scarcely be exaggerated.

This utility can be summed up in a few words. He broke up the influence of the false Frenchified spirit, and did much to beget a veneration for Shakespere in Germany. Klopstock had already given a turn to German literature back to the true channels, of German tradition, and Herder helped in the same direction ; but the great propelling force came from Lessing.

This great man united a combative spirit with great acuteness, frankness, and uprightness, and sparing no defect, overlooking no exaggeration, he worked out the true way to be followed in all branches of German literature.

True, he was more destructive than constructive, and his genius was essentially critical ; but he was unequalled as a critic. His criticism goes rather at fundamentals than at characteristics, and more to root out prejudices than to give examples. Yet it is held by judges, that in his plays, especially "*Emilia Galeotti*," he has given a more perfect specimen of a true German drama than was obtained even by Schiller.

Of another play, "*Minna von Barnhelm*," Göthe remarked that it "opened a view into a higher, more important world beyond the literary and civil sphere in which poetry had hitherto moved." In Germany, another great merit of Lessing was that of converting the Iambic verse of four feet into the regular measure of the German drama.

The next influential poet and prose writer of the Kantian era was Johann Gottfried Herder, of Morungen (1744—1803), a brother writer of Lessing in criticism, broader perhaps in sympathy with all human interests, and also in imaginative elasticity. Herder was a versatile genius. As a Protestant divine, he was led to appreciate Hebrew poetry ; as a poet, he understood the character of the traditions of all nations, as also evidenced in his "*Philosophy of History*." He may be called the general mythologist of Ger-

many, and had a special gift of thinking and feeling with all nations—a gift thought to be peculiar to modern Germany. But he was wanting in philosophical depth and critical exactness. His great merit was to direct the national taste and feeling to the cultivation of the old national ballads, of a people's lyrics, developed afterwards by the brothers Grimm and the Schlegels. The same spirit led Herder to write a valuable reproduction of the Spanish ballad of the Cid, though more faithful representations have been made since. His imitations of Greek poems and of Horace prove again how he could throw himself into the spirit of old times and nations. His prose style is very beautiful, and often evidently imitated from Lessing.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

GÖTHE AND SCHILLER.

BUT it is time to turn to the master poet of Germany, and one of its greatest men—Goethe. In one of the quaint old streets of Frankfurt, near the weird, ghostly houses out of which issued the golden generation of Rothschild, a right quaint mediæval legendary habitat, is a substantial, almost palatial burgher's house of stately appearance, and having the dignity of age and a wealthy descent about it. Broad vestibules, easy oaken staircases, shady yards with the fresh, everflowing brunnens*—the grave, calm, sedate burgher life of the free city hovers over this sanctuary, now valued and visited, as the lowly roof of Stratford, because the cradle of Germany's greatest genius.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe (born Aug. 24th, 1749, died at Weimar, 1832) had a more easy youth and easy life than usually fall to the lot of a great genius. He was in all points an exceptional man. Frederic Schlegel had written at an early date that it was admitted that Goethe's riper works were the most excellent productions that had appeared in the German language for poetic art and beauty of language. He has more genial power and grace than any of the poets succeeding Lessing. Yet Schlegel thinks he had the defect of linking his poetry too much to objects of the present time. The critic is also right in showing the immense contrast of Goethe's earlier works with his later—"Wilhelm Meister" with "Faust." Schlegel is, moreover, just in giving a great superiority to his poetry over his prose.

Many of Goethe's lyrics are equal to anything he has written; for example, the "Erl-König." But his great work is un-

* German for fountain.

doubtedly "Faust," containing all that is beautiful in poetry, with much wondrous philosophy.

Göthe passed many years in the literary court of Weimar, and being actively engaged at the time in real life, he wrote little. Some have thought this contact with court life with men and manners spoilt him; a sufficient reply is found in the fact that, though the plot of "Faust" was first laid down in 1773, it was only completed in 1831, thus nobly crowning a poetical activity of sixty-five years.

His other great tragedies, "Egmont," "Iphigenie," "Tasso," and "Claudine," were written after his Italian journey. "Iphigenie," is a grand drama in five foot iambs, and has achieved the great triumph of giving a German body to the spirit of antiquity. "Tasso" is a piece wanting the finish of "Iphigenie," but combines some of the finest, tenderest, most transparent, and vigorous elements of any German drama. "Egmont" is a piece more unequal, and wanting in completeness, but the finest scene in it is splendid (that with Clärchen), and taken from Göthe's own life.

Of "Faust" it is not possible properly to treat in the limits of this work. It worked up the grand old German legend of "Dr. Faustus" into a drama, combining a psychology, a mythology, almost a cosmology. It was first a fragment (1790), then a tragedy (1808), the first ending with the Cathedral scene, the second with the death of Valentine, and all from the Walpurgisnacht to the conclusion. "Faust" is a psychological drama, whose hero is not a separate, historical individual, but man as such, the full and true humanity, as he stands opposed to the world on his own feet, referred to the unassisted power of his body and soul, but sufficing to himself by the energy of his soul, his will, and his efforts; it is mere art that stands opposed to all encroaching Nature, resisting her with the entirety of his being and forces; in short, it is man viewed in the division of his nature, in the opposition of knowing and willing, cognition and enjoyment, power and weakness, certainty and doubt, doubt and truth.

Other great works emanated from the pen of Göthe, but none equal to this. "Hermann und Dorothea" is wonderful, because an epic dignity is given in it to the ordinary occurrences of common life. This poem resulted from Göthe's intercourse with Schiller, which the author of "Faust" said stirred him up to greater poetical activity.

It may be useful to wind up these few remarks on Göthe by :

summarising his good points. The first merit assigned him is that of a *sound* mind. Secondly, Göthe was no student dreamer; he was a thorough man. He was in a sense a man of the world, and a man of nature; he knew and sympathized with both, and in this is his greatness.

