



TARTU RIIKLIK ÜLIKOOL

A SHORT STUDENT'S GUIDE  
TO  
ENGLISH LITERATURE

I

600–1640

TARTU 1970

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Lääne-Euroopa kirjanduse  
ja klassikalise filoloogia kateeder

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Compiled by V. A l t t o a

## Foreword

As its title implies, this brief handbook of early English literature is not addressed to the general reader. It is intended primarily for the use of students of English at Soviet institutes and universities, more particularly of the English students of the third year, and the fourth-year students of the Extramural Department specializing in literature at Tartu University.

It does not give a survey of English literature during the period in question, nor does it claim to do so. Rather is it a work of reference in which the chief writers, characters, literary currents, etc. are dealt with in the form of separate entries, and no attempt has been made to link them together in a consecutive narrative. It should be regarded, therefore, not as a substitute for the general course in English literature, but as a collection of supplementary material and a means of checking some of the information that has to be hastily jotted down during lectures.

The basic source has been the Oxford Companion to English Literature (fourth edition, 1967), which remains the most convenient and authoritative reference work of its kind; and it has been followed in the vast majority of cases where the authorship, date of composition or publication, etc. is open to doubt. As a general rule, the original wording has been preserved.

However, certain changes have been introduced. The entries have been rearranged in approximate chronological order and the materials have been grouped according to the divisions adopted in the six-volume history of English literature published in Russian under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (1945-1958), which is the basis of the course read at the University. Many items have been condensed and abridged, and the text has been simplified in places. A few additions have been made, mainly in the form of variant spellings, supplementary data, etc.

No index has been appended, as the contents table is in itself an adequate guide to the arrangement of the materials. A large number of additional sources have been consulted, with the aid of which some errors have been corrected and many inconsistencies removed. Most of the early medieval titles are given in their original spelling, but from the Elizabethan dramatists onwards the standard short modern versions have been preferred for various reasons: they are more familiar, the text varies in different editions, and in any case nothing is lost by modernisation.

Space has not always been distributed according to the importance of the entries. Some minor writers (e.g. Hakluyt, Drayton, Shirley, etc.) have been treated more fully precisely because they are summarily dismissed in lectures owing to pressure of time. Much of the factual material offered falls beyond the scope of both the authorized prospectus and the requirements for the final examination; but it helps to fill in the background and may serve to stimulate a wider reading in English literature after completion of the stipulated course. From this point of view the present compendium is something more than a collection of illustrative material: it is a general, though elementary, source of reference which may be of interest to certain sections of the public at large.

Nevertheless, the basic aim of this booklet is not to comment, assess or interpret, but merely to inform. In the case of most of the works referred to, it offers little more than a bare summary of the contents. But in so doing it enables a larger proportion of the limited time allotted to lectures to be devoted to the vital task of ideological and aesthetic analysis.

My grateful acknowledgment is due to my colleague A.R. Hone, for his kind assistance in revising and systematizing the completed manuscript.

V.A.

December, 1969.

**The Old English period (Anglo-Saxon literature)**

**ca 600 - 1066**

## The Latinists

(St. Aldhelm, (640?-709), the first titular of the bishopric of Sherborne, was educated under Theodore at Canterbury and was foremost in the intellectual movement led by him. He was author of a number of Latin works (including treatises in prose and verse on the merits of virginity, with illustrious examples of chaste living), which reveal a wide knowledge of classical and ecclesiastical authors. His ornate and difficult vocabulary shows the influence of Irish models. He was Abbot of Malmesbury and built churches at Malmesbury, Bruton and Wareham, and monasteries at Frome and Bradford.

Bede (Lat. Bæda, 673-735), historian and scholar, was when young placed under the charge of Benedict Bishop, Abbot of Wearmouth. Thence he went to the monastery of Jarrow, where he spent the greater part of his life. He appears from his writings to have been wise, learned, and humble. He was a diligent teacher, and a Latin and Greek scholar, and found many pupils among the monks of Wearmouth and Jarrow. He was buried at Jarrow, but his bones were taken to Durham during the first half of the 11th cent. The epithet "Venerable" was first added to his name in the century following his death. His "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum" was brought to an end in 731, and by that year he had written nearly forty works, chiefly biblical commentaries.

The Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum, is a Latin history of the English people, in five books, from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the year 731, beginning with a description of Britain and ending with an account of the state of the country in 731.

Alcuin or Albinus (English name Ealhwine) (735-804), theologian, man of letters, and coadjutor of Charlemagne in educational reforms. He was born at York and educated in the cloister school of York under Archbishop Egbert. He met Charlemagne at Parma in 781, and settled on the Continent, becoming finally Abbot of Tours. He wrote liturgical, grammatical, hagiological and philosophical works and numerous letters and poems, including a Latin elegy on the destruction of Lindisfarne by the Danes.

## Old - English poetry

Widsith, a poem of 143 lines in Old English, so named after its opening word. It is included in the "Exeter Book".

Widsith, a wandering minstrel, speaks of his travels and the kings he has heard of. He claims to have been in Italy with Ælfwine (Alboin, 6th cent.), and with Hermanric (Hermanric, 4th cent.) king of the Goths, who gave him a rich bracelet. This he handed over to Eadgils, his own lord, who gave him some land. Thus do minstrels wander over many lands, giving fame and receiving gifts. The kernel of the poem may belong to the 7th cent. or an even earlier date.

The Complaint of Deor, an Old-English poem of 42 verses, divided into stanzas. It is included in the "Exeter Book". Deor is a minstrel who has fallen out of favour and been supplanted by another minstrel, Heorrenda, and consoles himself by considering the misfortunes of others, Wayland the Smith, Theodoric, Hermanric, etc. Each stanza ends with the refrain "That passed; this also may".



The Dream of the Rood, an Old-English poem, formerly attributed by some to Cædmon, by others to Cynewulf. It consists of a narrative introduction, relating the vision of the cross and the poet's emotions in its presence; followed by the address of the visionary cross to the poet, telling of the crucifixion and resurrection.

Beowulf, the name given to an Old-English poem of some 3200 lines, perhaps the earliest considerable poem in any modern language. The manuscript, of the late 10th cent., formed part of the collection of Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, whence it passed into the British Museum.

The poem opens with praise of the deeds of the Danes, Scyld their King, and his descendants. One of these, Hrothgar, builds a great hall, Heorot. The monster Grendel enters the hall at night, carries off thirty of Hrothgar's thanes and haunts the hall for twelve years, accomplishing more murders. Beowulf, the nephew of Higelac (Hygelac) king of the Geats (a tribe living in the south of Sweden), hearing of the trouble, comes with fourteen companions across the sea to give assistance, and is welcomed by Hrothgar, but taunted by Unferth, one of Hrothgar's followers, for his defeat by Breca in a swimming-match. Beowulf tells the true story and retorts on Unferth for not facing Grendel. Beowulf and his men sleep in the hall; Grendel breaks in and devours Hondscio, one of these, and seizes Beowulf, who unarmed wrestles with him and tears out his arm. Grendel, mortally wounded, makes off to his lair. Hrothgar rewards Beowulf, and Unferth is silenced. The minstrel sings the tragic tale of the blood feud which brings about the death of Finn, king of the Frisians.

Grendel's mother, a water-hag, now enters the hall to revenge her son, and carries off Aeschere, the counsellor of Hrothgar. Beowulf prepares to attack her. Unferth, recognizing the greater prowess of Beowulf, lends him his sword, Beowulf dives into the mere, and reaches a cave where the

witch's lair is, and fights with her, but the sword fails to wound her. She nearly kills him, but his woven armour, with God's assistance, saves him. He sees an old sword, made by giants, among the armour in the cave, and this cuts off the witch's head, and also the head of Grendel, who is lying in the cave. But their blood melts the sword, of which only the hilt remains. With this and the head of Grendel, Beowulf returns to Heorot. Hrothgar praises him, but warns him against pride. Beowulf and his Geats return to their own land. Beowulf surrenders the gifts he has received to Higelac, his king, and receives in return the sword of Hrethel and a part of the kingdom.

After the death of Higelac and Heardred his son, Beowulf succeeds to the kingdom, where he reigns for fifty years. A dragon which has been guarding a treasure finds that it has been robbed, and devastates the country. Beowulf and eleven companions go out to meet it. The dragon issues from its mound breathing out fire. All the companions, save Wiglaf, fly to a wood. Beowulf's sword breaks, and the dragon sets its teeth in Beowulf's neck. Wiglaf wounds it, and its strength wanes. Beowulf kills it, but is mortally wounded. He bids Wiglaf bring the treasure out of the mound, that he may see it. He directs that a barrow be built for him on the Whale's Headland, and dies. Wiglaf rebukes his companions and sends word of Beowulf's death. The messenger warns the people of coming troubles. Beowulf's body is burnt on a pyre, with his armour and the treasure.

Many of persons referred to in Beowulf are known to us from other sources, and it is possible to fix the date of the historical events in the first part of the 6th cent. The date of composition of the poem is uncertain; it has been strongly argued that it is the work of a Christian poet of the 8th cent.

Cædmon (fl. 670) entered the monastery of Streanes-

halch (Whitby) between 658 and 680, when already an elderly man. He is said by Bede to have been an unlearned herdsman, who received suddenly, in a vision, the power of song, and later put into English verse passages translated to him from the Scriptures. The name Cædmon cannot be explained in English, and has been conjectured to be Celtic. In 1655 François Dujon (Franciscus Junius) published at Amsterdam some long spiritual poems, which he took to be those of Cædmon. These are "Genesis", "Exodus", "Daniel" and "Christ and Satan". Modern scholarship denies them to Cædmon. The only authentic fragment of his work that survives is his first Hymn, which Bede quotes.

Cynewulf, probably a Northumbrian or Mercian poet of the late 8th or 9th cent. At one time a great many Old-English poems were attributed to him, but modern scholarship is inclined to restrict the canon of his works to four poems contained in the "Exeter Book" and the "Vercelli Book". The epilogues of these are "signed" with runic characters corresponding to the letters that compose the name Cynewulf. The poems are "St. Juliana", "Elene", the story of the discovery of the true cross by the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine, the "Fates of Apostles", a very brief martyrology of the apostles, and a poem on the Ascension which is placed in the "Exeter Book" between a poem on the Incarnation and one on the Last Judgement. Of the four, the finest is the "Elene".

The "Exeter Book", a famous collection of Old-English poems, copied about 975, given by Bishop Leofric (d. 1072) to Exeter Cathedral, where it still remains. The book contains many important works, including "Christ", "Guthlac", the "Phoenix", "The Wanderer", "Widsith", "Deor" and the "Riddles".

The "Vercelli Book", a codex of Old-English manuscripts in possession of the chapter of Vercelli in N. Italy. It

is not known how it came into their keeping. It contains prose sermons and religious poetry, including the "Dream of the Rood", and the "Elene and the "Fates of the Apostles" of Cynewulf.

## Old - English prose

Alfred (Ælfred) (849-901), king of the West Saxons (871-901), is important in the history of literature for the revival of letters that he effected in the west of England. He first translated into English the "Cura Pastoralis" of Pope Gregory, with a view to the spiritual education of the clergy. He then translated the "Historia mundi adversus Paganos" of Orosius, inserting the latest geographical information at his disposal, notably accounts of the celebrated voyages of Ohthere to the White Sea and of Wulfstan in the Baltic. He had a translation made of Bede's "Historia Ecclesiastica", with some omissions, but giving a West-Saxon version of the hymn of Caedmon. He also translated the "De Consolatione Philosophiae" of Boethius, with some original additions. He composed a code of laws, drawing on the Mosaic Law and earlier English codes. The "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" may represent in part his work or inspiration.

Ælfric, called Grammaticus (d. ca. 1020), was a monk at Winchester and Cerne and abbot of Eynsham. His chief works are the "Catholic Homilies" (990-992), largely drawn from the works of St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Gregory and other Latin writers, and his "Lives of the Saints" (993-996), a book of sermons in alliterative rhythmic prose. Several other works of his survive, including a Latin grammar; a "Colloquy" between a teacher, his pupil, and various other persons, including a ploughman, a shep-

herd, a hunter etc.; a paraphrase in the vernacular of the first seven books of the Bible (not all of it his own work). Ælfric is one of the most prominent figures in Anglo-Saxon literature, and the greatest prose writer of his time; his writings are important for their illustration of the belief and practice of the early English Church.

Wulfstan (d. 1023), Archbishop of York, wrote homilies in Old English, including a famous address to the English, in which he describes the desolation of the country owing to the Danish raids and castigates the vices and demoralization of the people.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, compiled by monks working at different centres, notably Winchester, Canterbury and Peterborough, is in the main a dry chronological record, in Old English, of events in England from the beginning of the Christian era to the middle of the 12th cent. It contains, however, some vivid and more detailed passages, notably the account of the struggle with the Danes during the period 893-7, and of the misery of the common people during the Civil wars of the reign of Stephen. In the portion of the "Chronicle" relating to the 10th cent. are inserted some important poems, among others the "Battle of Brunanburh". The earlier part of the "Chronicle", down to 892, may represent the work or inspiration of King Alfred.

"Brunanburh", a poem in Old English, describing the battle in which Æthelstan defeated the combined forces of the Northmen, Scots and Welsh in 937.

**The Early Middle Ages (Anglo-Norman literature)**

**1066 - 1300**

L a t i n   a n d   F r e n c h  
L i t e r a t u r e

Geoffrey of Monmouth, Galfridus Monumetensis (1100? - 1154), was probably a Benedictine monk. He studied at Oxford and was attached to Robert, Earl of Gloucester. He is said to have been Archdeacon of Llandaff, and he was appointed Bishop of St. Asaph in 1152.

In his "Historia Regum Britanniae" he purports to give an account of the "kings who dwelt in Britain before the incarnation of Christ" and especially of "Arthur and the many others who succeeded him after the incarnation". For this purpose he states that he drew upon a "most ancient book in the British tongue" handed to him by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, also known as Walter Calenius; but this book is unknown to any chronicler of the time. There is reason to suppose that this alleged work was in the main a mystification; his contemporary, William of Newburgh, condemns it as such in strong terms. Geoffrey's veracity was also challenged by Ranulf Higden. Geoffrey drew on Bede and Nennius, on British traditions, perhaps on Welsh documents now lost, and probably for the rest on a romantic imagination. He is the creator of King Arthur as a romantic hero. His "Historia" was translated into Anglo-Norman by Gaimar and Wace, and into English by Layamon and Robert of Gloucester; it was first printed in 1508 (in Paris).

Walter Map or Mapes (Gualterius Mapaeus, fl. 1200), a Welshman, Archdeacon of Oxford under Henry II, author of a satirical miscellany "De nugis curialium", which included the "Dissuasio Valerii ad Rufinum de non ducenda uxore", formerly attributed to St. Augustine (Chaucer refers to this in the Prologue of the Wife of Bath). Satirical poems on Bishop Goliath have been doubtfully attributed to him;

also a lost Latin original of the prose romance of "Lancelot du Lac".

Benoît (Beneit, Benedict) de Sainte-Maure (More), a 12th-cent. trouvère, born probably at Sainte-Maure in Touraine and patronized by Henry II of England, for whom he composed a verse history of the dukes of Normandy. His best-known work is the "Roman de Troie", based on the writings of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis. The poem was translated into Latin prose by Guido delle Colonne, and thus served as a source on which many subsequent writers drew, including Boccaccio, followed by Chaucer and Shakespeare, in the story of "Troilus and Cressida".

Wace of Jersey (d. after 1171), wrote ca. 1154 a "Roman de Brut" or "Geste des Bretons", dedicated to Eleanor, queen of Henry II, embodying the Arthurian legends, based on Geoffrey of Monmouth. This was one of the sources of Layamon's "Brut". Wace also wrote a "Roman de Rou" (i.e. Rollo or Hrolf) or "Geste des Normands", a history of the dukes of Normandy. He was made canon of Bayeux by Henry II.



## **The Legends of Chivalry (Chevaleresque Literature)**

King Arthur. The romantic figure of King Arthur has probably some historical basis, and there is reason to think - as Nennius states - that he was a chieftain or general (dux bellorum) in the 5th or 6th century. Arthur first takes definite form as a romantic hero in the "Historia Regum Britanniae" of Geoffrey Monmouth, a work in which the author's imagination played a very large part. In this narrative Arthur is the son of Uther Pendragon (Welsh = a leader in war) and Ygaerne (Igraine), wife of Gorlois of Cornwall, whom Uther wins by the help of Merlin's magic. The elves bestow on him long life, riches and virtues. At the age of fifteen he becomes king of Britain and wars against the Scots, Picts and Saxons. With his sword Caliburn (Excalibur) he slays Childric, defeats the heathen, and conquers Scotland, Ireland, Iceland and the Orkneys. He marries Guanhamara (Wenhaver, Guinevere), a lady of a noble Roman family. He conquers many lands on the Continent. His court is at Caerleon on the river Usk. He is summoned to pay tribute to the Emperor Lucius of Rome, resists and declares war. Guanhamara and the kingdom are left in charge of his nephew Modred. On his way to Rome he slays the giant of St. Michael's Mount. Arthur is about to enter Rome when he receives warning that Modred has seized Guanhamara and the kingdom. He returns with Walwain (Gawain), who is slain on landing. Modred retreats to Cornwall, and in a final battle is slain with all his knights. Arthur is mortally wounded, and is borne to the island of Avalon for the healing of his wounds. Guanhamara takes the veil.

This story was developed by the Norman writer Wace, who added many details. The Round Table is first mentioned by him as a device to settle the disputes as to precedence among Arthur's knights. The wounded king is expected to return from Avalon and resume his reign.

The Arthurian story was also developed in the French Matière de Bretagne by such writers as Marie de France

and Chrétien de Troyes. Arthur became the centre of a mass of legends in various languages. A number of these dealing with various personages (Merlin, Launcelot, Tristram, etc.) were gradually associated with him. He is the central figure only in the narratives of his earlier years and of his final battles and death. In the other tales his court is merely the rallying-point for the adventures of various knights. He ceases to be the model of purity and valour, and yields in importance to Gawain and Launcelot.

Launcelot of the Lake, appears relatively late in the series of English Arthurian romances, though he is the subject of a great French prose work, "Lancelot" of the 13th century. He is the son of King Ban of Brittany, stolen in childhood by Vivien, the Lady of the Lake, and brought by her, when he reaches manhood, to Arthur's court. His story is first dealt with at length in English in the 14th-century poem "Le Morte Arthur", where he is the lover of Queen Guinevere. King Arthur having proclaimed a tournament at Winchester, Launcelot goes secretly to the jousts. He is welcomed by the lord of Ascolot (Astolat, Guildford in Surrey). The lord's daughter Elaine, the Fair Maid of Astolat, falls in love with him; though remaining faithful to the queen, he consents to wear the maid's sleeve at the tournament. There he takes the weaker side and is wounded by his kinsman, Sir Ector de Maris. He is carried to Ascolot and gives his armour as a keepsake to Elaine. Gawain comes to Ascolot and the maid tells him that she is Launcelot's love. Gawain informs the court. Launcelot returns, and being reproached by the queen, leaves the court in anger. The Maid of Astolat is brought dead in a barge to Arthur's palace, a letter in her purse declaring that she has died for love of Launcelot. Launcelot and the queen are reconciled. Agravain (brother of Gawain) betrays them to the king, and with twelve knights surprises the lovers. Launcelot slays all except Modred, es-

caples and carries off the queen, who is sentenced to the stake. Arthur and Gawain besiege Launcelot and the queen in Launcelot's castle Joyous Gard. Launcelot restores the Queen to Arthur and retires to Brittany, where Arthur and Gawain pursue him. Launcelot wounds Gawain. Modred seizes Arthur's kingdom, and tries to get possession of Guinevere. Arthur, returning, lands at Dover, where Gawain is slain. After several battles, Modred retreats to Cornwall. In the final battle all the knights are slain except Arthur, Modred and two others. Arthur and Modred mortally wound each other, the sword Excalibur is thrown into the river, and Arthur is borne off to Avalon. Launcelot arrives to aid Arthur and, finding him dead, seeks the queen, but learns that she has taken the veil. Launcelot becomes a priest and helps to guard Arthur's grave. On his death he is carried to Joyous Gard, and visions indicate that he has been received into heaven. The queen is buried with Arthur, and the Abbey of Glastonbury rises over their graves.

Merlin. The germ of the story of Merlin is found in Nennius's "Historia Britonum". The British king, Vortigern, is building a citadel against Hengist and the Saxons, but the foundations are swallowed up as they are laid. Ambrosius, a boy of holy origin, explains that beneath the site of the citadel there live two dragons, one red and one white. The dragons are found, they fight and the white dragon is defeated. The boy interprets this as an omen that the Saxons will be expelled by the Britons.

Geoffrey of Monmouth identifies this Ambrosius with Merlin and recounts the same story. He makes Merlin assist Uther in the deceit by which he becomes the husband of Igraine and father of Arthur, and it is by Merlin's help that the great stones are brought to Stonehenge from Naas in Ireland. In "Arthour and Merlin",

a poem of the late 13th century, the story is developed. Merlin's birth is narrated (the devil is his father) and he aids Arthur to defeat his foes by his counsels and magic.