Friedrich Schiller, of Marbach, in Würtemberg (born November 10, 1759, died May 9, 1805), came ten years later than Göthe, but departed long before his friend. He came from a joyous land, but his life was one of trouble. Pilgrims have wandered up and along the sunny and shady banks of the Neckar, past the princely ruins of Heidelberg, among the ancient Schlosser of stout knights of the stamp of Götz von Berlichingen, and have dwelt with pleasure on the memory of those bright sylvan scenes of the Odenwald, and the quaint old mediæval towers of Heilbronn and Neckargemünde, and all the treasury of legends they recall.

It was in this poetical region that Schiller saw the light. Educated in the transition, eruptive period, when all things were becoming new, his young spirit was early in revolt, and the "Robbers" reflected himself. There is a purpose in this play, and, with all its extravagance, a truth. It made him at once famous. Schiller's after life was not cheery, though he had the best of wives. He was made professor, but had no patience, and lectured to empty benches. Then the publishers were hard upon him. Schiller's bent was after the ideal, like that of his age, and his dramas, like Ohlenschläger's, are coloured with this.

Schlegel, and German critics generally, are not quite satisfied with him. His historical studies were shallow, and it is only by depth of thought and historical accuracy that dramatic perfection can be attained, as in Greece, England, and Spain. His earlier dramas reflect his strong leaning to revolutionary opinions, and disgust at constituted authorities. Such are the "Robbers," and the "Conspiracy of Fiesco." "Kabale und Liebe" is thought better than "Fiesco," as touching more on real life.

"Don Carlos" came next (1781), but had the serious defect of totally misrepresenting the character of the prince, which was insanely passionate, and prone to gross cruelty, according to Mottler. Then the piece wants unity, Marquis Posa being brought forward as hero in the second part.

The great piece of Schiller is "Wallenstein's Tod," according to the best German critics (1799). The subject of the tragedy *was* historical and imposing. The choice of the piece, its life-

like and art-like treatment, place Schiller in the first rank as a great poet. It was the most laboured of his pieces, and in it he was the closest imitator of Göthe. "Maria Stuart" and the "Jungfrau von Orleans" are thought to be inferior. The former is described as too sentimental and rhetorical, and not historic enough; the other is thought affected in the supernatural, and untrue in the earthly passions ascribed to Joan. "The Bride of Messina" is classically the most perfect of Schiller's works; but the chorus has been misunderstood by him.

"William Tell" is in all respects a splendid drama, and has often been thought his best. The idea throughout the piece is artistically complete, but some scenes are thought unnatural. The parts that treat of the people are also thought stiff and untrue—almost condescending. Yet in some points, next to "Wallenstein," "William Tell" is the most perfect drama of Schiller.

Schiller's lyrics and didactics are charming, being characterized throughout by vivacity of representation, music and splendour of language, and strength and depth of feeling. Strength of fancy and feeling predominate in his earlier lyrics, which resemble the "Robbers" in this respect, but the grand lyrics of Schiller date from his intercourse with Göthe, at Weimar, and of these Germany is even prouder than of his dramas. To this period are traced his best lyrics, "Der Taucher," "Sehnsucht," "Der Jüngling am Bache," the "Berglied," and the "Alpenjäger."

Nothing in the whole of German poetry can compare with Schiller's lyrics, except Göthe's "Braut von Corinth." In some of these pieces, Schiller, the poet, rises almost to the prophet moved by the Spirit of God.

The distinction between Göthe and Schiller has been placed in this, and justly, that, while the former ascended from the particular to the universal, the latter descended from the universal to the particular. They are thus the representatives, not only of their time, but of many ages. As to their relation to Christianity, they have been censured as heathens; but they were both Christians in sentiment; though Göthe had a pantheistic, and Schiller a rationalistic tendency—the former deifying nature, the latter men.

The other poets of Germany of this age are so little compared with those we have considered, that few words can be given to them.

Jean Paul Richter (born 1763, died 1825) was one of the

popular German writers of fiction in this century. Unlike Schiller and Göthe, his first and his last works are almost equal in tone. He is generally classed with the humourists, and his writing is considered to be youthful, almost boyish, that is, immature throughout. His satires are said not to be satire, being too tedious and long-drawn. His poetry is attractive to youth, but mannerism is seen almost everywhere, and his style is almost unreadable to those who enjoy Luther, Göthe, Schiller, and Lessing. Yet he had a good effect on the coarseness and triviality of his age, and did much to promote a more moral tone.

Of the lyrics of the time of Lessing, Hölty is the best, and a little later comes Matthison. Following these appeared Arndt and Körner, with their trumpet-call for German freedom against Napoleon I., and in our time the dreamy Kerner, Bürger, Tieck, and Uhland.

It would be inexpedient to conclude this brief survey of recent German poets, without noticing Heinrich Heine, and regretting that the judgment of him must be unfavourable. For he was essentially a perverted genius, who had the misfortune, 1st, to prefer German mythology to Christian truth, and, 2ndly, to sacrifice sound German principle to French Voltairianism. He was, moreover, unhealthily bitter, and in this a German Dean Swift. Bürger had fallen a victim to the same infatuation, but in a less degree. That Heine's style is attractive and pleasing we readily admit.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

GERMAN PROSE.

THE grandest side of modern German prose is its philosophy, but this will be briefly viewed in the Appendix.

Of critics Germany has had abundance, and among the best of modern times. To this class belong Lessing, Winckelmann, the two Schlegels, and many more.

In branches that do not fall under the present notice, such as archaeology, philology, the history of jurisprudence, and science—general and medical, and even military—Germany is supremely rich.

Here must be enumerated the immortal labours of Lepsius, the brothers Grimm, Ottfried Müller, Bopp, Adeleung, William von Humboldt, Max Müller Savigny, Bunsen and Kirchoff,

Liebig, Bessel, Mädler, and a host more, besides the world-renowned Alexander von Humboldt, a model of beauty of style in German prose.

The theology of Germany is world-renowned, and notwithstanding many aberrations, the most remarkable of modern times. For depth of research and learning in this walk, few nations have anything to compare with Neander, Ewald, and Tholuck in the Protestant camp, Möhler, Hettinger, and Döllinger in the Catholic.

But the province of this work is confined to belles-lettres, and to the heads of history and prose romance.

HISTORY.

Niebühr was probably the profoundest historian of his day (died 1830), and is still an authority in Roman history, though his mythical theory was carried too far.

Von Raumer* gave a fine national account of the great Barbarossa period of the German Empire in his "Hohenstauffen." The admirable Schlosser wrote laborious, generally accurate and attractive annals of the more recent periods of European history; Leopold Ranke* has obtained a European reputation for his authentic treatment of all historical matters, giving an example of true history, untiring in going to the sources, and Mommsen, though unjust to Cicero, has given us the best history of Rome we possess; while Frederick von Schlegel and Gervinus* have treated the history of literature with admirable skill, though from opposite points of view.

For impartiality German historians are unrivalled; and the histories of Ferdinand I. of Austria by Bucholtz, and of the councils of the Church by Héféli,* are models in this respect.

ROMANCE.

In novels, Germany has little to show compared with England. Her novelists generally err on the side of false sentimentalism, and sometimes of loose morality. The best and soundest novels she has produced in this century are those of Steffens, Baroness Hahn Hahn, and the Swiss Zschokke.

* Living writers.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SCANDINAVIAN NATIONS.—DENMARK AND SWEDEN.

DANISH POETRY.

DENMARK, though recently at war with Germany, is closely allied to it in language and literature. The remark applies with less force to England. The earliest bloom of literature in Europe in the Middle Ages sprang up, as has been seen, among the Icelandic ancestors of the Danes; but when the Icelandic poetry vanished, a long interregnum took place before Danish literature, deserving of the name, assumed any importance among the European nations.

It may be justly said that the progress of Danish literature kept pace with that of its political development and general culture. In Denmark the progress of the nation was forwarded in opposition to what took place in England, by the increase of the power of the crown, limiting the excessive privileges of the aristocracy. When confidence was established (1600) between the governing and the governed, this general security was rewarded by general well-being and literary activity. The rule of the noble-minded Frederic V. (1746—1766) gave a great push to higher intellectual and artistic life, and his most essential principles were carried out by Frederic VI. (died 1784).

Education was promoted, literary activity developed, learning began to rise to the level of the most favoured nations; mathematics, natural and medical science, were actively promoted. A more active literary life sprang up in the eighteenth century, and at length, after shaking off the unfortunate French influence, broke out in the splendid creations of Ohlenschläger and Andersen.

MINUTER SURVEY OF DANISH POETRY.

The Danish poetry of the sixteenth century was confined to Church hymns; that of the seventeenth, to the imitation of foreign models, chiefly in lyrics and satires—especially those of Th. Kingo and W. Helt (died 1703), and satirical essays in a rough, unpolished style; such as those of Anders Bording (died 1677), T. G. Sörterup (died 1722), and Töger Reenberg (died 1742). The first important improver of Danish was Ludwig von Holberg (born 1684, died 1754), of Bergen, in Norway (then united to

Denmark), the creator of a better national taste, importing from abroad what seemed calculated to improve it, purifying and ennobling his ductile and powerful national tongue; successful both in prose and verse, in satires, and the drama. His prose is considered a model, like Addison's in England. He was followed by Chn. Braumann Tullin (died 1765), an elegiac poet; T. Clem. Tode (born 1736, died 1806), a composer of sonnets, descriptive poems, and comedies; John Ewald (1743—1781), a powerful, original poet, rich in lyrics, dramas, and humorous poems; Knud Lyne Rahbek (born 1760), an active composer of elegies, epistles, etc., T. Nordahl Brunn (died 1816), a lyric poet, and others, till we reach Jens Baggesen (died 1826), who closed the long list of poets curbed by the stiffening French influence then weighing on Europe. Baggesen, after enjoying great popularity, was eclipsed in later times by Ohlenschläger, and died almost broken-hearted, after many family trials.

The glory of Danish poetic literature is Ohlenschläger, born at Vesterbro (descended from Danish and German ancestry), brought up at Fredericsborg palace, taken in hand by an eminent poet of the day, frequenting the philosophical society of the two Oerstedes, the glories of Danish science and jurisprudence, and developed to maturity by a close study of northern mythology, and by his travels, when he made the acquaintance of Hegel, and other great spirits of the time, while his thoughts were deeply coloured by the philosophy of Schelling, then creating much stir in the learned world of the Scandinavian north. Ohlenschläger was a great dramatist, creating grand, powerful conceptions in his plays; while Thorwaldsen, the child of Iceland, was throwing out his sublime ideas in plastic art, and Andersen was surrounding this hard prose world of reality with the charming visions of his fairy-land. The great characteristic of Ohlenschläger is manly vigour, in this differing from Tegner, Sweden's epic poet. Ohlenschläger is the parent of a host of works, epic, dramatic, and lyric, placing him on a height of excellence in virile energy, richness of matter, and fertile invention, with originality of execution, unattained by any other Scandinavian author. At times dark and repulsive, he is generally so full of life, of action, of healthy passion, of wild beauty in his scenes and characters, that the reader overlooks this defect.