Tristram. The story of Tristram and his love for Iseult (Isolda) is much older than the parallel tale of Launcelot and Guinevere, and in its earlier form was not connected with the Arthurian cycle. Before Malory's "Morte Darthur" it figures in English only in "Sir Tristrem", one of the earliest medieval romances, probably dating from before 1300. This was drawn from earlier French sources, and was possibly composed by Thomas of Erceldoune (1220? - 1297?). According to this poem Tristrem is the son of Rouland of Erminia and Blanche fleur, sister of King Mark of England. He slays Moraunt, king of Ireland, but is himself wounded and is tended by Ysode, Moraunt's sister. Tristrem returns to England and tells King Mark of Ysode. Mark sends Tristrem to request Ysode in marriage. The remainder of the story is in essentials similar to that given by Malory. It probably emanated from a French source.

## Early Middle - English Literature

The "Poema Morale", or "Moral Ode", a poem in English of the period 1200-1250, chiefly interesting for its metrical form, rhymed couplets of fourteen syllables. It is a disquisition on the shortness of life, the failure of wisdom to increase with age, the coming of Judgement, and the joys of Heaven.

Layamon or Lawemon (meaning Lawman) (fl. 1200), according to his own statement a priest of Ernley (Arley Regis, Worcester), and author of a "Brut" or history of England from the arrival of the legendary Brutus to Cadwalader (A.D. 689), based directly or indirectly on Wace's French version of the "Historia Regum Britanniae" of Geoffrey of Monmouth, with additions from Breton or Norman sources. It is especially interesting as giving for the first time in English not only the story of Arthur, but also those of Lear, Cymbeline and other personages dealt with in later English literature. It is the first considerable work in Middle English. It is written in the Old-English alliterative line of two short sections, but the alliteration is frequently abandoned and rhyme is occasionally introduced.

"Handlyng Synne", a translation, in octosyllabic verse, of the "Manuel des Pechiez" of William of Waddington by Robert Mannyng (1288-1338) of Brunne (Bourne in Lincolnshire), a Gilbertine monk, written between 1303 and 1338. The author sets forth, with illustrative stories, first the ten commandments, then the seven deadly sins, then the sin of sacrilege, then the seven sacraments, dealing finally with confession. Mannyng is a good story-teller, and his work throws much light on the manners of the time, notably on the tyranny and rapacity of the lords and knights.

"King Horn", the earliest of the extant English verse romances, dating from the late 13th cent. and containing some 1500 lines. Horn is a beautiful child, the son of King Murray and Queen Godhild of Suddene (the Isle of Man). A host of invading Saracens slay the inhabitants, including the King. Horn's beauty saves him from the sword, and he is turned adrift in a boat with his companions, Athulf and Fikenhild. They reach the coast of Westernesse, where King Almair's daughter Rymenhild falls in love with

Horn. The steward Athelbrus brings Athulf to her chamber in place of Horn, to the indignation of the princess, when she discovers the trick. Fikenhild betrays the lovers to the king. Horn is banished and goes to Ireland under the name of Cutberd. He slays the champion of the Saracens, who are attacking the country. The Irish king offers his realm and daughter to Horn, who postpones acceptance. Meanwhile Rymenhild sends word that she is sought in marriage by a powerful suitor. Horn arrives disguised as a pilgrim and makes himself known to Rymenhild by means of the ring she had given him. With the help of Athulf he slays the rival suitor. He now reveals his birth to the king and returns to Suddene to recover his kingdom, leaving Rymenhild with her father. He presently learns that Rymenhild is wedded to Fikenhild. Disguised as a harper he makes his way into the castle and slays Fikenhild, thereafter living happily in Suddene.

"Horn Childe", a verse romance of the early 14th century, containing some 1100 lines. The general plot is similar to that of "King Horn", but is different in details. Horn is the son of Hatheolf of the north of England. Arlaund, the instructor of Horn and his eight companions, flees with them to Honlac, a king in the south of England, whose daughter Rimnild falls in love with Horn. Arlaund substitutes Hatheror, one of the companions, for Horn when Rimnild summons him to her chamber. Two of Horn's companions, Wiard and Wikel, betray Horn and Rimnild to the king. Horn goes to Wales, taking Rimnild's magic ring and promising to remain true to her for seven years. Then he passes to Ireland, where he drives out the pagan invaders of King Finlac's realm. He returns to England, overcomes the suitor of Rimnild in a tournament, slays Wiard, blinds Wikel, and marries Rimnild. The poem is inferior to "King Horn", and is one of those referred to by Chaucer in his "Tale of Sir Thopas".

The Lay of Havelok the Dane, one of the oldest verse romances in English, dating from the early 14th century, and containing 3000 lines. It tells the story of Havelok, son of Birkabeyne, King of Denmark and of Goldborough, daughter of Æthelwold, King of England. These are excluded from their rights by their respective guardians, Godard and Godrich. Godard hands Havelok over to a fisherman Grim, who is to drown him. But the latter, warned by a mystic light about the boy's head, escapes with him to England and lands at the future Grimbsy. Havelok takes service as a scullion in Earl Godrich's household. Here he distinguishes himself by his strength and athletic skill, and is chosen by Godrich as a husband for Goldborough, whom Godrich wishes to humiliate. The mystic flame reveals to her the identity of her husband. Havelok, with Grim, returns to Denmark, where with the help of the Earl Ubbe he defeats Godard and becomes king. Godard is hanged and Godrich burnt at the stake.

The name Havelok (Abloyc) is said to correspond in Welsh to Anlaf or Olaf, and Havelok as a scullion bore the name of Cuaran. The historical Anlaf Curan was the son of a Viking chief Sihtric, King of Northumbria in 925. Anlaf, driven into exile, took refuge in Scotland and married the daughter of Constantine III. He was defeated with Constantine at Brunanburh.



## **The Fourteenth Century**

## P r o s e

Richard Rolle of Hampole (c. 1300-49), born at Thornton in the North Riding of Yorkshire, is said to have left Oxford in his 19th year and to have become a hermit. He lived at various places in Yorkshire, finally at Hampole, where he died, near a Cistercian nunnery in which he had disciples. Among these was Margaret Kirkby, who became an anchoress and lived in his neighbourhood. Rolle wrote a number of scriptural commentaries, meditations and other religious works in Latin and English.

John Wycliffe (Wyclif, etc.) (c. 1320-84) was born in Yorkshire and probably educated at Balliol College, Oxford. A realist in philosophy and a religious reformer, he advocated the poverty of the clergy and attacked church endowments. His "De Domino Divino" (1376) expounds the doctrine that all authority is founded on grace. This leads to the idea that wicked kings, popes and priests should have no power. Wycliffe was in consequence banned by Pope Gregory XI. Moved to bolder defiance, he now attacked the papacy and declared it "Antichrist itself". He went on to condemn the whole hierarchy, to deny the doctrine of transubstantiation, and to assert the right of every man to examine the Bible for himself. He was condemned by an ecclesiastical court for his theological doctrines and retired to Lutterworth, where he died. The Lollards adopted and exaggerated his views. From a literary standpoint he is chiefly notable as having instituted the first translation of the whole Bible, himself translating the Gospels, probably the New Testament, and possibly part of the Old Testament.

His remains were disinterred and thrown into the river Swift.

Sir John Mandeville (Maundevile), was the ostensible author of a book of travels bearing his name composed soon after the middle of the 14th century. It purports to be an account of his own journeys in the East, but is really a mere compilation, especially from William of Boldensele and Friar Odovic of Pordenone, and from the "Seculum" of Vincent de Beauvais. The work was written originally in French, from which English, Latin, German and other translations were made.

The real author of this remarkable literary forgery remains unknown, but probability points to a certain Jean d'Outremeuse, a writer of histories and fables, who lived at Liège at the time in question.. According to him, Sir John Mandeville, who had assumed the name of Jehan de Bourgogne or Jean à la Barbe, died in 1372 and was buried in the church of the guillemins at Liège.

The "Voilage of Sir John Maundevile" purports to be a guide for pilgrims to the Holy Land, but carries the reader a good deal further to Turkey, Tartary, Persia, Egypt and India. It is an entertaining work, combining geography and natural history with romance and marvels, such as the fountain of youth and ant-hills of gold-dust.

## P o e t r y

'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', an alliterative poem of 2500 lines of the 14th century.

On New Year's Day Arthur and his knights sit feasting at Camelot. A gigantic knight comes in, dressed in green. Gawain accepts his challenge to give him a stroke with an axe and take one in return. Gawain beheads the knight at one blow, but the trunk picks up the head and rides off, challenging Gawain to meet him a year hence at the Green Chapel in North Wales. On the

next Christmas Eve, in a dreary forest, Gawain reaches a great castle where he is welcomed by the lord and lady. The lady tempts Gawain on three successive mornings while her husband is out hunting, but he accepts only kisses and a magic girdle that makes him invulnerable. On New Year's Day Gawain goes to the Green Chapel and meets the Green Knight. He receives his stroke, but is only slightly wounded. The knight reveals that he is lord of the castle and that he and his wife had agreed to tempt Gawain. As the latter has emerged successfully from the trial, save the matter of the girdle, he has saved his life but suffered a small injury. Gawain tells his story to the court at Camelot and all the knights and ladies agree to wear similar girdles of green. The poem may be connected with the creation of the Order of the Garter. The same story, in a later version, is used to account for the foundation of the Order of the Bath.

William Langland (1330? - 1400?). The details of his life are chiefly supplied from the work generally attributed to him - "The Vision concerning Piers the Plowman". He was a native of the western Midlands, was probably educated at the monastery of Great Malvern, and later went to London. His great work appeared in three versions (1362, 1377 and 1392); but recent critical discussion has left the question of their authorship undecided. Langland was possibly also the author of "Richard the Redeless", a poem criticizing Richard II.

"The Vision concerning Piers the Plowman", the most important work in Middle English with the exception of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales", is an alliterative poem of which the three versions, of very different length (2500-7300 lines), are attributed to William Langland, "Long Will" as he calls himself. He seems to have been an educated man, and to have lived near Malvern, and in later

life in London. He is supposed to have written them between 1360 and 1399. But the question of the authorship of the three versions (known as the A, B and C texts), and of the component parts of the A text remains open. As to the details regarding the life of the author, ~~drawn~~ from the poem itself, modern criticism has thrown doubt on their validity, and the whole subject remains involved in obscurity.

On the basis of the A text, the work may be very briefly summarized as follows:

Wandering on the Malvern Hills, the poet sees a vision of a high tower (Truth), a deep dungeon (Wrong) and a "fair field full of folk" (the earth) between, with the people going about their business, beggars, friars, priests, lawyers, labourers idle or hard-working, hermits and nuns, cooks crying "Hot pies, hot", and taverners, "White wine of Osey". There follows a vision in which Lady Meed (reward, but more particularly in a bad sense, bribery), Reason, Conscience and other allegorical figures are confronted. Then we have Conscience preaching to the people, and Repentance moving their hearts; the confession of the Seven Deadly Sins (which includes a vivid description of a tavern scene); and "a thousand of men" moved to seek the truth. But the way is difficult to find, and here Piers Plowman makes his appearance and offers to guide the pilgrims if they will help him plough his half-acre. Some help him, but others are shirkers. Then follows a discussion of the labour problems of the day. Able-bodied beggars must be severely dealt with. Labourers must not be dainty in their food or extravagant in their demands.

This takes us to the end of Passus VIII. With Passus IX (where according to some authorities the work of a continuator begins) the poem passes to a search for "Do-well", "Do-bet" and "Do-best", who are vainly looked for

among the friars, the priests, and in Scripture, with the help of Thought, Wit and Study.

The additions contained in the B and C texts, though characterized by sincerity and power of impression, are too incoherent to be easily summarized. Their author is especially concerned with the corruption in the church, the merits of poverty and the supreme virtue of love. The seven new visions include a long disquisition by "Ymaginatif" on wealth and learning; a theological discussion between Reason, Conscience, Clergy and a doctor of divinity; a conversation between Patience and "Activa-Vita", the humble worker, who receives his reward hereafter; narratives of Christ's life in which Christ and Piers Plowman blend into each other; and finally the attack of Antichrist and Pride upon the house "Unity", and of Death upon Mankind.

John Gower (1330? - 1408), of a Kentish family and a man of some wealth, probably lived mostly in London and was well known at court in his later years. He became blind in 1400, died at the priory of St. Mary Overies, Southwark, and was buried in the church, where he is commemorated by a fine tomb and effigy. He was a friend of Chaucer, who called him "Moral Gower". Of his chief works the "Speculum Meditantis" or "Mirour de l'Homme" is written in French, the "Vox Clamantis" (1382?) in Latin and the "Confessio Amantis" (1390) in English. His later works include a series of ballades in French, an English poem "In Praise of Peace" and a Latin poem in leonine hexameters, the "Cronica Tripartita", relating the event of the last years of Richard II's reign, including his deposition.

"Speculum Meditantis" or "Mirour de l'Homme", a didactic poem of 30,000 lines in French by Gower. It relates the contest for the possession of man between the seven deadly sins (with their offspring, such as arrogance and

hypocrisy) and the seven virtues, all of which are described at great length. To ascertain who has gained the victory, the author reviews every estate of man, and all are found corrupt. Man must therefore have recourse to the mercy of the Virgin, who will intercede for him. The poem concludes with the story of the Gospel. The description of the estates of man presents a valuable picture of contemporary society.

"Vox Clamantis", a poem of 10,000 lines in Latin elegiacs by Gower, recounting the Peasant Revolt of 1381 and exposing the corruption of contemporary society, especially in its political aspects.

"Confessio Amantis" is the principal English poem of Gower. It exists in three versions completed probably between 1386 and 1390. The first version is dedicated to Richard II, the second to Henry IV. The poem contains 34,000 lines in short couplets.

The poet tells how he, a lover weary of life, appealed to Venus, who required him to make full confession to Genius, her priest. This the lover does, and the priest instructs him concerning each of the seven deadly sins and its remedy, exemplifying each point with one or more stories. Venus reappears, shows the poet his grey hairs in a mirror and dismisses him from her court as too old for love, giving him a pair of black beads marked "pour reposer". The stories are taken from both classical and medieval sources, and include the tale of Florent (told also by Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*) and that of Constance (Chaucer's *"Man of Law's Tale"*). The poem shows the influence of Chaucer, and the language is substantially the same as his.

## Chaucer

Geoffrey Chaucer (prob. 1345-1400), was the son of John Chaucer, vintner, of London. In 1357 he was employed in the service of Lionel, afterwards Duke of Clarence. In 1359 he was in the army with which Edward III invaded France, and was taken prisoner, but soon after ransomed. He married Philippa, who was probably the daughter of Sir Payne Roet, and the sister of John of Gaunt's third wife. He evidently enjoyed John of Gaunt's patronage. He held various positions at court and in the king's service. In 1372-3 he went on a mission to Italy, perhaps meeting Boccaccio and Petrarch. He was on secret service in Flanders in 1376 and 1377, and was attached to embassies to France and Lombardy in 1378. In 1374 he was appointed controller of customs in the port of London and leased the dwelling-house over Aldgate. He was knight of the shire for Kent in 1386, and went on the Canterbury pilgrimage in April 1388. About this time he was clerk of the king's works at various places, including Westminster Abbey, living close to St. Margaret's. He received pensions from Edward III, John of Gaunt, Richard II and Henry IV. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, a monument being erected to him in 1555.

Chaucer's writings fall into three periods: 1) The period of French influence (1359-72), in which he uses the octosyllabic couplet. To this period belong "The Boke of the Duchesse", 1369, and the "Romaunt of the Rose", so far as it was written by Chaucer. 2) The period of Italian influence (1372-80), especially of Dante and Boccaccio, in which he leaves the octosyllabic couplet, uses mainly the 'rhyme-royal' of seven lines, and begins to use the heroic couplet. To this period belong "The Hous of Fame", "The Parlement of Foules", "Troylus and Cryseyde", "The Legende of Good Women" and the first drafts of some of



the "Canterbury Tales". 3) The period of his maturity (1386-1400), in which he uses the heroic couplet. To this period belong the "Canterbury Tales", designed about 1387.

"The Boke of the Duchesse", a poem of some 1300 lines by Chaucer, written in 1369. It is an allegorical lament on the death of Blanche of Lancaster, first wife of John of Gaunt. In a dream the poet joins a hunting party of the Emperor Octavien. He comes upon a knight in black who laments the loss of his lady. The knight tells of her virtues and beauty and their courtship, and in answer to a question declares her dead. The hunting party reappears, a bell strikes twelve, and the poet awakes with the story of Ceyx and Halcyone, which he has been reading, in his hands.

"The Romaunt of the Rose", a poem of 7700 lines in short couplets, attributed to Chaucer, but of which part only was probably written by him. It is a translation, with amplifications, from the French "Roman de la Rose", by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung. The story is put into the form of a dream in which the poet visits the Garden of Mirth, being invited to enter by Idleness. Here he sees various allegorical personages, the God of Love, Gladness, Courtesy, and so on, amusing themselves. In the water of the fountain of Narcissus he sees mirrored a rose-tree and falls in love with a rose-bud. His attempts to pluck the rose are aided or hindered by various allegorical personages, Bialacoil (Bel-Accueil, Welcome), Danger, False-Semblant, Reason, Shame, Jealousy. The God of Love shoots arrows at the poet and makes him yield himself his servant. He lays his commands upon him, and instructs him in the means by which the lover may achieve his ends (not omitting largesse to the maid). Finally Jealousy builds a castle round the rose. The latter part of the poem, which is fragmentary, contains a version of about one-

sixth of Jean de Meung's continuation; it is a vigorous satire on religion women and the social order.

"The House of Fame", a poem of 1080 lines composed probably between 1372 and 1386. In a dream the poet visits the Temple of Venus, where he sees graven the story of the flight of Aeneas after the fall of Troy, and of his reception by, and betrayal of, Dido. He is then carried by an eagle to the House of Fame, full of ambitious men and adorned with the statues of historians and poets. Here he sees the queen, Fame, distributing glory and ignominy. Then he is taken to the House of Rumour, crowded with shipmen, pilgrims, pardoners and other bearers of false tidings. The poem is unfinished.

"The Parlement of Foules", or the "Parlement of Brides" (birds), a poem of 700 lines in rhyme-royal, probably written between 1372 and 1386. In a vision the poet sees the Court of Nature on St. Valentine's day, "when every fowl cometh there to chose his mate". Three tiercel eagles advance their claims to a beautiful "formel" (female), and a debate follows. Nature decides that the formel must make her choice, but the formel begs for a year's respite "to consider" the matter. The poem probably refers to some lady sought by royal lovers, perhaps Anne of Bohemia, and is noteworthy, inter alia, for its fine opening lines:

"The lyf so short, the crafte so long to lerne,  
Thassay so harde, so sharpe the conquerynge",

as well as for its descriptive catalogue of trees and birds.

"Troilus and Cressida". This story, which has no basis in classical antiquity but has its origin in the "Roman de Troie" of Benoît de Sainte-Maure, has also been dealt with by Guido delle Colonne (in the "Historia Trojana"), Boccaccio (in the "Filostrato"), Lydgate, Henryson, Shakes-

peare and Dryden. It describes the love of Troilus, a son of Priam, King of Troy, for Cressida, the daughter of Calchas the priest, who has fled to the Greeks but left his daughter in Troy. Cressida returns the love of Troilus, and her uncle Pandarus acts as go-between. But an exchange of prisoners is arranged and Cressida is sent to the Greek camp, where Diomedes urges his suit and is finally preferred to Troilus. Troilus and Diomedes meet in the field and fight, but Troilus is killed by Achilles.

Chaucer's poem "Troilus and Cryseyde", probably written between 1372 and 1386, contains some 8200 lines of rhyme-royal; in it the poet enriched the story as he got it from Boccaccio by the vivid and humorous figure of Pandarus and by the development of the character of Cressida, a grave, sober, intelligent girl, who has an eye to her character, as well as to her pleasure.

"The Legend of Good Women", written probably between 1372 and 1386, was Chaucer's first experiment in the heroic couplet.

The poem begins with an allegorical prologue (of which there are two versions extant) in which the god of love rebukes the poet for his reflections on the fidelity of women in the "Romaunt of the Rose" and "Troilus and Cryseyde". Alceste, his queen, defends the poet, but directs that he shall write henceforth in praise of women. The poet accordingly narrates nine stories of classical heroines: Cleopatra, Thisbe, Dido, Hypsipyle and Medea, Lucrece, Ariadne, Philomela, Phyllis and Hypermnestra. The matter is taken from the Heroides of Ovid, and various authors.