His great merit was to be saturated with the spirit of the north—with his ancestral mythology. There he opens a new grand world of Thors, and Odins, and Balders, and Kraksna

and Valhallas, that are a refreshing novelty to men surfeited with Olympus and the Greek Pantheon. It was a new world unappropriated, that he evoked, and he has made it live again amongst men with wondrous vividness. Most of his dramas are taken from the north. An exception is "Aladdin," the tale of the "Arabian Nights," which he has woven into a delightful display of geniality and wit. His masterpieces are, perhaps: "Haken Jarl," (King Haken), and "Palnatoke,"—both on national themes. In "Haken Jarl" he presents a vigorous, savage, but crafty old heathen, in opposition to a mild, young, pious, and inspired Christian (personifying Olaf, and leaving out his defects). In "Palnatoke" he depicts honourable and powerful heathenism in conflict with monkish cunning and treachery. The scene of the sacrifice of his son by Haken is one of the most thrilling passages in dramatic literature. Ohlenschläger's genius may be summed up as strong, healthy, and fertile, without spasmodic efforts, tranquil in its power, naturally solemn in tone, but at times throwing out sparkling wit, irony, and humour. His great and serious dramas are his masterpieces. He is one of the men who cast a lasting glory over their native land, "having called Valhalla forth from the darkness of time, and wedded the fire of the south to the strength of the north."

DANISH PROSE.

In serious prose Denmark has been great. Astronomy, physics, philosophy, and philology have much to show in the triumphs of Tycho Brahe, the Oersteds, Ravn, and many more. But in belles-lettres Denmark was kept down by a fatal French influence till the present century. Hans Christian Andersen is her glory, and a European name in romantic prose; yet many other genial and original writers have adorned Danish prose in this century, in the lighter walks of literature.

Andersen was born at Odensee (1805), the son of a shoemaker. Not succeeding in the theatre, he was helped to a University, and a travelling stipend gave him the means to travel. His works consist of poems, plays, travels, and stories; but it is to the latter he owes his chief celebrity. His stories for children will always fascinate by their simple, legendary, and amusing contents and style. His "Improvvisatore" is a graphic description of Italian life, but his subsequent productions were failures, showing him in contrast to his former self, a worldly-minded man, a time-server and an egotist.

SWEDEN.

The greatness of Swedish literature in modern times is the work of one man, Bishop Tegner, the best epic poet of the north.

Sweden had many essays to show after the decline of the Sagas, but French influence crushed out all original genius till the present century, and till the Swedes ceased to be proud of the epithet, "*Les Français du Nord*."

Swedish troops fighting at Leipzig with Germans against Napoleon marked a revolution in the national feeling, reacting on its literature.

POETRY.

A national literature had begun in 1526, by the translation of the Bible into Swedish, but the movement was checked by the Frenchified propensities of Queen Christina. The first lyric poet whose name has come down to us is J. Th. Burens (died 1652), quaint and rough; improvement is seen in George Stjernhjelm (died 1672). But Olof von Dalin was the poet who brought in the despotic dominion of French rules and taste (1708—1763). His poems are of very moderate value, but his influence was considerable in the "*Argus*" periodical (1733), and his prose is regarded as very superior to his poetry. Disciples of Dalin were Joach. W. Lilljestråle (1721—1806), J. Ad. Count Creutz (1731—1785), especially Gustav. Fr. Count Gyllenborg (1731—1808). Slightly more originality may be detected in J. Henr. Kellgren (1751—1795), classical in his lyrics and drama, a good prose writer,* and a severe critic, and in J. Gabr. Count Oxenstjerna (1750—1818), a writer of descriptive poems, and a popular composer of lyrics, and Carl. Mich. Bellmann (1741—1795).

A more national spirit was developed in Pehr. Amad. Atterbom and his school, but so influenced by the varying importations of the philosophy of Schelling from Germany, as to make him an object of considerable ridicule in the north.

The best lyric poets of this century in Sweden have been Erik. Gustav. Gejer, with excellent satirical powers; F. M. Franzen (born 1769), of a pleasing idyllic spirit in his lyrics; Erik. J. Stagnelius (1791—1822), a powerful, genial lyric writer, author of tragedies and of an epic poem, "*Vladimir*," in hexameter verse.

The Frenchified school of dramatists had some representatives till the early years of the present century, including Gustavus III., Gyllenborg, Stagnelius, C. G. Leopold, C. Isr. Hallmann (1732—1799), a writer of comedies, C. Lindegren, an imitator of Kotzebue, C. Dalgren, happy in merry farces, and P. Hens Ling.

But it is time now to give a few lines to Tegner. Esaias Tegner, son of a clergyman, was born, like Geijer, the other renovator of Swedish poetry, in Wermland. His father died when he was only nine years old, and, as his family was poor, at sixteen Esaias went forth and worked as tutor in noblemen's families. After that he passed his University degrees with distinction, married, became Court librarian, and writing a prize poem, "Svea," obtained much notoriety; was appointed Professor of Greek at the University, where he greatly distinguished himself, and was at length made Bishop of Wexiö. His great crowning work, "Frithiofsaga," was published in 1824.

Tegner, like Geijer, belonged to the Gothic national school, in opposition to false French taste, and took for theme the old Norsk Saga of Frithiof.

His "Frithiofsaga" is a great poem, constructed with art, and carried out with the true creative faculty of the poet. If it cannot be called a perfect epic, it may perhaps be qualified as something better. It is a thoroughly noble narrative poem, of lofty self-sacrificing tendency, full of high principle, a continuous story, completely developed, lighted up with true poetic tones, and ornamented with all the graces of deep feeling and creative imagination.

The hero, Frithiof, is a noble conception, a demigod in youth, beauty, and bravery, yet even greater intellectually and morally. He has also the deepest affections, but deeper than all is his sense of duty and self-respect. Faithful to conscience, he resists all temptations, and sacrifices all opportunities of gratification and vengeance to obey his sovereign sense of principle. The theme is grand, sublime; and nobly is it worked out.

The work may have defects of form. It may be a bundle of lyrics rather than one epic, but it has been justly said, Why need we slavishly adhere to classical forms?

Again, Tegner may have less power than Ohlenschläger, but he as certainly exceeds him in tenderness and delicacy of feeling; nor is he perhaps so muscularly heroic, but his genius was essentially lyric.

In point of language the melodious Swedish becomes almost of Italian softness in Tegner's lines :—

“ Der växo uti Hildi's gård
Två plantar undar forstrarn's vård ;
Ej Norden förr sett två so sköna,
Dej vaxte herrligt i dett gröna.”*

PROSE.

Of Swedish prose little can be said, except that Frederica Bremer will always be valued in romance as the graphic describer of home and rural scenes ; that Swedenborg will be a problem and stumbling-block to shallow-pated Voltairians as the greatest of ghost-seers, that Linnæus and Berzelius are model men of science, in uniting piety with depth of science, and that on other sides Sweden, since it shook off French influence, has been chiefly an imitator and importer of German influences.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE NETHERLANDS.

FROM Sweden we must pass to the Netherlands, still more closely connected with Germany in tongue and literature.

The commencement of Dutch literature must be traced to the grand national contest against Spanish oppression (1567—1579), which enabled the country to give full scope to its industrial genius, to its patriotic feeling, and to its full character, distinguished for the union of reflection and domestic virtues. The great bloom of Dutch national life took place in the seventeenth century, but its activity was depressed by the rigidity of stiff Calvinistic orthodoxy, and a sort of mechanical spirit in learning. The nineteenth century, a period of severe national probation, has given fresh life to the national intelligence. The way was prepared in Holland, as elsewhere, for improvement in the language, by translations of the Bible (1477—1637).

- * “ There grew up in Hildi's garden
Two plants under fostering care,
The North ne'er saw aught so fair,
They grew up brightly in the green.”

(The opening stanza of “*Fridtjofs saga*.”)

POETRY.

Poetical societies were the first prompters of poetical effort in Dutch. One of their first poets was Dirk Volkertzoon Koornherdt (1522—1590). Philips von Marnix, Lord of St. Aldegonde (1538—1598), was a composer of popular sonnets, and rhymed psalms; he also wrote model prose for that age. Soon after we meet, among others, with Laur. Reaal (1585—1637), a pleasing lyrical poet; and Pietr. Cornelius Hooft (1581—1647), formed after the model of Roman classics and Italian lyrics, satires, and tragedies. In prose he was the translator of Tacitus. Joost van de Vondel, of Cologne (1587—1679), is reckoned as a Dutch writer, and was esteemed a model in style and metre in his classical tragedies with choruses, and in his lyric elegies, and didactic poems, and satires.

Jacob Cats (1577—1660) was quaint and merry in his tales and allegories; Konstantyn Huygens (1596—1687) was noted for didactic poems.

What is called the Dordrecht school, produced several respectable poets; among these may be noticed especially the admirable Hugo de Groot (Grotius) (died 1645), chiefly a religious prose writer, and as such, with Erasmus, one of the great glories of his country; Dan. Joncktys (died 1654), author of "Minnelieder;" and among lyric and elegiac poets, then the most numerous, Jerem. de Decker (1610—1666) and Gisp Japix, of Bolsward, (born 1603, died 1666).

Joachim Oudaan (1622—1692) was a versatile genius, composing lyrics, tragedies, and other kinds of poetry, and among later lyric poets may be enumerated Heyman Dullaert (died 1684), Luc. Schenner (died 1711), a poet penetrated with love of country, and the author of a pastoral poem, and Arnold Moonen (died 1711).

In the eighteenth century there were still poets who contended for a style of poetry devoted to nature, and formed after national Dutch models. Of this class are Hub. Cornz. Poot (1689—1733), but the encroaching French manner and tone, which discoloured all the thought and literatures of Europe in the first half of the eighteenth century, penetrated into Holland, and found advocates of its rigid formalism in Sybrand Feitama (1694—1758), who had many disciples, such as Arn. Hoogvliet (1687—1763), Willem van Haren (1710—1758), a lyric, and his brother, Onno Zwier van Haren (1713—1779), who, besides his *being a correct and admired prose writer*, composed a national

epos, in twenty-four cantos, called "De Geuzen" (appeared first at Zwoll, 1769, and was subsequently modified by Feith and Bilderdyk (1789). A lady appeared about this time in the ranks of Dutch poets, nor was she the last, Lucretia Wilhelmina van Merken, or, under her married name, Van Winter (1722—1789), who deserves the greatest credit for her strenuous opposition to French influence, and composed, among other pieces, an historical poem, "David" (1766), "Germanicus" (1779), a didactic piece, "Nat der Tegenspoeden" (1762), and several dramatic pieces. Another writer, who promoted the taste for a healthier national tone in poetry, was T. Bellamy (1757—1786), with a group of friends at Utrecht. He introduced rhymeless verses, and was very successful in his songs and tales. To this school belong Rhynvis Feith (1753—1824), the author of lyrical pieces and tragedies; and above all a most fertile and versatile writer, Willem Bilderdyk (born 1756); Hieronymus van Alphen (1746—1803); and another lady, Elizab. Bekker (when married, Wolff) (1738—1804), and her friend Agathe Deken (1741—1804), author of noted poems, "Liederen voor de Boerenstand," both ladies enjoying a high reputation as authors of good romances.

About the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, a high sense of patriotism awoke again in the nation, and gave birth to a rich series of lyrics. Of the more recent poets, some of the more remarkable were T. Kinker (1764), T. Fr. Helmers (1767—1813), an excellent lyrical poet, and specially graphic in his description of popular Dutch life, and Hendr. Tollens, who was considered by many as quite a model of Dutch lyrics (born 1780). Adr. Lootjes (1761—1816), a writer of idylls, was also highly esteemed as a writer of tragedies and in prose, while Adam Simons was noted for elegiac poetry.