"The Canterbury Tales", Chaucer's greatest work, designed about 1387, and written for the most part in heroic couplets (about 17,000 lines). The Prologue is especially interesting for the vivid picture it presents of contempo-

rary life. A party of twenty-nine<sup>1</sup> pilgrims are assembled at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, about to travel to the shrine of Becket at Canterbury, and of each of these the poet draws a striking portrait. They are:

- |                                  |                                                      |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. a Knight;                     | 17. a Webbe (weaver)                                 |
| 2. a Squire;                     | 18. a Dyer;                                          |
| 3. a Yeoman (servant);           | 19. a Tapicer (maker of<br>tapestry);                |
| 4. a Prioress;                   | 20. a Cook;                                          |
| 5. a Nun;                        | 21. a Doctor of Physic;                              |
| 6. - 8. three Priests;           | 22. a Shipman (sailor);                              |
| 9. a Monk;                       | 23. a Wife of Bath;                                  |
| 10. a Friar;                     | 24. a Parson (parish<br>priest);                     |
| 11. a Merchant;                  | 25. a Ploughman;                                     |
| 12. a Clerk (student) of Oxford; | 26. a Miller;                                        |
| 13. a Sergeant of Law;           | 27. a Manciple (steward);                            |
| 14. a Franklin (freeholder);     | 28. a Reeve (bailiff);                               |
| 15. a Haberdasher;               | 29. a Summoner (officer of<br>an ecclestical court); |
| 16. a Carpenter;                 | 30. a Pardoner (seller of<br>indulgences);           |
|                                  | 31. Chaucer himself.                                 |

After supper the host proposes that they shall shorten the way by telling each two stories on the way out and two on the way back. The teller of the best stories shall have a free supper on his return. The host will accompany them and act as a guide. The pilgrims agree and the tales follow, each preceded by a short prologue. But the plan by which each pilgrim would tell four tales was apparently curtailed. Even the reduced plan was not completed, and the work, as it stands at present, contains only the following twenty-three tales.

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1

So the prologue states, but there are, including Chaucer himself, thirty-one. It has been suggested that the words "and preestes thre" (Prol. 164) are not Chaucer's. But evidently Chaucer changed his mind as the work proceeded, and left it unfinished when he died.

1. The Knight's Tale, a shortened version of the "Teseide" of Boccaccio, the story of the love of Palamon and Arcite, prisoners of Theseus, King of Athens, for Emilia, sister of Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons, whom Theseus has married. The rivals compete for her in a tournament. Palamon is defeated, but Arcite, the favourite of Mars, at the moment of his triumph is thrown and injured by his horse through the intervention of Venus and Saturn, and dies. Palamon and Emilia, after prolonged mourning for Arcite, are united.

2. The Miller's Tale, a ribald story of the deception, first of a husband (a carpenter) through the prediction of a second flood, and secondly of a lover who fails to kiss his lady's lips and avenges himself for his disappointment with a hot coulter.

3. The Reeve's Tale, connected with the "Decameron" (Tenth day, No. 6), is an indecent story of two clerks who are robbed by a miller of part of their meal, and revenge themselves on the miller's wife and daughter. (The Reeve, who had formerly been a carpenter, thus gets his own back on the Miller.)

4. The Cook's Tale (another tale of "harlotrie" as Chaucer calls it) is imperfect and omitted in some manuscripts.

5. The Man of Law's Tale is the story of Constance, the daughter of a Christian emperor, who is married to the Soldan (Sultan) on condition that he shall become a Christian, and by a plot of the Soldan's mother is cast adrift on the sea. Her subsequent misfortunes are very similar to those told in "Emaré", a 14th-cent. verse romance of 1000 lines.

(Emaré is the daughter of the Emperor Artyus. By order of her unnatural father, she is cast adrift in a boat, clothed in a robe beautifully embroidered with four legends. She is found on the coast of Galys and married to Sir Ca-

dor, king of that country. By the wiles of the king's mother she is again cast adrift with her robe and eventually reaches Rome, where she is protected by a merchant. After seven years her husband comes to Rome to do penance, and the two are finally reunited.)

6. The Wife of Bath's Tale is preceded by a long prologue, in which Chaucer places in her mouth a condemnation of celibacy in the form of an account of her life with her five successive husbands. The action takes place at the court of King Arthur. A knight who is required, on pain of death, to answer the question, what do women love most, is told the right answer - "sovereignty" - by a foul old witch on condition that he marries her. He reluctantly complies and finds the witch restored to youth and beauty.

7. The Friar's Tale tells how a summoner meets the devil dressed as a bailiff, who confides to him his methods in dealing with men. The summoner attempts to extort a gift from a widow, who commends him to the devil. The devil thereupon carries him off to hell.

8. The Summoner, in retaliation, relates how the manoeuvres of a greedy and hypocritical friar by a sick-bed were unsavourily defeated.

9. The Clerk's Tale, which the poet states he learnt from Petrarch, was translated by the latter into Latin from the "Decameron" (Tenth day, No. 10). It tells how the Marquis of Saluces married the humble Griselda, and of her virtues and patience under trial.

10. The Merchant's Tale is the story of an old man and his young wife. The old man becomes blind, and the wife and her lover take advantage of his blindness. Pluto suddenly restores the husband's sight but Proserpine enables the wife to outwit him. The precise source of the story has not been traced.

11. The Squire's Tale is the story of Cambuscan, King of Tartary, to whom on his birthday an envoy from the King of Arabia brings magic gifts, including a ring for the king's daughter Canace, which enables her to understand the language of birds. A female falcon tells Canace the story of her own desertion by a tercel (male falcon). The poet promises the continuation of the tale, but it is incomplete. The origin of the tale is unknown.

12. The Franklin's Tale. In order to escape the assiduity of her lover, the squire Aurelius, Dorigen, the wife of Arveragus, makes her consent depend on an impossible condition, that all the rocks on the coast of Brittany be removed. When this condition is realized by the aid of a magician, the lover generously releases her from her promise. Chaucer states that the tale is taken from a "British lay", but this is not known to exist. A similar story is found in Boccaccio's "Decameron" (Tenth day, No. 5).

13. The Second Nun's Tale, in rhyme-royal, is perhaps translated from the life of St. Cecilia in the Golden Legend of Jacobus a Voragine. It describes the miracles and martyrdom of the noble Roman maiden Cecilia and her husband Valerian.

A certain canon and his yeoman having joined the party at Boughton-under-Blee, we next have

14. The Canon's Yeoman's Tale, an exposure of the follies and rogueries of the Alchemists.

15. The Doctor's Tale tells of the death of Virginia by her own wish at her father's hands, to save her from the designs of the wicked judge Apius, who has conspired to get possession of her. Chaucer quotes Livy as his source, but has followed fairly closely the version of the story in the "Roman de la Rose".

16. The Pardoner's Tale has a parallel in an Italian miscellany known as the "Centio Novelle Antiche" (No. 82).

The Pardoner discourses on the evils of gluttony and drunkenness, gambling and swearing. This theme is then illustrated by a story. Three revellers set out on a search for Death, who has killed one of their comrades in a plague. An old man tells them they will find him under a certain tree. There they discover a heap of gold. Each designs to get sole possession of the treasure, but they only succeed in killing one another.

17. The Shipman's Tale. There is a similar story in the "Decameron" (Eight day, No. 1). The wife of a niggardly merchant asks the loan of a hundred francs from a priest to buy finery. The priest borrows the sum from her husband and gives it to her, and she grants him her favours. On the merchant's return from a journey the priest tells him that he has repaid the sum to his wife, who cannot deny receiving it.

18. The Prioress's Tale, the source of which is unknown, is the legend of a widow's child murdered by the Jews because he sings "O alma Redemptoris mater" when passing through the ghetto at Lincoln on his way to school. He miraculously continues his song after his throat is cut and the body is in consequence discovered. This tale is in rhyme-royal.

19. Chaucer's own contribution follows in the form of the "Tale of Sir Thopas", in which he slyly ridicules the romances of knight errantry by contemporary rhymers. It contains phrases from several popular romances of chivalry. It is soon interrupted, and Chaucer then offers the "Tale of Melibeus", a prose translation of a French romance, "a moral tale vertuous". It is a long and tedious disputation between Melibeus and his wife Prudence on the most judicious method of dealing with enemies who have done them grievous injuries.

20. The Monk's Tale is composed of a number of "tragedies" of persons fallen from high estate, taken from dif-



ferent authors and arranged on the model of Boccaccio's "De casibus virorum illustrium". The tale is in eight-lined stanzas.

21. The Nun's Priest's Tale, perhaps developed from one of the episodes in the French story of Reynard the Fox, tells of a fox that beguiled a cock by praising his father's singing, and was beguiled in turn to let the cock escape.

22. The Manciple's Tale is the fable of the Crow, which had been treated by many authors from Ovid onwards. A certain Phebus has a crow that is white and can counterfeited any man's speech. It thus reveals to Phebus his wife's infidelity. Phebus in a fury kills his wife and then, in remorse, plucks out the crow's white feathers, deprives it of its speech, and throws it out "unto the devil", which is why crows are now black.

23. The Parson's Tale is a dissertation in prose on penitence and the various kinds of sin, together with their appropriate remedies. It is probably the raw material on which Chaucer proposed to work, rather than his finished tale.

## The Fifteenth Century

## Poetry: Chaucer's disciples

John Lydgate (1370-1451?), Chaucer's disciple and the most voluminous poet in English medieval literature, was probably born in the Suffolk village of which he bears the name. Most of his life was spent as a monk in the monastery of Bury St. Edmunds. He enjoyed the patronage of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester. His chief poems are "Troy Book" (written between 1412 and 1420, first printed in 1513), "The Story of Thebes" (written c. 1420, printed c. 1500) and the "Falls of Princes", some 36,000 lines in rhyme-royal founded on Boccaccio's "De Casibus Virorum Illustrium" (written between 1430 and 1438, first printed in 1494). Lydgate also wrote religious, philosophical, scientific, historical and occasional poems, besides allegories, fables and moral romances. A minor poem, "London Lickpenny", gives a vivid description of contemporary manners in London and Westminster.

Thomas Hoccleve or Hoccleve (1370? - 1450?), was for many years a clerk in the office of the Privy Seal. His principal work "De Regimine Principum" or "The Regement of Princes, written c. 1411-12, is an English version in rhyme-royal of a Latin treatise by Aegidius (a disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas) on the duties of a ruler, addressed to Henry, Prince of Wales. The poem of 2000 lines contains a eulogy of Chaucer and other interesting material. In 1406 he wrote a curious autobiographical poem "La Male Règle", in which he petitions for payment of his salary and confesses to various mean vices. He also wrote two verse-stories from the "Gesta Romanorum" a manly "Ars Sciendi Mori", a "Complaint" and a "Dialogue" containing autobiographical matter, and some shorter poems.

John Barbour (1316? - 95), Scottish poet, was Archdeacon of Aberdeen in 1357. He probably studied and taught

at Oxford and Paris. He was one of the auditors of ~~exchequer~~ in 1372, 1382 and 1384. He composed his poem "The Bruce", celebrating the war of independence and the deeds of King Robert and James Douglas, about 1375. Other poems which have with reasonable certainty been ascribed to him are the "Legend of Troy" and "Legends of the Saints", being translations from Guido delle Colonne's "Historia Destructionis Troiae" and the "Legenda Aurea".

"The Bruce", an epic poem written about 1375. The author relates the story of King Robert the Bruce and James Douglas, and of the war of independence, mingling anecdote with substantially accurate history. It contains some good descriptive passages, notably of the Battle of Bannockburn, and a frequently quoted outburst on freedom, beginning

"A! Fredome is a noble thing!"

James I (1394-1437), King of Scotland, was captured while on his way to France by an English ship, probably in 1406. He was detained in England for nineteen years and educated there. While in England he composed his poem "The Kingis Quair (Book)". In 1424 he married Lady Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset and granddaughter of John of Gaunt, the heroine of the above poem. James I was assassinated at Perth. One or two other poems "The Ballad of Good Counsel", "Christ's Kirk on the Green", "Peblis (Peebles) to the Play" have been doubtfully attributed to him. He is the subject of D.G. Rossetti's "The King's ~~Tragedy~~" (included in "Sonnets and Ballads", 1881).

Robert Henryson or Henderson (1430? - 1506), a Scottish poet of the school of Chaucer. He was probably a clerical schoolmaster attached to Dunfermline Abbey. His "Tale of Orpheus" was first printed in 1508. His "Testament of Cresseid" was attributed to Chaucer till 1721, though printed as his own in 1593. His Moral Fables of "~~Esop~~ the Phrygian" were printed in 1621.

William Dunbar (1465? - 1530?), Scottish poet, was possibly M.A. of St. Andrews, and for a time a Franciscan friar. He was wrecked off Zealand while carrying out a diplomatic mission for James IV. He was pensioned in 1500. He wrote "The Thrissill and the Rois", his first great poem, in 1503; "The Dance of the Sevin Deidly Synnis" between 1503 and 1508; "The Goldyn Targe", the "Lament of the Makaris" and "The Twa Maryit Women and the Wedo" about 1508; and numerous minor pieces. His poem "In Honour of the City of London" was inspired by his visit to the court of Henry VII during the negotiations for the marriage of Margaret Tudor. He described Queen Margaret's visit to the north of Scotland in "The Quenis Progress at Aberdeen". He is supposed by some to have fallen at Flodden (1513), by others to have written the "Orisone" after 1517.

"The Thrissill and the Rois" (The Thistle and the Rose) is a political allegory in rhyme-royal, written on the occasion of the marriage of Margaret Tudor to James IV. "The Twa Maryit Women and the Wedo" (widow) is a Satirical conversation in which the three women relate their experiences of marriage. "The Goldyn Targe" (golden shield) is an allegory in which the poet, appearing in a dream before the court of Venus, is wounded by the arrows of Beauty in spite of the shield of Reason. In "The Dance of the Sevin Deidly Synnis" (seven deadly sins), the poet in a trance sees the fiend Mahoun call a dance of unshriven outcasts, who are depicted with extreme vigour. The "Lament for the Makaris" (makers or poets) is a splendid elegy, suggestive of Villon, with the refrain Timor mortis conturbat me. Dunbar's work shows much Rabelaisian humour, satirical power and imagination.

Gawin or Gavin Douglas (1474? - 1522), Scottish poet and Bishop of Dunkeld, was the third son of Archibald, fifth earl of Angus. He wrote two allegorical poems, "The Palice

of Honour" (first published 1553?) and "King Hart" (first printed 1786); also a translation of the Aeneid, with original prologues (1553), which makes him the earliest translator of the classics into English. Probably there were earlier editions both of the "Aeneid" and of "The Pallice of Honour".

#### L a t e   m e d i e v a l   v e r s e

Skelton, John (1460? - 1529) was created "poet laureate" by both the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, an academic distinction equivalent to a degree in rhetoric. He became tutor to Prince Henry (Henry VIII), and enjoyed court favour despite his outspokenness. He was admitted to holy orders in 1498 and became parson of Diss in Norfolk. His principal works include "The Bowge of Court"<sup>1</sup> (a satire on the court of Henry VII); the "Garlande of Laurell" (a self-laudatory allegorical poem, describing the crowning of the author among the great poets of the world), "Phylp Sparowe" (a lamentation put into the mouth of Jane Scroupe, a young lady whose sparrow has been killed by a cat, followed by a eulogy of her by Skelton, and a defence of himself and the poem), and "Colyn Cloute" (a complaint by a vagabond of the misdeeds of the clergy; the name was later borrowed by Spenser). Not only this last poem, but also his satires "Speke, Parrot", and "Why come ye nat to courte" contained attacks on Cardinal Wolsey. As a result Skelton was obliged to take sanctuary at Westminster, where he died. His most vigorous poem was "The Tunning"<sup>2</sup> of

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<sup>1</sup> The "bowge (cf. Fr. "bouche") of court" is the right to eat at the King's table.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. 'brewing'. Eleanor Rumming kept an ale-house near Leatherhead.

Elynour Rumming". His play of "Magnyfycence" is a morality in which Magnificence, symbolizing a generous prince, is ruined by mistaken liberality and bad counsellors, but restored by Good-Hope, Perseverance, and other similar figures. Skelton's "Ballade of the Scottysse Kynge" is a spirited celebration of the victory of Flodden. A number of Skelton's poems were printed and reprinted in the sixteenth century; in 1568 appeared a fairly full collected edition in one volume. Anecdotes of Skelton appeared in the popular "Merie Tales (1566) and similar collections.

His favourite metre has been described as a "headlong voluble breathless doggerel, ... rattling and clashing on through quick recurring rhymes". As he himself said ("Colyn Cloute", II 53-8):

For though my ryme be ragged,  
Tattered and iagged,  
Rudely rayne beaten,  
Rusty and mothe eaten;  
If ye take well therwith,  
It hath in it some pyth.

## B a l l a d s   a n d   f o l k   s o n g s

"Chevy Chase", one of the oldest of the English ballads, probably dates in its primitive form from the 15th century. Its subject is the rivalry of the neighbouring families of Percy and Douglas, heightened by the national quarrel between England and Scotland. Percy, Earl of Northumberland, has vowed to hunt for three days across the Scottish Border "maugre (in spite of) the doughty Douglas". The two parties meet and fight, there is great slaughter on both sides, and both Percy and Douglas are killed. The ballad is included in Percy's "Reliques".

"The Battle of Otterbourne", one of the earliest of English ballads, included in Percy's "Reliques". The Scots in 1388, returning from a raid into England, attacked the Castle of Otterburn in Northumberland, and after an unsuccessful assault were surprised in their camp by Henry Hotspur, Lord Percy. In the ensuing engagement James, Earl of Douglas, commanding the Scottish force, was killed, and Percy taken prisoner. The ballad has many points in common with the preceding.

"Childe Waters", one of the most beautiful of the old ballads, first printed in Percy's "Reliques". It celebrates the constancy of Ellen to Childe Waters, her heartless lover, whom she serves as a page, receiving cruel and degrading treatment. Her child is born in a stable, where she is tending his master's horse. On hearing her singing a lullaby and wishing herself dead, Childe Waters relents and marries her. (The word "childe" was commonly used in the Middle Ages as the title of a young nobleman awaiting knighthood).

"Sir Patrick Spens", an early Scottish ballad. According to Andrew Lang it is a confused echo of the Scottish expedition which should have brought the Maid of Norway to Scotland, about 1285. Sir Patrick's ship is wrecked off Aberdour (in Aberdeenshire) on the return journey with the king's daughter aboard. The ballad is included in Percy's "Reliques".

"The Wife of Usher's Well", a ballad of the Scottish border. The wife sends her three sons to sea and soon gets tidings of their death. Their ghosts come back on one of the long nights of Martinmas and the mother, deceived by the apparitions, orders a feast; but at cock-crow they disappear.



Robin Hood, a legendary outlaw. His name is part of the designations of places and plants in every part of England. The facts behind the legend are uncertain. The first detailed history "A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode" (printed c. 1495) locates him in south-west Yorkshire; later writers place him in Sherwood and Barnsdale, and finally make him Earl of Huntingdon. According to Stow, there were about the year 1190 many robbers and outlaws, among whom were Robin Hood and Little John, who lived in the woods, robbing the rich but killing none but those who attacked them, suffering no woman to be molested and sparing the poor. Legend says that he was bled to death by a treacherous nun at Kirklees in Yorkshire. He is the centre of a whole cycle of ballads, one of the best of which is "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne". Popular plays embodying the legend appear to have been developed out of the traditional May games, the king and queen of the may giving place to Robin and Maid Marian.

"Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne", one of the best known of the ballads of the Robin Hood cycle. Robin Hood and Little John having gone on their separate ways in the forest, the latter is arrested by the Sheriff of Nottingham and tied to a tree. Meanwhile Robin Hood meets with Guy of Gisborne, who has sworn to take Robin; they fight and Guy is slain. Robin puts on the horsehide in which Guy was dressed, takes his arms, and blows a blast on his horn. The Sheriff mistakes him for Guy, thinks he has killed Robin, and gives him permission, as a reward, to kill Little John. But Robin releases Little John and hands him Guy's bow, and the Sheriff and his company take to their heels.

## The medieval popular drama

Miracle Plays, medieval dramatic representations based on sacred history or on legends of saints. Whether they were evolved from alternating songs sung in church (e.g. at the service on Easter Eve, between the three women approaching the grave and the Angel who guards it), or were spontaneous expressions of the dramatic instinct, is a point on which the authorities are not agreed. What is perhaps the earliest extant English miracle play, "The Harrowing of Hell", is of the late 13th or early 14th century, though such plays existed in France much earlier. They reached their fullest development in the 15th and 16th centuries. The four great collections of English "miracles" or "mysteries" are known by the names of the towns where they were, or are supposed to have been, performed: York, Chester, Coventry and Wakefield (the last being also known as the "Towneley" plays). Their performance was supervised by the corporation of the town, the episodes being usually distributed among the guilds or handicrafts, and acted on wheeled stages, or "pageants", moved one after the other from place to place, or to one place only. The scenes varied in length from 180 to 800 lines, and were written in different metres, sometimes rhymed, sometimes alliterative, sometimes both. They were played principally on church festivals (Corpus Christi day, Christmas, Whitsuntide, Easter).

Not only is there no dearth of humour in these plays, but they are notable in the history of the drama for the introduction of farcical by-play and comic episodes. A good instance of this is afforded by the "Second Shepherds' Play" in the Towneley cycle. The shepherds are watching their sheep by night, when Mak the sheepstealer makes his appearance. He succeeds in stealing a sheep and takes it to his home, where he and his wife Gill put

it in a cradle. When the shepherds search his house, Mak pretends that there is a new-born baby in the cradle; but the fraud is discovered. They toss Mak in a blanket till they are tired; then lie down and sleep. They are awakened by an angel who tells them that the Redeemer is born and they must go to Bethlehem.

"The Harrowing of Hell", a poem of some 250 lines in octosyllabic couplets of the late 13th or 14th century. It consists of a narrative introduction, followed by speeches, as in a drama, assigned to Christ, Satan, the Door-Keeper, and various persons in Hell (Adam, Eve, Abraham, David, John, Moses). Christ reproves Satan and claims Adam. Satan retorts with a threat to seduce a man for each soul that Christ releases. Christ breaks in the door, binds Satan, and frees his servants.