Two natives of Amsterdam, Gerbrand Adr. Bredero, a comic author (1585—1618), and Sam. Koster (1644), a writer of tragedies, founded the drama in Holland by transforming the mysteries and masks of the Middle Ages. They took as their models the great dramatic writers of antiquity, and were followed in this by Pict. Cornelius Hooft, who was very superior to them. Soon after appeared Van de Vondel, who made use of Biblical and national themes for dramatic purposes, and who brought the artificial lyrical style to perfection. Van de Vondel met with a rival in T. Vos (died 1662), a writer of tragedies, remarkable for his predilection for fierce and awful episodes, but ordinary and inferior in comedy; and Peits (1668) was con-

spicuous for working according to rule. S. Feitama showed a high appreciation of art; and Piet. Langendijk (1683—1756) was a fertile composer of comedies. A little later L. W. van Merken and her husband, Nic. S. van Winter, did much to ennoble and enrich the national stage; and valuable dramatic works were contributed at a later date by Van Bilderdyk, Rh. Feith, H. Tollens, A. Lootjes, and Sam. Ip. Wieselius (born 1795), who also tried to introduce the chorus again.

DUTCH PROSE.

Dutch prose writers have devoted themselves chiefly to learned and serious, often scientific matters; and Holland has been very rich in men of science, as Boerhaave, Leewenhoeck, Grotius, Erasmus, and a host of others. In belles-lettres, the proper theme of this work, the first noted prose writers are F. Marnix, and especially Hooft. Gerhard Brandt (1625—1685) was celebrated for his "History of the Reformation," and his biographies. But little was done after him till we come to Just. van Effen (1684—1735), who gave more consistency to Dutch prose by his periodical writings. Power and clearness were the characteristics of O. Z. van Haren, and of T. Wagenaar (1709—1773). Dutch prose attained a more artistic form and ripeness, and was enriched by masterly contributions, especially in history, in the last years of the eighteenth century. The best recent writers of this class (history) are Sim. Stijl (1731—1804), Adr. Kluit (1737—1807), J. Meermann (1753—1815), Mart. Stuart (died 1826); and, if we include sacred history, Oosterzee, of Utrecht, author of the best "Life of Christ" that has yet appeared, with a masterly refutation of Strauss, Paulus, and all the German rationalists.

Among recent novelists of merit may be named E. Bekker and A. Dekken, Elizab. Maria Post (married under the name of Overdorf) (1756), and Bilderdyk, excellent in almost all classes of compositions.

Of Spinoza, the great pantheistic thinker of Holland, notice will be taken in the Appendix.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SLAVONIC NATIONS.—RUSSIA; POLAND.

RUSSIAN and Polish, the principal representatives of this class of nations and tongues, have noble monuments of literature, chiefly

in recent times. Slavonic, and its cognate dialect, the Lithuanian, appear as the last-born of the Aryan family, or at least as the last imported element into Europe.

The civilization and letters of Russia are of Byzantine Christian origin; those of Poland, Roman and Latin.

The first push given to Roman literature dates from Peter the Great, who transformed his empire from barbarism to partial culture. Progressing under the Czarina Elizabeth (1755), the intellectual life of the nation reached some considerable ripeness under Catharine II. (1762); and though the movement was stemmed by Paul, it went on under Alexander (1801), and Nicholas (1825).

In recent times literary activity has wonderfully increased, and much genial originality has been displayed, though foreign influence is frequently perceptible.

The poetical literature of Russia begins with the Cossack, Semen Kliowsky (1725), a describer of nature; and a satirist, Konst. Demetr. Kantemir (1708—1744), who sought to determine the national prosody, an attempt in which he had been preceded by M. Smotrisky (1619), and which was carried out by Wassili Trediadowsky (1703—1769). Metrical laws have been fully represented in recent times by Risky (1811), and A. Wastokow (1812—1817).

Russia has a long and brilliant series of lyrical poets, opened by Michael W. Lomonossow (1711—1765), and Alexander Karin (died 1766), followed closely by Ivan P. Jelagin (1728—1796), and Wassili P. Petrow (1736—1799), a pensive, and yet fiery lyric, making use of rough language.

Mich. M. Cheraskow (1733—1807) wrote the "Rossiade," songs and fables. Hippel. F. Bogdanowitch (1743—1803) composed a poem of some repute, "Duschenka" (1775); but at the same time appeared the sublimest lyric of Russia, Gabr. R. Derjavin, of Kazan (1743—1816), grandly pindaric and bold in his style, whose "Hymn to God" is equal to almost any effusion in religious poetry.

At this time Russian literature was also enriched by the fables and tales of Ivan Chemnitz (1744—1784), and the satirical fables of T. Krylov (born 1768). Wasili Kapnist was a lyric of this period (1756—1823); also Prince Ivan Dolgorouki (1764—1823); and Ivan Dmitriev obtained a reputation for light pieces, lyrics, elegies, and fables.

Then came the founder of the new school of art in Russian poetry, W. Konst. N. Batjuskow (born 1787); the highly-gifted

W. Al. Shukowsky (born 1783), imitating German models; Michael W. Milonof (1792—1821), an elegiac and satirical poet; and, above the rest, the highly-popular A. Puschkín (born 1799), adventurous in his life, sparkling, brilliant, national in his poems. Among the best poets of the day were a peasant, F. Slaipouchekine (1826); A. Bestucheff, and K. Rylejeff.