Moralities, medieval verse dramas in which the biblical personages of the miracle plays give place to personified abstractions, such as the vices and virtues. The action is simple and the purpose edifying. They belong mainly to the 15th century, developing alongside the later "miracle" plays. They perhaps reached their greatest elaboration in Sir David Lyndsay's "Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis". Other well-known moralities were "Everyman", "Lusty Juventus" (the punishment of extravagance and debauchery), "The Cradle of Security" (on the vices of kings) and "Magnificence" (by John Skelton).

"Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis in Commendation of Vertue and Vituperation of Vyce", a morality play by Sir D. Lyndsay, containing over 4000 lines and produced before the Scottish court in 1540.

Part I represents the temptation of Rex Humanitas by Sensuality, Wantonness, Solace, and other evil companions, while Good Counsel is hustled away, Verity is put

in the stocks, and Chastity is warned off. An interlude follows, dealing with the adventures of Chastity among humbler folks (a tailor and a souter - or shoe-maker - and their wives). Then Chastity, too, is put in the stocks. But the arrival of Correction alters the situation. Verity, Good Counsel, and Chastity are admitted to the King, and Sensuality is banished.

After an interlude in which Pauper, an impoverished farmer, describes his sufferings at the hands of the clergy, and a pardoner's trade is ridiculed, Part II presents the Three Estates summoned before the King, and their misdeeds denounced by John the Common-Weal. The Lords and Commons repent, but the clergy remain impenitent, are exposed, and the malefactors brought to the scaffold.

The play is written in various metres (eight- and six-lined stanzas and couplets). It is, as a dramatic representation, in advance of all contemporary English plays, and gives an interesting picture of the Scottish life of the time.

## P r o s e

Sir Thomas Malory (d. 1471), author of "Le Morte Darthur", has been identified with Sir Thomas Malory, Knight, of Newbold Revel in Warwickshire and Winwick in Northamptonshire, who succeeded to his estates in 1433 or 1434. In 1450 he was charged with attempted murder and he later suffered terms of imprisonment for various major crimes. He sat in Parliament in 1456, followed Edward IV to Northumberland, and - probably with the Earl of Warwick - joined the Lancastrians, for he is excluded by name from two pardons granted them by Edward. Three "prayers for deliverance" occurring in his manuscript suggest that he wrote most of it to occupy himself while in prison.

"Le Morte Darthur", a prose translation made from the French, with adaptations from other sources, by Malory in twenty-one books, and finished between March 1469 and March 1470. It was edited and printed by Caxton in 1485. The work is a skilful selection and blending of materials taken from the mass of Arthurian legends. The central story consists of two main elements: the reign of King Arthur ending in catastrophe and the dissolution of the Round Table; and the quest of the Holy Grail, in which Lancelot falls by reason of his sin, and Galahad succeeds.

## **The Renaissance in English Literature**

English humanists and the  
prose literature of the  
Renaissance

Thomas More (1478-1535), the son of a judge, was educated at Canterbury Hall, Oxford. He was called to the bar, where he was brilliantly successful. He devoted his leisure to literature, becoming intimate (1497) with Erasmus, who afterwards stayed frequently at his house. He entered parliament in 1504. During an absence as envoy to Flanders he sketched his description (in Latin) of the imaginary island of Utopia, which he completed and published in 1516. He became Master of Requests and privy councillor in 1518, being treated by Henry VIII with exceptional courtesy during his residence at court. He was present at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, 1520, where he met William Budé or Budaeus, the greatest Greek scholar of the age. In 1528 he completed his "Dialogue", his first controversial book in English (directed mainly against Tyndale's writings). He succeeded Wolsey as Lord Chancellor in 1529, but resigned the post in 1532 and lived for some time in retirement, mainly engaged in controversy with Tyndale.

Although willing to swear fidelity to the new Act of Succession, More refused to take any oath that should impugn the pope's authority, or acknowledge the king's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, 1534. He was therefore committed to the Tower of London. During the first days of his imprisonment he prepared a "Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation" and the treatises on Christ's passion. He was indicted of high treason, found guilty, and beheaded in 1535. His body was buried in St. Peter's in the Tower and his head exhibited on London Bridge.

[William Tyndale (d. 1536), one of the most remarkable of the Reformation leaders, and a translator of the Bible. He was betrayed and arrested for heresy, imprisoned in 1535, and strangled and burnt at the stake.]

"Utopia", the principal literary work of Sir Thomas More, is a speculative political essay written in Latin. The work was published 1516 at Louvain, Erasmus supervising the printing. The form was probably suggested by the narrative of the voyages of Vespucci, printed in 1507. The subject is the search for the best possible form of government. More meets at Antwerp a traveller, one Raphael Hythloday, who has discovered the island of Utopia (nowhere-land). Communism is there the general law, a national system of education is extended to men and women alike, and the freest toleration of religion is recognized. The work at once became popular, and was translated into English by Ralph Robinson in 1551.

Sir Thomas Elyot (1499?-1546), author of the "Boke named the Governour", published in 1531, a treatise on education and politics, which displays the influence of the classics and Plato in particular, and illustrates the evolution of English prose. To this book Elyot owed his appointment as ambassador to Charles V. He wrote a number of other works including "The Doctrine of Princes" (translated from Isocrates, 1534), the "Image of Governance" (translated from a Greek manuscript of Eucolpius, the secretary of the Emperor Alexander Severus, and first published in 1540), and Platonic dialogues and compilations from the Fathers. His translations did much to popularize the classics in England. His "Dictionary" (Latin and English, 1538) was the first book in England to bear this title.



Sir John Cheke (1514-57), fellow of St. John's College, tutor to Edward VI, and subsequently professor of Greek at Cambridge. He was imprisoned by Queen Mary, 1553-1554. He was an eminent scholar, and though he wrote little in the vernacular (but many Latin translations from the Greek), was influential in promoting a simple style of English prose. He is referred to in one of Milton's sonnets. He is now chiefly remembered for his political treatise "The Hurt of Sedition how greueous it is to a Communewelth" 1549, written on the occasion of Kett's rebellion.

Roger Ascham (1515-1568), was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he distinguished himself in classics and became Greek reader in 1538. He published in 1545 "Toxophilus", a treatise in English in dialogue form on archery, urging the importance of physical training in education. He succeeded Grindal as tutor to Princess Elizabeth in 1548 and travelled on the Continent as secretary to Sir Thomas Morison, English ambassador to Charles V, in 1550-1553. In the latter year he became Latin secretary to Queen Mary, being specially permitted to continue in his profession of Protestantism. In 1558 he was appointed private tutor to Queen Elizabeth. In his "Scholemaster", published after his death, he dealt with the education of boys of position both at school, of which he criticized the prevailing discipline, and after leaving it, pointing out the dangers of idle attendance at court and of Italian travel. By his "Toxophilus" and "Scholemaster" and by his "Letters" he contributed notably to the development of a simple English prose style. According to Camden ("Annales", 1568) he lived and died a poor man owing to his addiction to dicing and cock-fighting. Whatever may be the truth about his gambling (which he condemns in "Toxophilus"), he acknowledges in the "Scholemaster" his interest in cock-fighting.

Thomas Wilson (1525?-1581), educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, privy councillor and secretary of state in 1578, published the "Rule of Reason" in 1551, and the "Art of Rhetorique" in 1553. In the latter the author urges the importance of writing of English matters in the English tongue, avoiding affectations and latinisms.

Raphael Holinshed (d. 1580?), came from a Cheshire family and is said by Anthony à Wood to have been a "minister of God's word". He reached London early in the reign of Elizabeth, and was employed as a translator by Reginald Wolfe, the printer and publisher. While in his employ he planned the "Chronicles" (1577) which are known by his name and are by several hands. The "Historie of England", was written by Holinshed himself. "The Description of England", a vivid account, not devoid of humour, of English towns, villages, crops, customs etc., of the day, was written by William Harrison. The "History and Description of Scotland" and the "History of Ireland" were translations or adaptations, and the "Description of Ireland" was written by Richard Stanyhurst and Edward Campion. A few passages in the "History of Ireland" offended the Queen and her ministers, and were expunged. A copy containing the expunged passages is in the Grenville collection in the British Museum. The "Chronicle" was reissued, with a continuation, in 1586, and politically offensive passages again taken out; it was utilized by Shakespeare and other dramatists.

Richard Hakluyt (1552?-1616), of a Herefordshire family, was educated at Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford. He was chaplain to Sir Edward Stafford, ambassador at Paris, 1583-1588. Here he learnt much of the maritime enterprises of other nations and found that the English were reputed for "their sluggish security". He accordingly decided to devote himself to collecting and publishing

the accounts of English explorations, and to this work he devoted the remainder of his life. He had already been amassing material, for in 1582 he published "Divers Voyages touching the Discovery of America". In 1587 he published in Paris a revised edition of the "De Orbe Novo" of Peter Martyr of Anghiera, and in the same year appeared his "Notable History, containing four Voyages made by certain French Captains into Florida". His "Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation" was issued in 1589 and, much enlarged, in three volumes 1598-1600. He therein gave to the world some account of the voyages of the Cabots, Sir Hugh Willoughby's voyage to the north-east in search of Cathay, Sir John Hawkins's voyage to Guinea and the West Indies, Drake's voyages of 1570-1572 and his circumnavigation of the world, Sir Humphrey Gilbert's last voyage in which he perished, Martin Frobisher's search for the north-west passage, John Davys's arctic voyages, and the voyages of Raleigh, James Lancaster and others. He thus brought to light the hitherto obscure achievements of the English navigators, and gave a great impetus to discovery and colonization. Hakluyt was rector of Wetheringsett in 1590, and archdeacon of Westminster in 1603. He left unpublished a number of papers which came into the hands of Samuel Purchas (1575?-1626), the other great chronicler of the English voyages of discovery.

Sir Walter Raleigh (Raleigh) 1552-1618), was educated at Oriel College, Oxford. He served in the Huguenot army and was engaged in various voyages of discovery. He obtained the favour of Queen Elizabeth, but forfeited it and was committed to the Tower (1592). After a most unfair trial he was condemned to death, reprieved, and again sent to the Tower in 1603 on a charge of conspiring against James I. He lived there until 1616, when he was permitted to undertake an expedition to South America. On his re-

turn he was arrested at the demand of the Spanish ambassador, and executed at Westminster in October 1618.

Much of his poetry is lost, but about thirty short pieces survive, the principal of which is a fragment of a long elegy entitled "Cynthia, the Lady of the Sea", expressing devotion to Elizabeth. The well-known short pieces "The Lie" and "The Pilgrimage" were probably written during his imprisonment. In prose he published "A report of the Truth of the Fight about the Isles of the Azores" (1591), a "History of the World" (1614) etc. In addition he wrote many essays on political and philosophical subjects, some of which were published after his death.

Francis Bacon, first Baron Verulam and Viscount St Albans (1561-1626), was the younger son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper in Queen Elizabeth's reign. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was admitted to Gray's Inn and went through the various steps of the legal profession. He entered Parliament in 1584. He then wrote papers on public affairs, including a "Letter of Advice to Queen Elizabeth" urging strong measures against the Catholics. He made the acquaintance of the Earl of Essex, who treated him with generosity and endeavoured to advance him in his career. Nevertheless having been appointed to investigate the causes of Essex's revolt in 1601, he was largely responsible for the earl's conviction. He became Solicitor-General in 1607, Attorney-General in 1613, Lord Keeper in 1617, and Lord Chancellor in 1618. In 1621 he was charged before the House of Lords with bribery, and confessed that he had been guilty of "corruption and neglect" but denied that he had ever perverted justice. He was deprived of the great seal, fined, condemned to confinement during the king's pleasure, and disabled from sitting in parliament. He remained in the Tower only a few days, the fine being subsequently assigned by the king to trustees for Bacon's own use. The remaining years of

his life were spent in literary and philosophical work. Pope described him as "the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind".

Bacon's works may be divided into three classes: the philosophical (which form by far the greatest portion), the literary, and the professional works. The principal and best known of the philosophical works are: (1) the "Advancement of Learning", published in English in 1605; (2) the "Novum Organum", published in Latin in 1620, under the general title "Francisci de Verulamio... Instauratio Magna", with a second title (after the preface) "Pars secunda operis, quae dicitur Novum Organum sive indicia vera de interpretatione naturae"; and (3) the "De Augmentis", published in Latin in 1623 with the title "Opera F. Baconis de Verulamio... Tomus primus, qui continet de Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum libros IX". It was Bacon's ambition to create a new system of philosophy, based on a correct interpretation of nature, to replace that of Aristotle; the "Novum Organum" describes the method by which the renovation of knowledge was to be achieved and is thus the keystone to the whole system. The "Advancement of Learning", of which the "De Augmentis" may be regarded as an enlarged edition, was included in the "Great Instauration" as a preliminary review of the present state of knowledge. Of Bacon's literary works, the most important are the "Essays", first published in 1597, and issued in final form in 1625; "De Sapientia Veterum", published in 1609; "Apophtegms New and Old", published in 1624; the "New Atlantis" in 1626; and the "History of Henry the Seventh" in 1622. The largest and most important of his professional works are the treatises entitled "Maxims of the Law" and "Reading on the Statute of Uses".

## Renaissance poetry

Thomas Wyatt (Wyat) (1503?-1542), was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge. He held various posts at home and abroad, including that of ambassador to Charles V (1537-1539), in the service of Henry VIII. He was a lover of Anne Boleyn before her marriage with Henry VIII, and was temporarily imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1536. He was again imprisoned in the Tower as an ally of Thomas Cromwell, but released in 1541. He was a close student of foreign literature, and (with Surrey) introduced the sonnet from Italy into England. His first published works appeared as "Certayne Psalmes... drawn into Englyshe meter" (1549); and many of his poems, which include sonnets, lyrics, and satires in heroic couplets, were issued by Tottel in his "Miscellany" (1557).

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517?-1547) was with the army during the wars with France (1544-1546), being wounded before Montreuil. He was condemned and executed on a frivolous charge of treasonably quartering the royal arms, being then barely thirty years old.

His works consist of sonnets and miscellaneous poems in various metres, notable for their grace and finish. Like Wyatt he studied Italian models, especially Petrarch. He shared with Wyatt the merit of bringing the sonnet from Italy into England, and had perhaps the even greater merit of introducing, in his translation of Virgil's "Aeneid", the use of blank verse. The subject of many of his love poems was "the fair Geraldine" (Elizabeth, daughter of the ninth Earl of Kildare).

Richard Tottel (d. 1594), a publisher who carried on business at "The Hand and Star" within Temple Bar from 1553 to 1595. He is chiefly known as the compiler, with Nicholas Grimald (1519-1562) of "Songs and Sonnets", known as "Tottel's Miscellany" (1557), comprising the chief works of Wyatt and Surrey. He also published, besides law-books, More's Dialogue of Comfort" (1553), Lydgate's "Falls of Princes" (1554) and Surrey's "Aeneid" (1557).

Edmund Spenser (1552?-1599) was probably born in East Smithfield, London, and was educated at Merchant Taylors' School and Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. While still at Cambridge, he contributed in 1569 a number of "Visions" and sonnets (from Petrarch and Du Bellay) to an edifying "Theatre for Worldlings"; to his "green youth" also belong the "Hymnes in honour of Love and Beautie" (not published till 1596), which reflect the Platonic influence, being the adaption of ideas drawn from the "Symposium". Spenser obtained in 1578, through his college friend, Gabriel Harvey, a place in Leicester's household, and through Leicester became acquainted with Sir Philip Sidney. With Sidney and others, he formed the literary club called the "Areopagus". In 1579 he began the "Faerie Queen" and published his "Shepheards Calender", which was enthusiastically received. In 1580 he was appointed secretary to Lord Grey, who left for Dublin in the same year as Lord Deputy of Ireland. In 1586 he became one of the "undertakers" for the settlement of Munster, and acquired Kilcolman Castle in county Cork. Here he settled and occupied himself with literary work, writing his elegy "Astrophel" on Sir Philip Sidney, and preparing "The Faerie Queene" for the press, three books of this work being entrusted to the printer on the Poet's visit to London in 1589. He reluctantly returned to Kilcolman,

which he regarded as a place of exile, in 1591, and wrote "Colin Clouts come home againe" (printed 1595). The reputation of "The Faerie Queene" led the printers to issue his minor verse and juvenilia, in part re-written as "Complains", containing sundrie small poems of the worlds vanitie" (1591). This includes "The Ruines of Time", which is in fact a further elegy on Sir Philip Sidney, dedicated to his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. In 1591 appeared his "Daphnaïda", an elegy on the daughter of Viscount Byndon. In 1594 Spenser married Elizabeth Boyle, whom he had wooed in his "Amoretti", and possibly celebrated the marriage in his splendid "Epithalamion" (the two were printed together in 1595). He published the second instalment of three books of the "Faerie Queene" and "Four Hymnes" in 1596, being in London for the purpose at the house of his friend, the Earl of Essex, where he wrote his "Prothalamion", and also his well-informed, though one-sided, prose "View of the Present State of Ireland". He returned to Kilcolman, depressed both in mind and health, in 1597. His castle of Kilcolman was burnt, October 1598, in a sudden insurrection of the natives, chiefly O'Neills, under the Earl of Desmond. With his wife and four children he was compelled to flee to Cork. Lost books of the "Faerie Queene" were probably burnt in the castle. He died in London in distress, if not actual destitution, at a lodging in King Street, Westminster, and was buried near his favourite Chaucer in Westminster Abbey.

/Spenserian stanza, the stanza invented by Edmund Spenser, in which he wrote "The Faerie Queene". It consists of eight five-foot iambic lines followed by one of six feet, rhyming a b a b b c b c c . /



"The Faerie Queene", Spenser's greatest work, of which the first three books were entrusted to the printer in Nov. 1589, and the second three were published in 1596.

The general scheme of the work is expounded in the author's introductory letter addressed to Sir Walter Raleigh. By the Faerie Queene the poet signifies Glory in the abstract, and Queen Elizabeth in particular (who also figures under the names of Belpheobe, Mercilla and Gloriana). Twelve of her knights, the "patrons" or examples of twelve different virtues, each undertake an adventure on the twelve successive days of the Queen's annual festival. Prince Arthur symbolizes "magnificence", in the Aristotelian sense (according to Spenser) of the perfection of all the other virtues (he must have meant not "magnificence", but "magnanimity" or "gentlemanliness"). Arthur has a vision of the Faerie Queene and, determining to seek her out, is involved in the adventures of the twelve knights and carries them to a successful conclusion. But this explanation, given in the introduction, does not appear from the poem itself; for the author starts at once with the adventures of the knights, intending to give an account of their origin in the last of the twelve books, which was never written. In fact Spenser published only six books, of which the subjects are as follows:

I the adventures of the Red Cross Knight of Holiness (the anglican church), the protector of the virgin Una (truth, or the true religion), and the wiles of Archimago and Duessa;

(Archimago is the great enchanter, symbolizing Hypocrisy, who deceives Una by assuming the appearance of the Red Cross Knight.

Duessa, the daughter of Deceit and Shame, is Falsehood in general; in Book I she signifies in particular the Roman Catholic Church, and in Book V Mary Queen of Scots.)

II the adventures of Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, his encounters with Pyrocles and Chymocles, his visit to the cave of Mammon and the House of Temperance, and his destruction of Acrasia and her Bower or Bliss. Acrasia, who typifies Intemperance, is captured and bound by Sir Guyon. Canto X of this book contains a chronicle of British rulers from Brute (or Brutus) to Elizabeth I;

III the legend of Chastity, exemplified by Britomart and Belphoebe;

IV the legend of Triamond and Cambell, exemplifying Friendship; together with the story of Scudamour and Amoret;

V the adventures of Artegall, the Knight of Justice, in which allegorical reference is made to various historical events of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the defeat of the Spaniards in the Netherlands, the recantation of Henry IV of France, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and the administration of Ireland by Lord Grey;

VI the adventures of Sir Calidore, exemplifying Courtesy.

We have also a fragment on Mutability, being the sixth and seventh cantos of the legend of Constance, which was to have formed the seventh Book. This fragment contains a charming description of the Seasons and the Months.

The work as a whole, modelled to some extent on the "Orlando Furioso" of Ariosto, suffers from a certain monotony, and its chief beauties lie in the particular episodes with which the allegory is varied, and in its descriptions, such as those of the Cave of Mammon and the temptation of Sir Guyon by the Lady of the Idle Lake in Book II. The meaning of many allusions, which must have added to the interest of the work for contemporaries, is now lost.

"The Shepherds Calender", Spenser's earliest impor-

tant work, was published in 1579. It consists of twelve eclogues, one for each month of the year, written in different metres, and modelled on the eclogues of Theocritus, Virgil, and more modern writers. They take the form of dialogues among shepherds, except the first and last, which are complaints by "Colin Cloute", the author himself. Four of them deal with love, one is praise of Elysa (Queen Elizabeth), one a lament for a "mayden of greate bloud", four deal allegorically with matters of religion or conduct, one describes a singing-match, and one laments the contempt in which poetry is held.