The Russian drama has been developed since the seventeenth century, and was at first restricted to spiritual matters. Sim. Polozki (1680) and D. Tuptalo (1708) are named as the first Russian dramatic writers, in point of time. But the Russian national drama was really founded by Feodor Wolkow (died 1763), at Jaroslavl, and transplanted to Petersburg (1752). French imitations were first introduced by Al. P. Ssumarokow (1718—1777). Ivan Dmitrievsky worked more independently (1736—1821); also Jelagin, Bogdanowitch, Ivan A. Kraylow, and others. Jac. B. Kniaznin (1732—1791) was at once a tragic and comic writer, and Prince A. Ssachowskoj has been a particularly prolific writer (born 1777), his works comprising fifty tragedies, besides comedies, farces, etc., mostly from the French.

RUSSIAN PROSE.

The prose of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, consisting of chronicles and translations, received an artistic form from Lomonossow, Jelagin, Bogdanowitsch, and Witzin. It was developed further by J. W. Lewanda (1736—1814), and Plato Lewschin (1737—1812), and perfected by Nic. M. Karamsin (1765—1826), the great historian of Russia, a model in all branches of prose.

Recent times have been enriched with a great number of historical and prose works: among others, those of Mich. N. Muravief (1757—1807), Benckzii (1780—1809), author of "Fairy Tales," Schiskow, a writer of children's books, Ouvarof, noted for erudition, Al. Bestucheff, Apostol, and Thaddeus Bulgarin, happy in descriptions, with much wit and fine feeling, accompanied by elegance of diction.

POLAND.—POETRY.

The beauty and greatness of Polish literature are additional motives in regretting the extinction of Polish nationality. The *golden period* of its literature was from 1566 to 1622, when it *paid great attention* to the classical models of antiquity, and to

the best school of Italian literature. Soon after degeneracy crept in (1622—1760) with political decline; a free national tone was lost; tumidity and magniloquence came in, and imitation of French became predominant. A momentary awakening took place under Stanislaus Augustus (1764), but the failure of the attempt to reconstitute an independent nationality (1791), had a deplorable effect in depressing the national genius and literature, and the great days of Poland are evidently passed.

The sixteenth century was rich in Polish lyrics, such as Nicolas Rey (died 1581), the most celebrated being John Kochanowski (born 1532, died 1584); his brother, Andrew, translator of Virgil's "*Æneid*" (1590), and his nephew, Peter, translator of "*Tasso*" (1618), and "*Ariosto*." Then we have idylls by Simon Szymonwicz and S. Zimorowicz (died 1629).

In the seventeenth century the Polish writers were mostly unnatural and wanting in life; the best among them were Sam. Twavdowski (died 1660), Vesp. Kochowski (1670), and the satirist, Christopher Opalinski (died 1685), whose works have been most translated.

The Polish poetry became more finished and pliant in the eighteenth century. Its representative men are: A. St. Chrosi-enski (died 1737), Ign. Krasicki (1735—1801), the author of fables, satires, tales, and also a good prose writer; Francis Karpinski (1745—1825), author of lyrics, elegiacs, and satirical poems, and Stanislaus Trembecki (died 1812), active and versatile as the writer of lyrics, epistles, descriptions, and fables.

Among the more recent poets of Poland may be added to our list, M. Molski (1751—1822), author of lyrics; Valentine Gurski (1784); and above all the author of the people's classics in song, the Béranger of Poland, Jarl. Urs. Niemcewicz (1816), Casimir Brodzinski, Caj. Kozmian, Michael Krajewski, Ad. Mickiewicz, J. B. Tomaszewski, Francis Zablocki, and others. The best Polish translators of recent times have been Krasicki, Karpinski, Francis Dmorchowski, &c.

PROSE.

Polish prose was first developed in the second half of the sixteenth century, at which time many scientific works were composed in the national tongue. Of that period remain a "*Chronicle*" by Martin Bielski (died 1576), and another in Lithuanian by Mathew Strykowski (born 1547). The seventeenth and a large part of the eighteenth century are poor in model prose, but in recent times we have several works, highly esteemed

style. Thus Krasicki and Karpinski have written a valuable national history; while Adam Narusiewicz (1733—1796), was the translator of Tacitus, and author of "*Historia Naroda Polskiego*,"* continued by G. U. Niemczewicz (1819).

Francis Dmochowsky wrote a "*History of the Constitution of 1791*;" Count Stanislaus Potocki (1759—1821) translated Winckelmann's "*History of Art*," and was a model in eloquence; Alexander Bronikowski has distinguished himself as a romance writer, and among the long list of modern Polish prosaists may be enumerated Count Tentecin Ossolinski (1746—1826). F. Bentkowiak, Joachim Lelewel, Count Edward Raczyński, Ign. B. Rakowiecki, and Michael Oginsky, all approved historians. In science, the name of Copernicus is enough to glorify the Polish nation.

And thus the reader has travelled over the broad field of European literature since the Fall of the Roman Empire; and in the department of belles-lettres he has been helped to gather up the flowers and fruit of each important contributor, to dwell, however briefly, on the great literary ornaments of each age and country, and while receiving, as far as was feasible, an impartial account of their good points, he has been led not to disguise or veil the defects which, from the infirmity of man, must accompany all human productions.

A nation's mind is of long growth and life, and reflected in its literature; and, by a calm and patient study of its literature, we obtain the truest insight into the character of each nation, and hence of the general culture and advance of humanity.

* History of the Polish People.

APPENDIX.

A. For an English version of the "Hoffnung" of Schiller, see Sir Bulwer Lytton's translation.

B. See Carey's translation of Dante.

C. See Sismondi's "History of the Literature of the South of Europe" for "Ariosto."

D. See Hoole's "Tasso."

E. See for passages of Camoens, Tickner's "History of Spanish Literature."

F. It has been a favourite fancy with a certain school of writers, to regard and represent philosophy as a visionary commerce of the mind, dealing in moonshine, lacking all value, and leading to no results. So far, however, is this from being the case, that all the great advances of man in civilization and refinement must be traced primarily to religion; and, secondly, to her hand-maid, philosophy. A brief survey of the history of modern philosophy will establish this point.