"Colin Cloute come home againe", an allegorical pastoral written by Spenser on his return to Kilcolman after his visit to London of 1589-1591. It was dedicated to Sir Walter Raleigh "in part paiement of the infinite debt in which I acknowledge my selfe bounden unto you, for your singular favours and sundrie good turnes, shewed to me at my late being in England". The poem describes in allegorical form how Raleigh visited Spenser in Ireland and induced him to come to England "his Cynthia to see" (i.e. the queen). there is a charming description of the sea voyage; after which the poet tells of the glories of the queen and her court, and the beauty of the ladies who frequent it. Then follows a bitter attack on the envies and intrigues of the court. The poem ends with a tribute to "Rosalind" in spite of her cruelty to the poet. Of the characters mentioned in the work, Cynthia is Queen Elizabeth, Hobbinol is G. Harvey, Amyntas is T. Watson, the shepherd of the sea is Sir W. Raleigh.

"Epithalamion", a splendid hymn perhaps in celebration of the author's marriage with Elizabeth Boyle in 1594. The poem was printed with the "Amoretti" in 1595. The Greek title signifies "the bridal chamber".

"Amoretti", a series of eighty-eight sonnets, which have been thought to illustrate the course of the author's wooing of Elizabeth Boyle.

"Prothalamion", a "sponsal verse", published in 1596, in celebration of the double marriage of the Lady Elizabeth and the Lady Katherine Somerset, daughters of the Earl of Worcester. The name was invented by Spenser on the model of "Epithalamion".

Philip Sidney (1554-1586), was educated at Shrewsbury and Christ Church, Oxford. In 1572-1575 he visited France, Austria, Venice, Genoa and Padua. In 1576 he became acquainted with Walter Devereux, first earl of Essex, and his daughter Penelope, to whom he addressed the famous series of sonnets known as "Astrophel and Stella", written in 1580-1584. He saw much of Spenser at Leicester House and received the dedication of his "Shepheards Calender". He became a member of the "Areopagus" (a club formed chiefly for the purpose of naturalizing the classical metres in English verse, its members including Spenser, Gabriel Harvey and others). In 1584 he was appointed governor of Flushing. In 1586 he joined as a volunteer the attack on a Spanish convoy for the relief of Zutphen. Here, on Sept. 22nd, he received a fatal wound in the thigh. As he lay dying, he passed a cup of water to another wounded man, saying, "Thy necessity is greater than mine". He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, and his death evoked elegies by Spenser ("Astrophel"), and others.

Sidney exercised an extraordinary influence on the poets of his own and the following generations, heightened, perhaps, by the romantic character of his personal history. None of his works appeared in his lifetime; the "Arcadia" was first published in 1590; the third edition (1598) included his "Apologie for Poetrie" (first

entitled "The Defence of Poesie"), and "Astrophel and Stella".

"Astrophel and Stella", the series of sonnets in which Sidney, according to the common account, expressed his love for Penelope Devereux, daughter of the first earl of Essex. In 1580 she was married against her will to Lord Rich, and Sidney's disappointment and passion are supposed to have found voice in these poems. It appears, however, that Penelope was in love before her marriage with the Earl of Devonshire, Charles Blount, whom she married after her divorce. This renders the theory of Sidney's devotion to her improbable, though not impossible. The sonnets were not published until 1591, after Sidney's death, and their chronological order is uncertain.

"Arcadia", a prose romance by Philip Sidney, including at the end of each book a pastoral eclogue. It was begun in 1580 for the amusement of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, but not published until 1590, after Sidney's death. Sidney had no high opinion of the work and is said to have asked when dying that it should be destroyed. But it has importance in the history of English literature. The chief incidents were dramatized by James Shirley in 1640.

The scene is laid in Arcadia, with its flowery meads, where "shepherd boys pipe as tho' they would never be old". The main thread of the story is as follows. Pyrocles and Musidorus, son and nephew of the King of Macedon, gallant knights and devoted friends, are wrecked on the coast of Laconia. Pyrocles is carried off by pirates, Musidorus rescued by shepherds and taken to Arcadia, whose King Basilius, in consequence of an oracle, has retired with his young wife Gynecia and his beautiful daughters Pamēla and Philoclea into a forest. Pyrocles seeing

Philoclea in the forest falls in love with her, disguises himself as a woman (Zelmane), and is admitted by Basilius to his household. Basilius falls in love with Zelmane, while both Philoclea and her mother Gynecia, seeing through the disguise, also fall in love with him.

Musidorus discovers Pyrocles, falls in love with Pamēla, and obtains employment as a servant of Dametas, who is in charge of Pamēla. He makes love to Mopsa, the daughter of Dametas in order to veil his affection for Pamēla. The pathetic story is here introduced of the true Zelmane, daughter of the wicked Plexistus, who from love of Pyrocles had followed him as a page, fallen sick, and died. Cecropia, who had been heiress to the crown of Arcadia until Basilius married and had daughters, now carries off Pamēla, Philoclea, and the disguised Pyrocles. She is besieged in the castle where she holds them captive, trying by the most cruel devices to make one or other of the sisters marry her son Amphialus. Finally, after some deeds of valour by the disguised Pyrocles, the stirring narrative of which is unfortunately unfinished, the sisters are delivered.

The sisters and Pyrocles return to the forest, where finally Musidorus runs away with Pamēla, and Pyrocles, pestered by both Basilius and Gynecia, gives to each an assignation in a cave on the same night, thus confronting husband and wife with each other. On this occasion Basilius drinks a love potion intended by Gynecia for Pyrocles, and falls apparently dead. Pyrocles is found in Philoclea's chamber and arrested; Musidorus is captured. Gynecia confesses that she is the cause of Basilius's death. Pyrocles and Musidorus are sentenced to death, Gynecia to be buried alive, Philoclea to be sent to a nunnery. At this moment a stranger arrives who reveals the identity of Pyrocles and Musidorus as princes of Macedon and Thessaly, and Basilius comes to life again,

his potion proving to have been only a sleeping draught. A general pardon follows and the lovers are united.

Samuel Daniel (1562-1619), the son of a music-master, entered Magdalen Hall, Oxford, in 1579, and after visiting Italy became tutor to William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke, and later to Anne Clifford, daughter of the Countess of Cumberland. He is mentioned in Spenser's "Colin Clout" as "the new shepherd late up sprong". He published "Delia", a collection of sonnets inspired by Tasso and Desportes, in 1592; the "Complaynt of Rosamond", in which Fair Rosamund laments her relations with Henry II, also in 1592; and "Cleopatra", a Senecan tragedy, in 1594. "Musophilus, or Defence of all Learning", appeared in 1599; the "Defence of Rhyme" in 1602 (?), in which he maintained, in reply to Thomas Campion's "Art of English Poesy", the fitness of the English language for rhymed verse; "Philotas", a Senecan tragedy in 1605. In 1609 he issued a new edition of his "Civil Wars", which first appeared in 1595. He composed numerous masques for court festivities, including "Tethys Festival" 1610, and "Hymen's triumph" 1615. He was inspector of the children of the queen's revels from 1615 to 1618. His poems were sharply criticized by Ben Jonson, with whom he was "at jealousies", but praised for their "sweetness of ryming" by Drummond of Hawthornden.

Michael Drayton (1563-1631), born at Hartshill in Warwickshire, but of the details of whose life little is known, produced a vast quantity of historical, topographical and religious verse, besides odes, sonnets and satires. His earliest work was a volume of sacred verse, the "Harmonie of the Church", 1591. In 1593 he published "Idea, the Shepherds Garland", containing songs and eclogues in the tradition of Spenser, praising Elizabeth, lamenting Sidney, etc. Drayton's "Ideas Mirrour", a

series of sonnets, many of them inspired by French originals and including the magnificent "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part", was published in 1594. The lady referred to under the name "Idea" was probably Anne, second daughter of Sir Henry Goodere, an early patron of Drayton. "Endymion and Phoebe", a pastoral, was written about 1595.

Drayton's great topographical poem on England, the "Polyolbion", was completed in 1622. "The Owle", a satire, appeared in 1604, and "Poemes Lyrick and Pastorall", containing the famous "Balled of Agincourt" and the ode "To the Virginian Voyage", c. 1605. "Nimphidia" and other poems appeared in 1627.

Drayton's chief historical poems were "Piers Gaveston" c. 1593; "Matilda", 1594; "The Tragickall Legend of Robert, Duke of Normandie", 1596; "Mortimeriados", republished as "The Barrons Wars", 1603; and the "Legend of Great Cromwell", 1610. In 1597 appeared his "England's Heroicall Epistles", imaginary letters in verse exchanged by historical personages (there are twelve couples in the first edition, including Henry II and Fair Rosamund, Edward IV and Jane Shore, Lord Guildford Dudley and Lady Jane Grey). Drayton was buried in Westminster Abbey.

(See also Shakespeare, poems)

## T h e   d e v e l o p m e n t   o f   t h e t h e a t r e   i n   t h e   s i x t e e n t h c e n t u r y

Interludes were plays performed at Court, in the halls of the nobles, at the Inns of Court, and in colleges, generally but not exclusively by professional actors, dealing with a short episode and involving a



limited number of characters. That interludes were sometimes performed by villagers we know from "Pyramus and Thisbe" in "A Midsummer Night's Dream". The vogue was chiefly in the 15th and 16th centuries. They succeeded the moralities in the history of drama, and are not always clearly distinguishable from them. The characters are still frequently allegorical, but the comic or farcical element is more prevalent. The versification tends to doggerel, and they are shorter than the moralities.

A notable producer of interludes was J. Heywood, author of "The Four P's", in which a Palmer (pilgrim), a Pardoner, and a 'Pothecary contend as to the merits of their respective callings. A Pedlar comes along and suggests that the man who tells the biggest lie should be accounted victor. The Palmer wins the prize by asserting that in all his wanderings "he never saw or never knew any woman out of patience". This follows a humorous description by the Pardoner of his visit to hell to rescue the soul of the shrewish Margery Coorson.

"Thersites", another interlude (c. 1537), perhaps by Heywood, is a farcical treatment of boasting, in which the braggart Thersites, having had arms made for him by Mulciber, successfully attacks a snail, but sneaks away behind his mother when threatened by Miles, a knight.

John Heywood (1497?-1580?), was probably born in London. Under Henry VIII he was a singer and player on the virginals. As a Catholic, he was much favoured by Queen Mary, and on her death withdrew to Malines, and afterwards to Antwerp and Louvain. He published interludes, substituting the human comedy of contemporary types for the allegory and instructive purpose of the morality; but he did this in the form of narrative and debate rather than of plot and action. His principal works were "The Four P's", first printed in 1545(?), the "Play of the Weather" (1533), in which Jupiter asks vari-

ous persons what kind of weather they want and receives conflicting answers, and "A Play of Love" (1534). He may also have been the author of the "Pardoner and the Frere" (Friar) and "Johan the husbande Johan Tyb the wife & syr Jhân the preest", comedies of a wider scope. Heywood also wrote "A Dialogue concerning Witty and Witless", and some collections of proverbs and epigrams.

### C l a s s i c   i n f l u e n c e s

Nicholas Udall (Uvedale) (1505-1556), dramatist and scholar, educated at Winchester, successively headmaster of Eton and Westminster. He was the author of "Ralph Roister Doister", the earliest known English comedy. He translated selections from Terence and other works, and wrote Latin plays on sacred subjects.

"Ralph Roister Doister", the earliest known English comedy, by Udall, probably written about 1553 and printed about 1567, and perhaps played by the Westminster boys while Udall was headmaster of that school. The play, in short rhymed doggerel, represents the courting of the widow Custance (Constance), who is betrothed to Goodluck, an absent merchant, by Roister, a swaggering simpleton. Roister is repulsed and beaten by Custance and her maids; and Goodluck, after being deceived by false reports, is reconciled to her. The play has much in common with the comedies of Plautus and Terence.

"Gammer Gurton's Needle", the second English comedy in verse, was published in 1575, having previously been acted in 1566, at Christ's College, Cambridge. It is written in long doggerel lines, and deals with the losing and finding of a needle used to mend the breeches of Hodge, Gammer Gurton's man. The other characters, be-

sides Hodge and the Gammer, are Tib and Cock, their maid and boy; Diccon the Bedlam; Dame Chat and Doll, her maid; Master Baily and his servant, Spendthrift; Doctor Rat, the curate; and Gib the cat. The mischievous Diccon persuades Gammer Gurton that Dame Chat has taken the needle; a quarrel ensues and Doctor Rat is called in, but gets his head broken. Finally Hodge becomes acutely aware that the needle is still in the seat of his breeches. The play includes the famous old drinking-song with the refrain:

Back and side go bare, go bare,  
Both foot and hand go cold;  
But Baily, God send thee good ale enough,  
Whether it be new or old!

"Gorboduc" or "Ferrex and Porrex", one of the earliest English tragedies, of which the first three acts are by Thomas Norton (1532-1584) and the last two by Thomas Sackville (1536-1608). It was acted in the Inner Temple Hall in 1561. The play is constructed on the model of a Senecan tragedy, and the subject is taken from the legendary chronicles of Britain. Gorboduc and Videna are king and queen. Ferrex and Porrex are their two sons, and the dukes of Cornwall, Albany, Logres and Cumberland are the other chief characters. Ferrex and Porrex quarrel over the division of the kingdom. Ferrex is killed by Porrex, and Porrex is murdered in revenge by his mother. The Duke of Albany tries to seize the kingdom and civil war breaks out. There is little action on the stage and the play, which is written in blank verse, consists almost entirely of long speeches and the reports of messengers.

John Bale (1495-1563), Bishop of Ossory, author of several religious plays, a history of English writers and numerous polemical works in favour of the cause of the Reformation. He is notable in the history of the drama

as having written "King John", the first English historical play, or at least a bridge between the interlude, the morality and the historical play proper.

George Gascoigne (1525?-1577), a man of a good Bedfordshire family, educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, entered Gray's Inn and represented Bedfordshire in parliament. His "Supposes" (an adaption of Ariosto's "Suppositi" and our earliest extant comedy in prose) was acted at Gray's Inn in 1566. Gascoigne saw military service in Holland, 1572-1575, and was captured by the Spaniards. An unauthorized book of poems by him was published in his absence, and in 1575 he issued "The Posies of G. Gascoigne, corrected and completed", containing "Jocasta" (paraphrased from the "Phoenissae" of Euripides), the second earliest tragedy in English in blank verse. The book also contained "Certain Notes of Instruction concerning the making of verse", the earliest English critical essay. He published his "tragicall comedie" the "Glasse of Government" in 1575. His other works include "The Steele Glas", a long, satiric poem published in 1576, "The Droomme (drum) of Doomesday" and the posthumous "Tale of Hemetes". Gascoigne is notable as a pioneer in various branches of literature.

## THE RENAISSANCE DRAMA

### The "University Wits"

John Lyly (1554?-1606), was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, and studied also at Cambridge. He sat in Parliament (1589-1601) and supported the cause of the bishops in the Martin Marprelate controversy in a worthless pamphlet, "Pappe with an Hatchet", in 1589. The first part of his "Euphues" appeared in 1578, and the second part "Euphues and his England" in 1580. Its peculiar style has received the name of "euphuism". Lyly's best plays are "Alexander and Campaspe" (1584), "Endimion" (1591), "Midas" (1592), "Mother Bombie" (1594) and "The Woman in the Moone" (1597). His "Sapho and Phao" was acted in 1584. The plays contain attractive lyrics. Lyly as a dramatist is important as the first English writer of what is essentially high comedy, and as having adopted prose as the medium for its expression.

"Euphues", a prose romance of which the first part "Euphues: the Anatomy of Wit", was published in 1578, and the second, "Euphues and his England" in 1580. The plot of each is very slender and little but a peg on which to hang discourses, conversations and letters, mainly on the subject of love. In the first part Euphues, a young Athenian, visits Naples, where he makes the acquaintance of Philautus, an Italian, and a friendship develops between them. Nevertheless Euphues proceeds to oust Philautus from the affections of Lucilla, to be in turn ejected by one Curio. Euphues and Philautus, after upbraiding one another, unite in regarding Lucilla "as most abominable", and part as friends. Euphues returns to Greece, leaving behind him a pamphlet of advice to lovers, which he terms "a cooling Carde for Philautus".

In Part II Euphues and Philautus travel to England, where their adventures are even less entertaining than at Naples. They are largely concerned with the love-affairs on which Philautus embarks, in spite of the advice of Euphues to use circumspection in his dealings with English ladies. Finally Euphues is recalled to Greece. From Athens Euphues addresses a letter to the ladies of Italy, in which he describes England.

"Alexander and Campaspe", a prose comedy, published in 1584. Alexander the Great, enamoured of his Theban captive Campaspe, gives her freedom and engages Apelles to paint her portrait. Apelles and Campaspe fall in love with each other, and when the portrait is finished Apelles spoils it, so as to have occasion for further sittings. Alexander suspects the truth and by a trick makes him reveal it. Thereupon he surrenders Campaspe to Apelles and returns to his wars, saying "It were a shame Alexander should desire to command the world, if he cannot command himself".

Thomas Kyd (Kyd, 1558?-1594), dramatist, was educated at Merchant Taylors' School, London, and was by profession a scrivener. His "Spanish Tragedy" was printed in 1594(?). He was perhaps the author of a pre-Shakespearian play (now lost) on the subject of Hamlet. He was one of the best-known tragic poets of his time, and his work shows an advance in the construction of plot and development of character.

"The Spanish Tragedy" a tragedy in blank verse, acted 1592, printed 1594. The political background of the play is the victory of Spain over Portugal in 1580. Lorenzo and Bel-imperia are son and daughter of Don Cyprian, Duke of Castile. Hieronimo is Marshal of Spain, and Horatio his son. Balthazar is son of the viceroy of Portugal and

has been taken prisoner by Lorenzo and Horatio in the war. He courts Bel-imperia, and his suit is favoured by Lorenzo, and by the King of Spain for political reasons. Lorenzo and Balthazar discover that Bel-imperia loves Horatio, and come upon them at night in Hieronimo's arbour, where they kill Horatio and hang him to a tree. Hieronimo coming out and finding his son dead is frantic with grief. He discovers who the murderers are and plots with Bel-imperia their destruction. For this purpose he engages them to act with Bel-imperia and himself, before the court, a play that suits his revengeful purpose. In the course of the play Lorenzo and Balthazar are killed, Bel-imperia stabs herself, and Hieronimo takes his own life.

Thomas Lodge (1558?-1625), was the son of Sir Thomas Lodge, lord mayor of London. He was born in Lincolnshire and educated at Merchant Taylors' School, London, and Trinity College, Oxford. He was a student of Lincoln's Inn in 1578. He abandoned law for literature and published "A Defence of Plays" in reply to the "School of Abuse" of Stephen Gosson in 1580; and in 1584 "An Alarum against Usurers", depicting the dangers that money-lenders present for young spendthrifts.

His first romance, "The Delectable Historie of Forbonius and Priscilla", appeared in 1584; and "Scyllaes Metamorphosis" in 1589 (reissued in 1610 as "Glaucus and Scilla"). This work is interesting as the first romantic treatment in verse of a classical subject, the prototype of Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis". Lodge then sailed on a freebooting expedition to the Canaries in 1588, and to South America in 1591. In the course of the former voyage he wrote his second and best-known romance "Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacie", which appeared in 1590. His chief volume of verse "Phyllis", a cycle of love sonnets (largely translations and imita-

tions of French and Italian poems) with songs and lyrics, was issued in 1593. He published "A Fig for Momus" containing satires and epistles in verse on the Horatian model, in 1595. During his voyage to South America, amid the winter storms of the Straits of Magellan, he wrote "A Margarite of America", a romance dealing with the tragical love of Arsadachas, son of the Emperor of Cusco, for Margarita, daughter of the King of Muscovy, which appeared in 1596; as did also his "Wits Miserie and Worlds Madnesse". He was converted to Roman Catholicism and studied medicine, becoming M.D. at Oxford, 1603. He published a laborious volume, "The Famous and Memorable Workes of Josephus" (1602), "A Treatise of the Plague" (1603), and "The Workes, both Morrall and Natural, of Lucius Annaeus Seneca" (1614). His last literary undertaking "A learned Summary upon the famous Poeme of William of Saluste, lord of Bartas, translated out of the French", was published in 1625. Lodge excelled as a lyric poet and was the best of the imitators of the style of "Euphues".

"Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacie", a pastoral romance in the style of Lyly's "Euphues", diversified with sonnets and eclogues, published in 1590. The story is borrowed in part from the medieval romance "The Tale of Gamelyn" and was dramatized with little alteration by Shakespeare in his "As You Like It". Lodge's Rosader is Shakespeare's Orlando, Saladyne is Oliver; Alinda, Celia; and Rosalind is common to both. The ill-treatment of Rosader (Orlando) by his elder brother is more developed by Lodge, and the restoration of the rightful duke to his dukedom is effected by arms instead of persuasion. The characters of Jaques and Touchstone, and the humour that enriches "As You Like It", are found only in Shakespeare's work. Lodge's romance includes the pleasant and well-known madrigal



Love in my bosome like a Bee  
Doth suck his sweet.