Religion had used all its endeavours to curb the Pagan spirit of the Germanic nations in the Middle Ages, and produced a compromise, with many noble elements mixed up with much barbarism. Even here the scholastic philosophy did much in aid of religion to humanize society, by promoting thought and science. But scholastic philosophy was one-sided, though valuable, and in many points true. The Aristotelian system ruled too despotically at that time, and syllogisms, often chained down to false premises, led in many cases to barren results.

It was reserved especially for two great men (already noticed) to make a great advance on scholasticism. Francis Bacon in England, and René Descartes in France, established philosophy on its proper basis, on which it has rested more or less ever since, and they led to results unattainable without their methods—Baconian research having inaugurated a great part of our physical discoveries, and the Cartesian method holding out the corrective that is to prevent an inordinate devotion to sensationalism, by leading us to estimate at its proper value the ideal, with all that is associated with it in religion and morals. Yet it would be wrong to view the Baconian and Cartesian methods as antagonistic. Nor does

true Baconian philosophy lead to sensationalism. Bacon's system of induction, making all research based on careful experiment issuing in conclusions, has led to certain inferences in recent researches, such as mesmerism, psychic force, &c., that appear rather to establish spiritualism. But the fact remains, that our modern progress and civilization stand on philosophy as their principal basis after religion.

Of Descartes, mention has been already made, and of Bacon it need only be added that he was a master of thought and style in English prose, and that in all researches pertaining to facts his system of induction must always remain the true method.

This method degenerated in England in the school of John Locke and his followers, and led in France to the most extravagant materialism of the Encyclopædists in the eighteenth century, of which notice has been already taken.

Germany kept aloof from this abuse, but after the great Leibnitz (contemporary of Newton), who was inclined to Cartesianism, though an independent thinker and grandly true in all his views of matter and mind, and of their harmony, Germany went to sleep till roused by the scepticism of Hume.

Meanwhile, in England, Bishop Berkeley had admirably carried out the views of Descartes, or, rather, Malebranche (noticed previously in the text), in a system of excellently-reasoned idealism, but David Hume imagined he could turn Berkeley's reasonings into the service of unbelief by denying all causation, only he had overlooked the fact that, in his argument in favour of universal doubt, he was basing his reasonings on the infallible axioms of the human mind.

The Scotch and German schools overthrew Hume's scepticism from opposite points of view—Reid from the certain ground of common sense, Emanuel Kant by falling back on the eternal laws of human thought and consciousness. Both in their way saved the ideal, and with it religion, art, civilization, and morals, though the empirical views of the French philosophers, disfiguring Bacon, led for a time to the chaos and ruin of social order in the French revolution.

The Scottish movement antagonistic to Hume was led by James Reid, the founder of the philosophy of common sense, who was followed by Dugald Stewart (1753—1828), eloquent, elegant, clear, and yet profound and decided in his anti-materialism. After Stewart appeared Brown, a correct and elegant writer, often profound in thought, but inclined to revert to some of the errors of Hume by denying causation, a tendency cor-

rected by Sir William Hamilton (born 1806), who retained many of the best points of the Scotch school—precision, clearness, and common sense—while drawing largely from Germany, and even admitting some mystical elements.

England has had no proper school of philosophy since Locke, though Thomas De Quincey (1785—1859), Coleridge, Carlyle, and other critics of the nineteenth century have introduced much German thought in their writings; and a recent writer, Dr. J. D. Morell, has issued valuable works on psychology and the history of philosophy, combining the best points of the Scotch and German systems. John Stuart Mill (1806—1872) can scarcely be classed as a philosopher, being rather a political economist, though his "Logic" endeavours to introduce and establish the system of Auguste Comte, which may be described as a renewal of the sensationalism of Locke and the scepticism of Hume, with certain additional sophistries, rendering the theory of positive doubt plausible in the eyes of all but fundamental thinkers.

In Germany modern philosophy from Kant has passed through strange changes, and illustrates our previous remarks that society and civilization are based on it. The idealism of Kant, Fichte the elder, Schelling, and Hegel were a reaction against Hume and the French idealogists. They helped to keep up a healthy tone of morals and principle in Germany in opposition to the debasing materialism of France at the time of the revolution. Most of the greatness of German literature and art in modern times is due to this influence.

Unfortunately, the one-sided exaggerations of Hegel and his school led to extravagant results in Feuerbach, and even to the denial of all philosophy, and this prompted the rise of a kind of German positivism in Moleschott and Büchner, repeating the old errors of Locke's school with the more telling arguments of modern science.

Here and in the positivism of Comte in France, we have instances of the tendency in man to exaggerate any favourite system; the Baconian system having led to so many triumphs in modern times has disposed men to be one-sided in bestowing on it their exclusive attention, and in being unjust to it, by directing it merely to material phenomena, contrary to the wishes of its founder.

Before we conclude this brief survey, it is proper to remark that there have been, from time to time, exceptional men raising their voices against this exaggeration of materialism to which

the modern world is prone, and drawing their arguments and inspirations from the deeper instincts of human nature. To this mystical school belong Jacob Böhme (sixteenth century), in Germany; Emanuel Swedenborg (eighteenth century), in Sweden; Franz von Baader, in Germany; De Maistre and De Bonald, in France—thinkers disposed to base all reason on faith.

A recent school of healthy thought has risen in Germany, represented by Ulrici, of Halle, and Fichte the younger, who have succeeded in giving a masterly refutation of modern positivism, German and French, by showing the necessity of trust in the infallible laws of human thought, and giving even some share of evidence to the mystical sides of life and human nature.

That the state of art and science, and the movements of politics, issue mainly from philosophy in connection with religion, will be evident to all who trace the chronology of these phases of civilization in connection with the predominance or decadence of idealism and materialism.

THE END.