George Peele (1558?-1597?), son of a London citizen and salter, was educated at Christ's Hospital, London, and Broadgates Hall (Pembroke College) and Christ Church, Oxford. He led a dissipated life, and in 1579 was turned out of his father's dwelling, within the precincts of Christ's Hospital, by the governors of the institution. He was almost certainly a successful player as well as playwright, and his lyrics were popular in literary circles. His works, which are very numerous, fall under three heads: plays, pageants, and "gratulatory" and miscellaneous verse. Among his plays may be mentioned "The Arraignment of Paris" (c. 1581), "The Battle of Alcazar", printed in 1594), "The Old Wives' Tale" (1595), and "David and Bethsabe (i.e. Bathsheba)" (1599). Among his miscellaneous verse were "Polyhymnia" (1590) and "The Honour of the Garter" (1593), a 'gratulatory' poem to the Earl of Northumberland on his being created a knight of that order. The lyrics in Peele's plays are particularly attractive.

Robert Greene (1560?-1592), was educated at St. John's College and Clare Hall, Cambridge, and was incorporated at Oxford in 1588. He appears from his own writings to have been a witty Bohemian, of good intentions but poor performance, who drifted to a miserable end and is said to have died after an illness brought on by a surfeit of pickled herrings and Rhenish wine. He probably had some share in the authorship of the original "Henry VI" plays, which Shakespeare revised or re-wrote. Among his thirty-eight publications were pamphlets, romances, and five (posthumous) plays, including "The Honorable Historie of frier (friar) Bacon and frier Bungay",

acted in 1594. His numerous pamphlets include the autobiographical "A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance" (1592), in which occurs the attack on Shakespeare.

"A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance", an autobiographical prose tract published in 1592. It begins with the death of the miser Gorinius, who leaves the bulk of his large fortune to his elder son, and only "an old Groate" to the younger Roberto (i.e. the author), "wherewith I wish him to buy a groatsworth of wit". Roberto conspires with a courtesan to fleece his brother, Lucanio, but the courtesan betrays him to the latter, subsequently ruining Lucanio for her sole profit. The gradual degradation of Roberto is then narrated, and the tract ends with the curious "Address" to his fellow playwrights Marlowe, Lodge and Peele, urging them to spend their wits to better purpose than the making of plays. It contains the well-known passage about the "Crow, beautified with our Feathers", the "Johannes Factotum", who "is in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a Countrey", probably referring to Shakespeare, whose earliest plays were adaptations of works by his predecessors.

"The honorable historie of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay", a comedy in verse and prose, acted in 1594. The play is based on a prose pamphlet "The famous history of Friar Bacon", embodying legends relating to Roger Bacon and Thomas Bungay. Bacon with the help of Friar Bungay makes a head of brass and, conjuring up the Devil, learns how to give it speech. It is to speak within a month, but "if they heard it not before it had done speaking, all their labour should be lost". After watching day and night for three weeks, Bacon hands over the duty of watching to his servant Miles and falls asleep. The head speaks two words "Time is". Miles, thinking his

master would be angry if waked for so little, lets him sleep. The head presently speaks again, "Time was", and finally "Time is past", when it falls down and breaks. Bacon awakes, and heaps curses on Miles's head. The above is diversified with the pleasant story of the loves of Edward Prince of Wales (afterwards Edward I) and Lord Lacy for the fair Margaret, the keeper's daughter of Freshingfield, and the prince's surrender of her to Lacy. There is also an amusing scene where Bacon, Bungay and a German rival display their respective powers before the German emperor and the kings of England and Castile.

George-a'-Green, the merry pinner or pinder (pound-keeper) of Wakefield. The story is given in W.C. Hazlitt's "Tales and Legends". George-a'-Green wins the pindership by defeating all competitors at quarterstaff, defies the messenger who comes from Prince John (during Richard I's absence) demanding a contribution from Wakefield, and elopes with Justice Grymes's daughter. Maid Marian provokes Robin Hood to challenge him, but George-a'-Green defeats both Robin and his companions.

He is the subject of a play (licensed for publication in 1595), probably by Robert Greene.

Thomas Nashe or Nash (1567-1601), was a sizar of St. John's College, Cambridge. He made a hasty tour through France and Italy, and before 1588 settled in London. His first publication was an acrid review of recent literature (prefixed to Greene's "Menaphon", 1589), which he discussed at greater length in the "Anatomie of Absurdities" (1589). He was attracted to the Martin Marprelate controversy by his hatred of puritanism.

Under the pseudonym of "Pasquil" he wrote "A Counter-cuffe given to Martin Junior" (1589), "The Returne of the renowned Cavaliero Pasquil of England" (1589), and "The

First Parte of Pasquils Apologie" (1590). He was possibly the author of other attacks on the Martinists. In 1591 Nashe replied to the savage denunciations of Richard Harvey, the astrologer and brother of Gabriel Harvey, with "A wonderful, strange, and miraculous Astrologicall Prognostication"; and in 1592 he wrote "Pierce Pennilesse his Supplication to the Divell". This was translated into French, and the second edition was called "The Apologie of Pierce Pennilesse". "The Terrors of the Night", notable for the praise of Daniel's "Delia", appeared in 1594, and in the same year "The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jacke Wilton", a spirited romance of adventure. Nashe further satirized Harvey in "Haue with you o Saffron-Walden" (1596), to which Harvey replied, the government subsequently ordering the two authors to desist. He attacked so many current abuses in his lost comedy "The Isle of Dogs" (1597) that he was sent to the Fleet prison for some months. In 1599 he published "Lenten Stuffe", a burlesque panegyric of the red herring, written to repay hospitality enjoyed at Yarmouth; and in 1600 a comedy still extant, called "Summers Last Will". Nashe's original personality gives him a unique place in Elizabethan literature and his writings have something of the fascination of Rabelais. His romance of "Jacke Wilton" inaugurated the picaresque novel of adventure in England.

"The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jacke Wilton", a prose tale of adventure, published in 1594, the earliest picaresque romance in English and the most remarkable work of the kind before Defoe. It is dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. Jack Wilton is "a certaine kinde of an appendix or page" attending on the court of Henry VIII at the time of the siege of Tournay. He lives by his wits, playing tricks on a niggardly old victualler and other gullible occupants of the camp, and gets whipped for his pains. He goes to Münster, which

the Anabaptists are holding against the Emperor, and sees John of Leyden hanged. The Earl of Surrey, the lover of the Fair Geraldine, takes him to Italy as his page. During their travels they meet Erasmus and Sir Thomas More, and Aretino. They hear Luther disputing at Wittenberg. Wilton passes himself off as the Earl of Surrey and runs away with an Italian courtesan. There is a pleasant scene where the true earl discovers them and treats the escapade with singular good humour. After a tourney at Florence, where the earl defeats all comers in honour of the Fair Geraldine, Wilton leaves him, and is at Rome during an outbreak of the plague. Here, turning from lighter themes, he depicts scenes of violence and tragedy, rapes, murders, tortures and executions. Depressed by what he has seen, he is converted to a better way of life, marries his courtesan and is last seen at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, in the King of England's camp. The whole story is told with much spirit and wit.

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), son of a Canterbury shoemaker, was educated at King's School, Canterbury, and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He attached himself to the Earl of Nottingham's theatrical company, which produced most of his plays. He was acquainted with many leading men of letters, including Raleigh. Not later than 1587 he wrote his first play "Tamburlaine", which was published in 1590 and gave a new development to blank verse. His "Tragedy of Dr. Faustus" was first entered on the Stationers' Register in 1601, but not apparently published till 1604. At some date after 1588 he wrote "The Jew of Malta", which was first published in 1633; and about 1593 he produced his historical drama "Edward II". It has been suggested from internal evidence that he was part author of Shakespeare's "Titus Andronicus". He perhaps also wrote parts of "Henry VI", which Shakespeare revised and completed, and of "Edward III". Marlowe held

and propagated atheistical opinions, and a warrant was issued for his arrest in 1593; but later researches have suggested that he was a government agent, and that his murder had a political complexion. He was killed at a tavern in Deptford - according to the inquiry held at the time, as the result of a quarrel about the score. Marlowe was spoken of with affection by Nashe and Chapman, and Jonson referred to his "mighty line".

"Edward II", a historical drama in blank verse, produced in 1593. It deals with the recall by Edward II, on his accession, of his favourite, Piers Gaveston, the revolt of the barons, and the capture and execution of Gaveston; the period during which Spenser (Hugh le Despenser) succeeded Gaveston as the king's favourite; the estrangement of Queen Isabella from her husband; her rebellion, supported by her paramour Mortimer, against the king; the capture of the latter, his abdication of the crown, and his murder in Berkeley Castle.

"Tamburlaine the Great", a drama in blank verse, written not later than 1587 and published in 1590. It showed an immense advance on the blank verse of "Gorboduc" and was received with much popular approval. The material for it was taken from a Spanish source, of which an English translation had appeared in 1571.

Pt. I of the drama deals with the first rise to power of the Scythian shepherd-robber Tamburlaine; he allies himself with Cosroe in the latter's rebellion against his brother, the king of Persia, and then challenges him for the crown and defeats him. Tamburlaine's unbounded ambition and ruthless cruelty carry all before him. He conquers the Turkish emperor, Bajazet, and leads him about, a prisoner in a cage, goading him and his empress, Zabina, with cruel taunts till they dash out their brains against the bars of the cage. His ferocity is softened only by

his love for his captive, Zenocrate, the daughter of the sultan of Egypt, whose life he spares in deference to her pleadings when he captures Damascus.

Pt. II deals with the continuation of his conquests, which extend to Babylon, whither he is dragged in a chariot drawn by "pampered jades of Asia" the kings of Trebizond and Soria, with the kings of Anatolia and Jerusalem as relay; it ends with the deaths of Zenocrate and Tamburlaine.

"The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus", a drama in blank verse and prose, published apparently in 1604, probably produced in 1588. It is perhaps the first dramatization of the medieval legend of a man who sold his soul to the Devil and who became identified with a Dr. Faustus, a necromancer of the 16th cent. The legend appeared in the "Volksbuch" published at Frankfurt in 1587, and was translated into English as "The History of the Damnable Life and Death of Dr. John Faustus". Marlowe's play follows this translation in the general outline of the story, though not in the conception of the principal character, who, under the poet's hand, from a mere magician becomes a man thirsty for infinite power, ambitious to be the "great Emperor of the world".

Faustus, weary of the sciences, turns to magic and calls up Mephistopheles, with whom he makes a compact to surrender his soul to the Devil in return for twenty-four years of life. During this time Mephistopheles is to attend on him and give him whatsoever he demands. Then follows a number of scenes in which the compact is executed, notable among them being the calling up of Helen, where Faustus addresses Helen in the well-known lines: "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships..." the anguish of mind of Faustus as the hour for the sur-

render of his soul draws near is poignantly depicted. Both in its end and in the general conception of the character of Faustus the play thus differs greatly from the "Faust" of Goethe.

"The Jew of Malta", a drama in blank verse and prose by Marlowe, produced about 1592 but not published until 1633, revised by T. Heywood. The Sultan of Turkey having demanded a tribute from Malta, the governor of Malta decides that it shall be paid by the Jews of the island. Barabas, a rich Jew, who resists the edict, has all his wealth impounded and his house turned into a nunnery. In revenge he indulges in an orgy of slaughter, procuring the death of his daughter Abigail's suitors among others, and poisoning all the nuns and Abigail herself. Malta being besieged by the Turks, he betrays the fortress to them, and, as a reward, is made governor of the island. He now plots the destruction of the Turkish commander and his force at a banquet by means of a collapsible floor; but is himself betrayed and hurled through the same floor into a boiling cauldron, where he dies.

## S h a k e s p e a r e

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was born at Stratford-on-Avon. Shakespeare's father was a husbandman (also variously described as a yeoman, a glover, a butcher, and a wool-dealer) at Stratford and held various municipal offices. Shakespeare was educated at the free grammar school at Stratford. In 1582 he married Anne, daughter of Richard Hathaway, and his first child, Susannah, was baptized the next year. He left Stratford about 1585,



having spent, it has been suggested, some time as a school-master, and is next heard of in London where he became acquainted with the Earl of Southampton, his principal patron. He was probably engaged in some subordinate capacity at one of the two theatres (The Theatre or the Curtain) then functioning in London, and afterwards became a member of the Lord Chamberlain's (after the accession of James I, the King's) company of players, which acted at the Theatre, the Curtain, the Globe, and from c. 1609 the Blackfriars Theatre. It is established that by September 1592 Shakespeare was both an actor and playwright. He took part in the original performances of Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour" (1598) and "Sejanus" (1603), after which he drops out of the actor-lists and may have acted little. By 1598 he was sufficiently prominent in the company to share with the Burbages and other notable players in the establishment of the new Globe Theatre on the Bankside; it was built in 1599. His earliest work as a dramatist, the three parts of "Henry VI", dates from 1590-1591. "Henry VI" was followed by "Richard III" and "The Comedy of Errors" in the theatrical season of 1592-1593, and by "Titus Andronicus" and "The Taming of the Shrew" in 1593-1594. Some critics suspect Peele's hand in Act I of "Titus". Shakespeare published the poems "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece" in 1593 and 1594 respectively. The "Sonnets" were printed in 1609, but the bulk of them appear to have been written between 1593 and 1596, and the remainder at intervals down to 1600. The "Two Gentlemen of Verona", "Love's Labour's Lost", and "Romeo and Juliet" (Shakespeare's first tragedy) are assigned to 1594-1595; "Richard II" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" to 1595-1596. In 1596 Shakespeare applied for a grant of arms in his father's name. He purchased New Place, the second largest house in Stratford, in 1597, but does not appear to have settled there permanently till 1611, by which year he owned a considerable

amount of property in Stratford. "King John" and "The Merchant of Venice" are assigned to 1596-1597, the two parts of "Henry IV" to 1597-1598. Shakespeare's most perfect essays in comedy "Much Ado about Nothing", "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night", belong to the years 1598-1600, together with "Henry V" and "Julius Caesar". "Hamlet" and "The Merry Wives of Windsor" (the latter, according to tradition, written by order of the Queen) are assigned to 1600-1601, "Troilus and Cressida" and "All's Well that Ends Well" to the next two theatrical seasons. Then came the accession of James I, who (according to Ben Jonson) no less than Elizabeth held Shakespeare in high esteem. A period of gloom in the author's life appears to have occurred about this time, manifested in the great tragedies, and succeeded, about 1608, by a new outlook in the final romances. The probable order and dates of the Jacobean plays are as follows: "Measure for Measure" and "Othello" 1604-1605; "King Lear" and "Macbeth" 1605-1606; "Antony and Cleopatra" 1606-1607; "Coriolanus" and "Timon of Athens" 1607-1608, "Pericles", "Cymbeline" and "The Winter's Tale" are assigned to the next three seasons; and "The Tempest", probably the last drama that Shakespeare completed, to 1611-1612. "Two Noble Kinsmen" and "Henry VIII", in which Fletcher is often thought to have collaborated, were written in 1612-1613.

Shakespeare now abandoned dramatic composition. He spent the concluding years of his life (1611-1616) mainly at Stratford, but paid frequent visits to London till 1614, and continued his relations with actors and poets till the end. He purchased a house in Blackfriars in 1613. He drafted his will in January 1616, and completed it in March. He died on April 23rd (o.s., i.e. May 3rd), and was buried in Stratford Church, where a monument with a bust by a London sculptor was erected before 1623.

## P o e m s

"Venus and Adonis", a poem in six-lined stanzas, published in 1593 and dedicated to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. It was probably Shakespeare's first published work. Venus, in love with the youth Adonis, detains him from the chase and woos him, but cannot win his love. She begs him to meet her on the morrow, but he intends to hunt the boar. She tries in vain to dissuade him. When the morning comes she hears his hounds at bay and, filled with terror, goes to look for him, only to find him killed by the boar.

"The Rape of Lucrece", a poem in seven-lined stanzas, published in 1594 and dedicated to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. Lucrece or Lucretia, a celebrated Roman lady, daughter of Lucretius, and wife of Tarquinius Collatinus, whose beauty inflamed the passion of Sextus (son of Tarquin, King of Rome), which he used threats and violence to satisfy. Lucretia, after telling her father and husband and entreating them to revenge her, took her own life. The outrage committed by Sextus, coupled with the oppression of the king, led to the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome and the introduction of republican government.

The Sonnets of Shakespeare, were printed in 1609, but were probably written, the bulk of them, between 1593 and 1596, the remainder before 1600. Most of them trace the course of the writer's affection for a young patron of rank and beauty, and may be addressed to Lord William Herbert, afterwards Earl of Pembroke, or Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. Other characters are alluded to who evidently played a real part in Shakespeare's life, a stolen mistress (40-42), a rival poet (83-86), a dark woman (127 et seq.).

## C h r o n i c l e s

"King Henry VI", Parts I, II and III, a historical drama ascribed to Shakespeare. The extent to which it was actually written or revised by him is uncertain. The three parts were acted about 1592; the first part was published in 1623, the second part anonymously in 1594 as "The first part of the contention betwixt the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster", and the third part in 1595, as "The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt". The question of authorship remains undecided. The play probably evoked Greene's famous censure of Shakespeare in his "Groatsworth of Wit".

Part I deals with the wars in France during the early years of Henry VI, the relief of Orleans by the French and the gradual expulsion of the English from a large part of France. The French are guided and inspired by Joan of Arc, who in accordance with the ideas of the time is represented as a "minister of hell" and a wanton. On the English side, the commanding figure of Talbot (until his death near Bordeaux) throws the other leaders into the shade. At home, the play deals with the intrigues of the barons, and the beginning of the strife between York and Lancaster.

Part II presents the marriage of Henry to Margaret of Anjou, the intrigues of the Yorkist faction and other historical events, including Jack Cade's rebellion, down to the battle of St. Albans (1455) and the death of Somerset.

Part III takes us from Henry's surrender of the succession to the crown to the Duke of York and Queen Margaret's revolt against the disinheriting of her son, to the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, concluding with the murder of Henry VI by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, whose ambitious and unscrupulous character (as subsequently developed in "King Richard III") is here first indicated.

"King Richard III", a historical tragedy, produced probably in 1594, printed in 1597, and based on Holinshed. Shakespeare perhaps had before him an earlier play, "The True Tragedie of Richard III".

The play centres in the character of Richard of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard III, ambitious and sanguinary, bold and subtle, treacherous yet brave in battle, a murderer and a usurper of the crown. The principal incidents of the play are the imprisonment and murder of Clarence, procured by his brother Richard; the wooing of Anne, widow of Edward, Prince of Wales, by Richard as she accompanies the bier of her dead father-in-law; the death of Edward IV and the machinations of Richard to get the crown; the accession of Richard; the murder of the princes in the Tower; the executions of Rivers, Grey and Hastings; Richard's project of marrying his niece, Elizabeth of York; Buckingham's rebellion in support of the Earl of Richmond, his capture and execution; Richmond's invasion, and the defeat and death of Richard at Bosworth Field (1485).

"King Henry IV", Parts I and II, a historical drama, produced about 1597, and printed in quarto, Part I in 1598, and Part II in 1600.

The subject of Part I is the rebellion of the Percys, assisted by Douglas, and in concert with Mortimer and Glendower; and its defeat by the King and the Prince of Wales at Shrewsbury (1403). Falstaff first appears in this play. The Prince of Wales associates with him and his boon companions, Poins, Bardolph and Peto, in their riotous life. Poins and the prince contrive that the others shall set on some travellers at Gadshill and rob them, and be robbed in their turn by themselves. The plot succeeds, and leads to Falstaff's well-known fabrication to explain the loss of the booty, and his exposure.

At the battle of Shrewsbury Falstaff finds the body of the lately slain Hotspur, and pretends to have killed him.

Part II deals with the rebellion of Archbishop Scroop, Mowbray and Hastings; while in the comic underplot the story of Falstaff's doings is continued, with those of the prince, Pistol, Poins, Mistress Quickly and Doll Tearsheet. Falstaff, summoned to the army for the repression of the rebellion, falls in with Justices Shallow and Silence in the course of his recruiting, makes a butt of them and extracts a thousand pounds from the former. Henry IV dies and Falstaff believes that the Prince's accession to the throne will make himself all-powerful. He is rudely disabused when he encounters the new king, is banished from his presence, and thrown into prison.

The play is notable, among other things, for the reminiscences of Shakespeare's early life in Warwickshire interwoven in the story.

Sir John Falstaff, a fat, witty, good-humoured old knight, loving jests, self-indulgent and over-addicted to sack. He is a braggart but, when exposed, has enough presence of mind to save his face. He seems to exaggerate and boast of his vices in order to bring out their humorous side. The Falstaff of the "Merry Wives of Windsor" presents a different character. A mere designing knave, with but few sparks of his former ingratiating humour, he cuts a sorry figure in the indignities and mortifications to which his vices expose him. The character was originally called Oldcastle, but objection was taken by Lord Cobham, a descendant of the original Sir John Oldcastle, "for he died a martyr".

"King Henry V" was performed in 1599, an imperfect draft being printed in 1600, the corrected text appearing in the first folio (1623).

The play deals with the arrest of Lord Scroop, Sir Thomas Grey, and the Earl of Cambridge for treason; the invasion of France and the siege and capture of Harfleur; the battle of Agincourt (1415); and Henry's wooing of Katharine of France. The knaves Nym and Bardolph and the braggart Pistol, who is made to eat the leek by the choleric Welshman Fluellen, provide comic relief. The death of Falstaff is related by Mistress Quickly (II, iii).

### C o m e d i e s

"The Comedy of Errors" was acted in 1594 (perhaps as early as 1592) and first printed in the Folio of 1623. This is one of the earliest and crudest of Shakespeare's plays and is, in the main, an adaption of the "Menaechmi" of Plautus.

Syracuse and Ephesus being at enmity, any Syracusan found in Ephesus is put to death, unless he can pay a ransom of a thousand marks. Aegeon, an old Syracusan merchant, has been arrested in Ephesus, and on the Duke's order explains how he came there. He and his wife Aemilia had twin sons, exactly alike and each named Antipholus; the parents had purchased twin slaves, also exactly alike, and each named Dromio, who attended on their sons. Having been separated in a shipwreck from his wife and elder son, with his slave, Aegeon had never seen them since. On reaching manhood the younger son (Antipholus of Syracuse) had gone to search for his brother and mother and had no more been heard of. Aegeon had now sought him for five years, coming at last to Ephesus.

The Duke, moved by this tale, gives Aegeon till evening to find the ransom. Now, the elder Antipholus (Antipholus of Ephesus), with one of the Dromios, has been living in Ephesus since his rescue from the shipwreck and is married. Antipholus of Syracuse and the other Dromio have arrived there that very morning. Each twin retains

the same confusing resemblance to his brother as in childhood. From this the comedy of errors results. Antipholus of Syracuse is summoned home to dinner by Dromio of Ephesus; he is claimed as husband by the wife of Antipolus of Ephesus, the latter being refused admittance to his own house, because he is supposed to be already within; and so forth. Finally Antipholus of Ephesus is confined as a lunatic and Antipholus of Syracuse takes refuge from his brother's jealous wife in a convent. Meanwhile evening has come and Aegeon is led to execution. As the Duke proceeds to the place of execution, Antipholus of Ephesus appeals to him for redress. The simultaneous presence of the two brothers explains the numerous misunderstandings. Aegeon recovers his two sons and his liberty, and the abbess turns out to be his lost wife, Aemilia.

"The Taming of the Shrew", a comedy by Shakespeare with perhaps a collaborator, was probably written about 1594, partly adapted from a play, "The Taming of a Shrew", which had appeared in 1594. It was first printed in the folio of 1623. The play is introduced by an "induction" in which Christopher Sly, a drunken tinker picked up by a lord and his huntsmen on a heath, is brought to the castle, sumptuously treated, and in spite of his protestations that he is only "old Sly's son of Burton-heath... Ask Marian Hackett the fat ale-wife of Wincot", is assured that he is a lord who has been out of his mind, and is set down to hear the following play, performed for his sole benefit by strolling players.

Petruchio, a gentleman of Verona, of shrewd wit and imperturbable temper, determines to marry Katharina, the notorious termagant elder daughter of Baptista, a rich gentleman of Padua. He carries his courtship through with a high hand, undeterred by her rude rebuffs, but pretending to find her courteous and gentle. Then the taming begins. First he humiliates Katharina by keeping her waiting on



their wedding-day, and at last appearing dressed like a scarecrow. Then he cuffs the priest, refuses to attend the bridal feast and hurries his wife off, on a sorry horse, to his home. On arrival, he refuses to let her eat or sleep, on the pretext that the food and bed prepared are not good enough for her, and distresses her by other mad pranks. Finally he takes her back to her father's house, which she reaches completely tamed. Meanwhile Bianca, Katharina's younger sister, has been won by Lucentio, who has made love to her while masquerading as a schoolmaster. Hortensio, the disappointed suitor of Bianca, marries a widow. At the feast which follows there is a wager among the bridegrooms which wife shall prove the most docile: Petruchio wins triumphantly.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream", a comedy probably written in 1595 or 1596, and printed in 1600.

Hermia, ordered by her father, Egeus, to marry Demetrius, refuses because she loves Lysander, while Demetrius has formerly professed love for her friend Helena, and Helena loves Demetrius. Under the law of Athens, Theseus, the duke, gives Hermia four days in which to obey her father; else she must suffer death or enter a nunnery. Hermia and Lysander agree to leave Athens secretly in order to be married where the Athenian law cannot pursue them, and to meet in a wood a few miles from the city. Hermia tells Helena of the project, and the latter tells Demetrius. Demetrius pursues Hermia to the wood, and Helena Demetrius. The wood is the favourite haunt of the fairies.

Oberon and Titania, king and queen of the fairies, have quarrelled, because Titania refuses to give up to him a little changeling boy for a page. Oberon tells Puck, a mischievous sprite, to fetch a certain magic flower, intending to press the juice on the eyes of Titania while she sleeps, so that she may fall in love with what she first sees when she wakes. Overhearing Demetrius in the wood re-

proaching Helena for following him, and wishing to reconcile them, Oberon orders Puck to drop some of the love-juice on Demetrius's eyes, but so that Helena shall be near him when he does so. Puck, mistaking Lysander for Demetrius, applies the love-charm to him, and it chanced that Helena is the first person that Lysander sees when he wakes. He at once makes love to her, and she is furious because she thinks he is mocking her. Oberon, discovering Puck's mistake, now places some of the juice on Demetrius's eyes, and he on waking first sees Helena, so that now both Lysander and Demetrius are in love with Helena. The ladies fall to high words and the men go off to fight for Helena.

Meanwhile Oberon has put the love-juice on Titania's eyelids. She wakes to find Bottom the weaver near her, wearing an ass's head (Bottom and a company of Athenian tradesmen are in the wood to rehearse a play for the Duke's wedding and Puck has put an ass's head on Bottom). Titania at once becomes enamoured of him, and toys with his "amiable cheeks" and "fair large ears". Oberon, finding them together, reproaches Titania for bestowing her love on an ass, and again demands the changeling boy, whom she in her confusion surrenders; whereupon Oberon releases her from the charm.

Puck at Oberon's orders throws a dense mist round the human lovers and brings them all together, unknown to one another, and they fall asleep. He then applies a remedy to their eyes, so that when they awake they return to their former loves. Theseus and Egeus appear on the scene, the runaways are forgiven, and the couples married. The play ends with the show of "Pyramus and Thisbe", comically acted by Bottom and his fellow tradesmen, to celebrate the wedding of the lovers and that of Theseus and Hippolyta.

"The Merchant of Venice", a comedy, probably written about 1596, printed in quarto in 1600. It is based on material in Giovanni Fiorentine's collection of Italian novels, "II Pecorone", and the "Gesta Romanorum", and perhaps on works in which this material was rehandled.

Bassanio, a noble but poor Venetian, asks Antonio, his friend, a rich merchant, for three thousand ducats to enable him to prosecute his suit of the rich heiress Portia. Antonio, whose money is all employed in foreign ventures, undertakes to borrow the sum from Shylock, a Jewish usurer, whom he has been wont to upbraid for his extortions. Shylock consents to lend the money against a bond by which, in case the sum is not repaid at the appointed day, Antonio shall forfeit a pound of flesh. Bassanio prospers in his suit. By her father's will Portia is to marry that suitor who selects of three caskets (one of gold, one of silver, one of lead) that which contains her portrait. He makes the right choice - the leaden casket - and is wedded to Portia, and his friend Gratiano to her maid Nerissa. News comes that Antonio's ships have been wrecked. The debt has not been repaid when due, and Shylock claims his pound of flesh. The matter is brought before the Duke. Portia disguises herself as an advocate and Nerissa as her clerk, and they come to the court to defend Antonio, unknown to their husbands. Failing in her appeal to Shylock for mercy. Portia admits the validity of his claim, but warns him that his life is forfeit if he spills one drop of blood, since his bond entitles him to nothing beyond the flesh. Pursuing her advantage, she argues that Shylock's life is forfeit for having conspired against the life of a Venetian citizen. The Duke grants Shylock his life, but gives half his wealth to Antonio, half to the state. Antonio surrenders his claim if Shylock will turn Christian and make over his property on his death to his daughter, Jessica, who has run away and married a Christian and been disinherited. Shylock agrees.

Portia and Nerissa ask as rewards from Bassanio and Gratiano the rings that their wives have given, which they have promised never to part with. Reluctantly they give them up, and are taken to task accordingly on their return home. The play ends with news of the safe arrival of Antonio's ships.

"The Merry Wives of Windsor", a comedy, probably of 1600-1601. An imperfect text was printed in 1602, the corrected text in the folio of 1623. It is said to have been written by command of Queen Elizabeth to show Sir John Falstaff in love.

Falstaff, who is "out at heels", determines to make love to the wives of Ford and Page, two gentlemen living at Windsor, because they have the rule of their husbands' purses. Falstaff's discarded followers, Nym and Pistol, warn the husbands. Falstaff sends identical love-letters to Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, who contrive the discomfiture of the knight. At a first assignation at Ford's home, on the arrival of the husband they hide Falstaff in a basket, cover him with foul linen and have him tipped into a muddy ditch. At a second assignation, they disguise him as a fat woman of Brentford, in which character he is soundly beaten by Ford. The jealous husband having also been twice befooled, the plot is now revealed to him, and a final assignation is given to Falstaff in Windsor Forest, where he is beset and pinched by mock fairies and finally seized and exposed by Ford and Page.

The underplot is concerned with the wooing of Anne, the daughter of Page, by three suitors: Doctor Caius, a French physician; Slender, the foolish cousin of Justice Shallow; and Fenton, a wild young gentleman, whom Anne loves. Mistress Quickly, servant to Dr. Caius, acts as go-between for all three suitors, and encourages them all impartially. Sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh parson, interferes on behalf of Slender and incurs the enmity of, and receives

a challenge from, the irascible Dr. Caius, but hostilities are limited to the "hacking" of the English tongue. At the final assignation with Falstaff in the forest, Page, who favours Slender, arranges that the latter shall carry off his daughter, who is to be dressed in white; while Mrs. Page, who favours Dr. Caius, arranges that he shall carry her off dressed in green. In the event both of these find themselves fobbed off with a boy in disguise, while Fenton has run away with and married the true Anne.

"Measure for Measure", a rather bitter comedy, was probably first acted in 1604, though not printed till the folio of 1623. The plot is taken from Cinthio (translated by Whetstone).

The Duke of Vienna, on the pretext of a journey to Poland, hands over the government to Angelo, that he may escape the odium of enforcing the laws against unchastity that have long been disregarded. Angelo at once sentences to death Claudio as guilty of seduction. Claudio sends word of his position to his sister Isabella, a novice, and begs her to intercede with Angelo. Isabella's prayers fail to win her brother's pardon but her beauty awakens Angelo's passion and, at a second interview, he offers her brother's life if she will sacrifice to him her honour. Isabella indignantly refuses; and there follows the famous scene in the prison, when Isabella tells her brother of Angelo's offer and he, momentarily weakening, pleads with her for his life. Meanwhile the Duke, who has not left Vienna, but has assumed the disguise of a friar and thus learnt the infamous conduct of Angelo, contrives to save Claudio. He tells Isabella to agree to go to Angelo's house at midnight, and arranges that Mariana, who had formerly been betrothed to Angelo and still loves him, shall go there in Isabella's place. The ruse is successful; but none the less Angelo orders Claudio's execution at dawn. The provost of the prison disobeys. The Duke, laying aside his friar's robes

and simulating an unexpected return to Vienna, hears the complaint of Isabella and the suit of Mariana, and confutes Angelo, who denies their stories. Angelo is pardoned at the instance of Mariana and Isabella, and marries the former; and the Duke reveals his love for Isabella. The play contains the beautiful song "Take, O take those lips away".

## R o m a n   a n d   G r e e k   p l a y s

"Julius Caesar", a Roman tragedy probably produced in 1599, and printed in the 1623 folio. The plot is taken from North's translation of Plutarch's "Lives", and deals with the events of the year 44 B.C., after Caesar, already endowed with the dictatorship, had returned to Rome from a successful campaign in Spain.

Distrust of Caesar's ambition gives rise to a conspiracy against him among Roman lovers of freedom, notably Cassius and Casca; they win over to their cause Brutus, who reluctantly joins them from a sense of duty to the republic. Caesar is slain by the conspirators in the senate-house. Antony, Caesar's friend, stirs the people to fury against the conspirators by a skilful speech at Caesar's funeral. Octavius (Caesar's nephew), Antony, and Lepidus, united as triumvirs, oppose the forces raised by Brutus and Cassius. The quarrel and reconciliation of Brutus and Cassius, with the news of the death of Portia, Brutus's wife, provide one of the finest scenes in the play. Brutus and Cassius are defeated at the battle of Philippi (42 B.C.), and kill themselves.

"Troilus and Cressida" (see previous reference under Chaucer).

Shakespeare's Cressida is a giddy girl, an unpractised jilt, who falls in love with Troilus, as she after-

wards deserts him, from mere levity and thoughtlessness of temper. His Pandarus, instead of being a friendly, officious go-between, has a professional stamp. Shakespeare's play, produced probably in 1602 and printed in 1609, presents the principal characters of the "Iliad": Agamemnon, Ajax, Ulysses, Nestor, Achilles sulking in his tent, the railer Thersites; and on the Trojan side, Priam, Aeneas, Hector and Andromache, Paris and Helen. The death of Hector at the hands of Achilles is summarily dealt with. The play is remarkable for its discussion of social and political ideas, and its bitter denunciation of war and the aristocratic code of honour.

"Antony and Cleopatra" was probably written about 1606-1607, but first printed in the folio of 1623. In it the poet closely follows North's "Plutarch".

The play presents Mark Antony at Alexandria, enthralled by the beauty of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra. Recalled by the death of his wife Fulvia and political developments, he tears himself from Cleopatra and returns to Rome, where the estrangement between him and Octavius Caesar is terminated by his marriage to Octavia, Caesar's sister, an event which provokes the intense jealousy of Cleopatra. But the reconciliation is short-lived, and Antony leaves Octavia and returns to Egypt. At the battle of Actium, the flight of the Egyptian squadron is followed by the retreat of Antony, pursued to Alexandria by Caesar. There, after a momentary success, Antony is finally defeated. On the false report of Cleopatra's death, he falls upon his sword. He is borne to the monument where Cleopatra has taken refuge and dies in her arms. Cleopatra, fallen into Caesar's power, but determined not to grace his triumph, takes her own life by the bite of an asp.

"Timon of Athens" was probably written about 1607.

It was perhaps left unfinished or written in collaboration with another dramatist, and was not printed until the first folio.

The material of the play is drawn from Plutarch's "Antony", Lucian's "Misanthropos", and an anonymous play "Timon". Timon, a rich and noble Athenian, ruins himself by his prodigal liberality to flatterers and parasites. He then turns to his friends for assistance, but is deserted by all who had previously frequented him. Cursing the city, he betakes himself to a cave, where he lives alone. While digging for roots he finds a hoard of gold, which has now no value for him. His embittered spirit is manifested in his talk with the exiled Alcibiades, the churlish philosopher Apemantus, the thieves and flatterers attracted by the gold, and his faithful steward Flavius. When the senators of Athens, hard pressed by the attack of Alcibiades, entreat him to return to the city and help them, he offers them his fig-tree, on which to hang themselves as a refuge from affliction. Soon his tomb is found by the sea-shore, with an epitaph expressing his hatred of mankind.

"Coriolanus" was probably written about 1608, but was first printed in the folio of 1623. The story is taken from North's Plutarch.

Caius Marcius, a proud Roman general, performs wonders of valour in a war against the Volscians, and captures the town Corioli, receiving in consequence the surname Coriolanus. On his return it is proposed to make him consul, but his arrogant and outspoken contempt for the people makes him unpopular, and the tribunes have no difficulty in securing his banishment. He is received in the house of Aufidius, the Volscian general, his enemy of long standing, and leads the Volscians against Rome to effect his revenge. He reaches the walls of the city and the Romans, to save it from destruction, send emissaries



to propose terms, but in vain. Finally the mother, wife and son of Coriolanus beseech him to spare the city. He yields to their prayers, makes a treaty favourable to the Volscians, and returns with them to Antium, a Volscian town. Here the Volscian general accuses him of treachery and with the assistance of a group of conspirators kills him in public.

## T r a g e d i e s

"Romeo and Juliet", the first romantic tragedy of Shakespeare, based on an Italian romance by Bandello frequently translated into English. Shakespeare's play was probably written in 1595, first printed in corrupt form in 1597 (authentic second quarto, 1599).

The Montagues and Capulets, the two chief families of Verona, are at bitter enmity. Romeo, son of old Lord Montague, attends, disguised by a mask, a feast given by old Lord Capulet. He sees and falls in love with Juliet, daughter of Capulet, and she with him. After the feast he overhears, under her window, Juliet's confession of her love for him, and wins her consent to a secret marriage. With the help of Friar Laurence, they are wedded next day. Mercutio, a friend of Romeo, meets Tybalt, of the Capulet family, who is infuriated by his discovery of Romeo's presence at the feast, and they quarrel. Romeo arrives on the scene and attempts to reason with Tybalt, but Tybalt and Mercutio fight, and Mercutio falls. Then Romeo draws and Tybalt is killed. The Duke with Montague and Capulet come up, and Romeo is sentenced to banishment. Early next day, after passing the night with Juliet, he leaves Verona for Mantua, on the advice of the friar, who intends to publish Romeo's marriage at an opportune moment. Capulet determines to marry Juliet to Count Paris. Juliet consults the friar,

who tells her to consent to the match, but on the night before the wedding to drink a potion which will render her apparently lifeless for forty hours. He promises to warn Romeo, who is to rescue her from the vault and carry her to Mantua. Juliet does so, but the friar's message to Romeo miscarries, and Romeo hears that Juliet is dead. Buying poison, he goes to the vault to take leave of Juliet. He chances upon Count Paris outside the vault; they fight and Paris is killed. Then Romeo, after a last kiss on Juliet's lips, drinks the poison and dies. Juliet awakes and finds Romeo dead by her side, the cup still in his hand. Guessing what has happened, she stabs herself and dies. The story is unfolded by the friar and Count Paris's page, and Montague and Capulet, faced by the tragic results of their enmity, are reconciled.

"Hamlet" was probably produced before 1603-1604, published imperfectly in quarto in 1605, and fully in quarto 1604, and with some omissions in the first folio. The story is in Saxo Grammaticus and was accessible in Belleforest's "Histoires Tragiques". There was also an earlier play on the subject, perhaps by Kyd, not now extant.

The king of Denmark has been murdered by his brother Claudius, after Claudius has seduced Gertrude, the king's wife. Claudius has supplanted on the throne the dead man's son, Hamlet, and married Gertrude with indecent haste. Hamlet meets the ghost of his dead father, who relates the circumstances of the murder and demands vengeance. Hamlet vows obedience; but his melancholy, introspective, and scrupulous nature makes him irresolute and dilatory in action. He counterfeits madness to allay the suspicion that he is dangerous to the king. His behaviour is attributed to his love for Ophelia (the daughter of Polonius, the Lord Chamberlain), whom he has previously courted but now treats rudely. He tests the ghost's story

by having a play acted before the king reproducing the circumstances of the murder, and the king betrays himself. A scene follows in which Hamlet violently upbraids the queen. Thinking he hears the king listening behind the arras, he stabs at it with his sword, but instead kills Polonius. The king now determines to destroy Hamlet. He sends him on a mission to England, with intent to have him killed there. But pirates capture Hamlet and send him back to Denmark. He arrives to find that Ophelia, crazed with grief, has perished by drowning. Her brother Laertes, a strong contrast to the character of Hamlet, has hurried home to take vengeance for the death of his father Polonius. The king contrives a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes, in which the latter uses a poisoned sword and kills Hamlet; but not before Hamlet has mortally wounded Laertes and stabbed the king, while Gertrude has drunk a poisoned cup intended for her son.

"Othello, the Moor of Venice" was acted in 1604 and printed in quarto in 1622. The story is drawn from Cinthio.

Desdemona, daughter of the Venetian senator, Brabantio, has secretly married the Moor, Othello, a gallant general in the service of the Venetian state, who has won her love by the tale of his adventures and encounters. Brought before the duke, Othello is accused by Brabantio of carrying off his daughter; simultaneously comes news of an impending attack on Cyprus by the Turks, against whom Othello is needed to lead the Venetian forces. Othello explains by what simple means he has won Desdemona, who confirms his story. Brabantio reluctantly hands his daughter over to the Moor, who at once sets out with Desdemona for Cyprus.

Othello had lately promoted to the lieutenantcy Cassio, a young Florentine whom he trusted. By his promotion he had deeply offended Iago, an older soldier who

thought he had a better claim, and who now plots his revenge. By a trick he first discredits Cassio with Othello, so that the former is deprived of his lieutenancy. Then he instigates Cassio to ask Desdemona to plead in his favour with Othello, which she warmly does. At the same time he craftily instills in Othello's mind suspicion of his wife's fidelity and jealousy of Cassio. Finally he arranges that a handkerchief given by Othello to Desdemona shall be found on Cassio. He stirs Othello to such a frenzy of jealousy that the Moor smothers Desdemona in her bed. Shortly afterwards Cassio, whom Iago had set Roderigo, one of his dupes, to assassinate, is brought in wounded. Roderigo has failed in his purpose, and is killed by Iago to prevent discovery of the plot. But on him are found letters revealing the guilt of Iago and the innocence of Cassio. Othello, thunderstruck by the discovery that he has murdered Desdemona without cause, kills himself from remorse.

"King Lear" was performed in 1606 and two slightly different versions of it were printed in 1608. The story of Lear and his daughters is given by Geoffrey of Monmouth and by Holinshed. "King Lear" resembles in certain respects an older play "Leir", which had been "lately acted" in 1605.

Lear, King of Britain, a petulant and rash old man, has three daughters: Goneril, wife of the Duke of Albany; Regan, wife of the Duke of Cornwall; and Cordelia for whom the king of France and Duke of Burgundy are suitors. Intending to divide his kingdom among his daughters according to their affection for him, he bids them say which loves him most. Goneril and Regan make profession of extreme affection, and each receives one-third of the kingdom. Cordelia, disgusted with their hollow flattery, says she loves him according to her duty, not more nor less. Infuriated with this reply, Lear divides her portion between his other daughters, with the condition that

himself with a hundred knights shall be maintained by each daughter in turn. Burgundy withdraws his suit for Cordelia, but the King of France accepts her without a dowry. The Earl of Kent, who takes her part, is banished. Goneril and Regan reveal their heartless character by grudging their father his upkeep and finally turning him out of doors in a storm. The Earl of Gloucester shows pity for the old king, and is suspected of complicity with the French, who have landed in England. His eyes are put out by Cornwall, who receives a death-wound in the affray. Gloucester's son Edgar, who has been traduced to his father by his bastard brother Edmund, takes the disguise of a lunatic beggar and tends his father till the latter's death. Lear, whom rage and ill-treatment have deprived of his wits, is conveyed to Dover by the faithful Kent in disguise, and Cordelia receives him. Meanwhile Goneril and Regan have both turned their affection to Edmund. Embittered by this rivalry, Goneril poisons Regan, and takes her own life. The English forces under Edmund and Albany defeat the French, and Lear and Cordelia are imprisoned. Cordelia is hanged and Lear dies from grief. The treachery of Edmund is proved on him by his brother Edgar. Albany, who has not abetted Goneril in her cruel treatment of Lear, takes over the kingdom.

"Macbeth", founded on Holinshed's "Chronicle of Scottish History", was no doubt designed as a tribute to King James I. It was probably finished in 1606, and was first printed in the folio of 1623.

Macbeth and Banquo, generals of Duncan, King of Scotland, returning from a victorious campaign against rebels, encounter the three weird sisters, or witches, upon a heath, who prophesy that Macbeth shall bethane of Cawdor, and king hereafter, and that Banquo shall beget kings though he be none. Immediately afterwards comes the news that king has created Macbeth thane of Cawdor. Stimulated

by the prophecy and spurred on by Lady Macbeth, Macbeth murders Duncan, who visits his castle. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, escape, and Macbeth assumes the crown. To defeat the prophecy of the witches regarding Banquo, he contrives the murder of Banquo and his son Fleance, but the latter escapes. Haunted by the ghost of Banquo, Macbeth consults the weird sisters, and is told to beware of Macduff, the thane of Fife; that none born of woman has power to harm him; and that he never will be vanquished till Birnam Wood shall come to Dunsinane. Learning that Macduff has joined Malcolm, who is gathering an army in England, Macbeth surprises the castle of Macduff and causes Lady Macduff and her children to be slaughtered. Lady Macbeth loses her reason and dies. The army of Malcolm and Macduff now invades Scotland. Passing through Birnam Wood every man cuts a bough and under this screen the army marches on Dunsinane. Macduff, who was "from his mother's womb untimely ripped", kills Macbeth. Malcolm is hailed King of Scotland.

## R o m a n c e s

"Cymbeline", a play acted in 1610 or 1611, first printed in the folio, 1623. It combines a fragment of British history, freely adapted from Holinshed, with the story of Ginevra from Boccaccio's "Decameron" (Second day, No. 9.).

Imogen, daughter of Cymbeline, King of Britain, has secretly married Leonatus Posthumus, an accomplished gentleman. The queen, Imogen's stepmother, who wanted her son Cloten to marry Imogen, reveals this secret marriage to the king, who banishes Posthumus. The latter, at Rome, boasts of the virtue of Imogen and enters into a wager with Iachimo that if the latter can win Imogen's favour he shall have a diamond ring, a gift from Imogen to Posthumus. Iachimo, repulsed by Imogen, by a stratagem

gets admission to her chamber at night, brings back to Posthumus evidence that convinces him of her infidelity, and receives the ring. Posthumus writes to Pisanio, his servant at the court, directing him to kill Imogen. Pisanio from compassion spares her, provides her with a man's apparel and leaves her in a forest, where she is kindly entertained by Bellarius and the two sons of Cymbeline, whom he had stolen in their infancy. A Roman army invades Britain. Imogen falls into the hands of the Roman general and becomes his page. In the ensuing battle Cymbeline is captured and then rescued. The Romans are defeated and Imogen and Iachimo are taken prisoners. Meanwhile Posthumus has returned from Rome to fight for Cymbeline. He now surrenders himself for execution as having returned from banishment. The Roman general begs Cymbeline to spare Imogen. The king moved by something familiar in her appearance, spares her life and grants her a boon. She asks that Iachimo be forced to tell how he came by the ring that he wears on his finger. Iachimo discloses his treachery. Posthumus, learning that his wife is innocent and believing her dead, is in despair, till Imogen reveals herself. The king's joy at recovering his daughter is intensified when Bellarius restores to him his two lost sons, and the scene ends in a general reconciliation. The play contains the beautiful dirge: "Fear no more the heat o' the sun."

"The Tempest", a romantic drama, was probably written in 1611 and the latest of Shakespeare's completed works. It was not printed till the Folio of 1623. The story of the exiled magician and his daughter had figured in a recent German play, and other literary sources have been suggested. Shakespeare has worked into the play details of the shipwreck on Bermuda of Sir G. Somers's ship the "Sea-Venture" in 1609. He may have got the name of the god Setebos from Richard Eden's "History of Travaile"

(1577). Prospero, Duke of Milan, ousted from his throne by his brother Antonio and turned adrift on the sea with his child Miranda, has been cast up on a lonely island. This had been the place of banishment of the witch Sycorax. Prospero, by his knowledge of magic, has released various spirits (including Ariel) formerly imprisoned by the witch, and these now obey his orders. He also keeps in his service the witch's son Caliban, a misshapen monster, the sole inhabitant of the island. After Prospero and Miranda have lived here for twelve years, a ship carrying the usurper, his confederate, the King of Naples, and the latter's son Ferdinand is by the art of Prospero wrecked on the island. The passengers are saved, but Ferdinand is separated from his companions, who think he is drowned. Ferdinand and Miranda are thrown together and fall in love. Ariel, by Prospero's order, subjects Antonio and the King of Naples to various terrors. Antonio is cowed; the king repents his cruelty, is reconciled with Prospero, and his son Ferdinand is restored to him. All ends happily, for the ship is magically restored and Prospero and the others prepare to leave the island, after the former has renounced his magical faculties. Caliban, whose intercourse with Stephano, a drunken butler, and Trinculo the jester has provided some excellent fooling, is left, as before, the island's sole inhabitant.

Shakespeare's contemporaries and immediate successors

George Chapman (1559?-1634?) was probably born near Hitchin in Hertfordshire and educated at Oxford. He is chiefly known for his translations of Homer, animated by "a daring fiery spirit" (Pope) and commemorated in Keats's sonnet, "Much have I travelled in the realms



of gold"; but Swinburne and others have drawn attention to the remarkable quality of his dramatic works. He was renowned as a scholar and is perhaps the "rival poet" of Shakespeare's "Sonnets".

He published the obscure poem "The Shadow of Night" in 1594, and a continuation of Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" in 1598. His principal tragedies were published as follows: "Bussy D'Ambois" (1607), "The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Byron" (1608), "The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois" (1613) "Caesar and Pompey" (1631), "The Tragedy of Chabot" (1639). His comedies were "The Blind Beggar of Alexandria" (1598), "An Humorous Day's Mirth" (1599), "All Fools" (1605), "The Gentleman Usher" (1606), "Monsieur D'Olive" (1606), "May-Day" (1611), "The Widow's Tears" (1612), and "Eastward Ho!" (1605). This last play is written in collaboration with Ben Jonson and Marston, and contains a flippant allusion to the Scots which gave offence at Court and led to the temporary imprisonment of the authors. Chapman published the whole "Iliad" in 1611, adding the "Odyssey" in 1614-1615, and the hymns etc. in 1616. He also wrote court poems, and a masque (1614).

Thomas Dekker (1570?-1632) was born, and mainly lived, in London, the manners of which his writings vividly illustrate. He suffered from poverty and was long in prison for debt, but appears to have been a man of happy and lovable temperament. He was engaged about 1598 by Philip Henslowe to write plays (most of which are now lost) in collaboration with Drayton, Ben Jonson and many others. He published "The Shoemaker's Holiday" and "Old Fortunatus" in 1600. His other principal plays are "The Honest Whore", of which Part I appeared in 1604, and Part II in 1630; and "The Witch of Edmonton", written in collaboration with Ford and Rowley, 1623. He wrote a number of pamphlets, including "The Wonderful Yeare 1603", containing a poignant description of London during the plague of that year; "The

Seven deadly Sinnes of London"; and "Newes from Hell", an imitation of Nashe, 1606. His writings are marked by a sunny simplicity and sympathy for the poor and oppressed (including animals tortured for man's amusement).

"The Shoemaker's Holiday, or A pleasant comedy of the Gentle Craft". Rowland Lacy, a kinsman of the Earl of Lincoln, loves Rose, the daughter of the Lord Mayor of London. To prevent the match, the earl sends him to France in command of a company of men. Lacy resigns his place to a friend and, disguised as a Dutch shoemaker, takes service with Simon Eyre, who supplies the family of the lord mayor with shoes. Here he successfully pursues his suit, is married in spite of the efforts of the earl and the lord mayor to prevent it, and is pardoned by the king. The most entertaining character in the play is Simon Eyre, the cheery, eccentric master-shoemaker, who eventually becomes Lord Mayor of London. (See also p.122).

Thomas Middleton (1570?-1627) was the son of parents settled in London. He wrote satirical comedies of contemporary manners, and later, under the influence of W. Rowley, romantic comedies. Much of his work was done in collaboration with Dekker, Rowley, Munday and others. He also wrote pageants and masques for city ceremonials, and was appointed city chronologer in 1620. In 1624 he wrote a political drama "A Game at Chesse", for which he and the actors were summoned before the Privy Council. His plays (which were very popular) include "The Mayor of Quinborough" (1611) and possibly "The Old Law" (1656, in collaboration with Massinger and Rowley), "Michaelmas Term" (1607), "A Trick to Catch the Old One" (1608), "The Family of Love" (1608), "A Mad World, my Masters" (1608), "The Roaring Girl" (1611, with Dekker), "A Fair Quarrel" (1617, with Rowley), "The Spanish Gipsy" and "The Changeling" (1623, with Rowley), "A Chaste Maid in Cheapside"

(1630), "The Widow" (1652, with Ben Jonson and Fletcher), "Women beware Women" (1657) and many others. His pageants and masques include "The Triumphs of Truth" (1613), "The Triumphs of Love and Antiquity" (1619), "The Triumphs of Health and Prosperity" (1626). He is also supposed to have written some miscellaneous verse and prose.

Ben Jonson (1572-1637) (christened 'Benjamin') was of ===== Border descent, but born probably in Westminster. He was educated at Westminster School under William Camden and for a time followed the trade of his stepfather, a brick-layer. His occupation from 1591 to 1597 is uncertain but included some voluntary military service in Flanders. In 1597 he began to work for Henslowe's company as player and playwright. A year later he killed a fellow actor in a duel, but escaped death by benefit of clergy. During his imprisonment he became a Roman Catholic, but abjured twelve years later. His "Every Man in his Humour", with Shakespeare in the cast, was performed by the Lord Chamberlain's company at the Curtain in 1598, and "Every Man out of his Humour" at the Globe in 1599. "Cynthia's Revels" (1600), and "The Poetaster" (1601) were performed by the children of the Queen's Chapel. In 1600 Jonson was writing additions to Kyd's "Spanish Tragedy". His first extant tragedy "Sejanus" was given at the Globe by Shakespeare's Company. He was temporarily imprisoned for his share in "Eastward Ho", a play reflecting on the Scots. His "Volpone" was acted at both the Globe and the two universities in 1606. "Epicoene, or the Silent Woman" followed in 1609, "The Alchemist" in 1610, "Bartholomew Fayre" in 1614; and "The Devil is an Ass" in 1615. Though not formally appointed the first Poet Laureate, the essentials of the position were conferred on him in 1616, when a pension was granted to him by James I. In 1618 he went to Scotland. He produced "The Staple of News", his last great play, in 1625. He was elected chronologer of London in 1625. "The New Inn",

a comedy, which shows a decline in his powers and proved a failure, was produced in 1629. From 1605 onwards he was constantly producing masques for the court, a form of entertainment that reached its highest level in Jonson's hands: ("The Masque of Queens", 1609; "Love Restored" 1612; "Pleasure reconciled to Vertue" 1618, which gave Milton his idea for "Comus", etc.) Jonson quarrelled with Inigo Jones after the production of the masque "Chloridia" (1630) and lost the patronage of the court. His last masques were produced in 1633-1634. He was buried in Westminster Abbey and celebrated in a collection of elegies (1637-1638). His poems include "Epigrammes" and "The Forest", printed in the folio of 1616, "Underwoods" (1640), and translations. His chief prose work is "Timber, or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter" (1640).

As a man Jonson was arrogant and quarrelsome but fearless, warm-hearted, and intellectually honest. The estimate of him formed by his contemporaries is summed up in the inscription of one of these upon his tomb, "O rare Ben Jonson", which has been adopted as his epitaph.

"Every Man in his Humour", a comedy performed in 1598. Kitem, a merchant, is the husband of a young and pretty wife, and his "humour" is jealousy. His house is resorted to by his young brother with a crowd of riotous but harmless gallants, and these he suspects of designs on his wife. One of these young men is Edward Knowell, whose father's "humour" is excessive solicitude for his son's morals. Dame Kitem, though not suspicious by nature, becomes highly jealous when her suspicions are aroused. Bridget, Kitem's sister, is merely a young woman easily wooed and won. Bobadill, one of Jonson's greatest creations, is a boastful cowardly soldier, who associates with the young gallants above mentioned. Out of these elements, by the aid of the devices and disguises of the mischievous Brainworm, Knowell's servant, an imbroglio is produced in which Kitem

and his wife are brought face to face at a house to which each thinks the other has come for an improper purpose. In the end Knewell is married to Kately's sister; and the post-asters and "gulls" are held up to ridicule. The misunderstandings are cleared up by the shrewd and kindly Justice Clement. The prologue contains an exposition of Jonson's dramatic theory.

"Every Man out of his Humour", a satirical comedy, first acted in 1599 at the Globe Theatre, in which the poet holds up to ridicule various absurd characters and fashions of the day: Fastidious Brist, the spruce fashionably-dressed courtier; Fungoso, a student, whose aim in life is to be a courtier, but who is always behind the fashion; Sordido, his father, a countryman, whose recreation is reading almanacs; Sogliardo, Sordido's brother, whose ambition is to be taken for a man of quality; Delerid, who dotes absurdly on his wife; Puntarvolo, a vainglorious knight, who makes a ridiculous insurance on the safe return of his cat and dog from a voyage to Constantinople. They are all put "out of humour" with their various predilections.

"Sejanns, his Fall", a Roman tragedy, first acted in 1603, Shakespeare and Burbage having parts in the cast.

The play deals with the rise of the historical Sejanus, the confidant of the Emperor Tiberius, his machinations with a view to securing the imperial throne, his fall and execution.

"Volpone, or The Fox", a comedy, first acted in 1606 and printed in 1607.

Volpone, a rich Venetian without children, feigns that he is dying, in order to draw gifts from his would-be heirs. Mosca, his parasite and confederate, persuades each of these in turn that he is to be the heir, and thus extracts costly presents from them; one of them, Corvino, even sacrifices his

life to Volpone in hope of the inheritance. Finally Volpone overreaches himself. To enjoy the discomfiture of the vultures who are awaiting his death, he makes over his property by will to Mosca and pretends to be dead. Mosca takes advantage of the position to blackmail Volpone; and Voltore, a lawyer, who has aided Volpone in the infamous conspiracy against Corvino's wife, finding himself defrauded of his expected reward, reveals the whole matter to the senate; whereupon Volpone, Mosca and Corvino receive the punishment they merit. Sir Politick Would-Be, the English traveller in Italy, with his absurd schemes for supplying Venice with red herrings and detecting by means of onions and bellows whether there is plague on a ship, and Lady Politick Would-Be, the voluble female pedant, have little connection with the main plot. The names of the principal characters, Volpone (the fox), Mosca (the fly), Voltore (the vulture), Corbaccio (the crow), Corvino (the raven), are significant of the parts they play.

"Epicoene, or the Silent Woman" a comedy, first acted in 1609, and one of the most popular of Jonson's dramas. Morose, an egoistic bachelor with an insane aversion to noise, proposes to disinherit his nephew Sir Dauphine Eugenie, whom he suspects of ridiculing him, and to marry (if he can find one) a silent woman. Outheard, his barber, finds such a bride in Epicoene. Unfortunately, immediately after the wedding, she recovers the vigorous use of her tongue, to the dismay of Morose, which is increased by the arrival of his nephew and friends, together with a party of "Collegiate Ladies" and musicians. Driven frantic by the hubbub, and having in vain consulted a pseudo-clergyman and a lawyer as to possible grounds of divorce, he accepts his nephew's offer to rid him of Epicoene for five hundred pounds a year and the reversion of his property. Whereupon Sir Dauphine pulls off Epicoene's wig and reveals her as a boy whom he has trained for the part (the word "epicoene" means "having characteristics of both sexes").

Among the characters who contribute to the humour of the play are Captain Otter, who always speaks under correction when his wife is present; Sir Amorous La-Foole, a vain-glorious coward; the Collegiate Ladies (a group of dissolute women "between courtiers and country madams, who live from their husbands and give entertainment to all the wits and braveries (beaux) of the time"), and Sir John Daw, a braggart knight, who pretends to learning and collects the titles of classical works without knowing their contents.

"The Alchemist", a comedy, first acted in 1610 and printed in 1612, by many considered the greatest of Jonson's plays. Love-wit, during an epidemic of the plague, leaves his house in London in charge of his servant, Face. The latter, with Subtle, the Alchemist, and Dol Common, his consort, use the house as a place for deluding and cheating gullible people, by holding out to them promise of the philosopher's stone. Among their victims are Sir Epicure Mammon, a greedy, voluptuous knight; Tribulation Wholesome and Ananias, puritans; Dapper and Druggier, a clerk and a tobacco-conist; and Kastril, the quarrelsome lad who wants a good match for his sister Dame Pliant. Surly, the gamester, who sees through the fraud, attempts to expose it by presenting himself disguised as a Spaniard; and the unexpected return of Love-wit puts Subtle and Dol to sudden flight. Face makes peace with his master by resourcefully marrying him to Dame Pliant.

"Bartholomew Fayre", a farcical comedy, produced in 1614. The play, the plot of which is very slight, presents, with much humour and drollery, if somewhat coarsely, the scenes of a London holiday fair with its ballad-singers, stall-keepers, bullies, bawds and cut-purses. Bartholomew Cokes, the perfect simpleton, visits the fair and is successively robbed of his purses, his cloak and sword, and finally of his future wife, whom he is to marry against her

will; while his servant, the self-confident and arrogant Waspe, is robbed of the licence which is to marry them, and is put in the stocks for brawling. The puritan Zeal-of-the-land Busy, is ridiculed for his hypocrisy, and is also put in the stocks. Overdo, the Justice of the Peace, who attends the fair in disguise to discover its "enormities", is taken for a pickpocket and receives the same punishment.

Thomas Heywood (1574?-1641), dramatist, studied at Cambridge, was a member of the Lord Admiral's company in 1598, and later one of the Queen's players, and a retainer of the Earl of Southampton and the Earl of Worcester. He wrote a large number of plays, many of which are lost. His chief strength lay in the domestic drama. His best plays are "A Woman Kilde with Kindnesse" (acted 1603, printed 1607), "The Fair Maid of the West" (printed 1631) and "The English Traveller" (printed 1633).

"A Woman Kilde with Kindnesse". Frankford, a country gentleman, is the husband of Anne, a "perfect" wife. But his happiness is ruined by the treachery of Wendoll, a guest to whom Frankford has shown every kindness and hospitality. Frankford discovers Anne in the arms of Wendoll. But instead of taking immediate vengeance on her, he determines to "kill her even with kindness". He sends her to live in comfort in a lonely manor-house, only prohibiting her from seeing him or her children again. She dies from remorse, after sending for Frankford to ask forgiveness on her death bed, and receiving it. This play, in which pathos and manliness are blended, is considered Heywood's masterpiece. It opens with a pleasant hawking scene.

"The Fair Maid of the West, or A Girl worth Gold". The play opens with a vivid scene at Plymouth, where Essex's expedition is on the point of sailing for the Azores (1597), and gallant Master Spencer has the misfortune to kill a man



while protecting Besse Bridges, "the flower of Plymouth", from insult. He has to fly the country, but first makes provision for Besse by handing over to her the Windmill Tavern at Fowey, which she conducts with spirit and decorum. Meanwhile Spencer, who has sailed to the Azores, is wounded to the point of death in trying to stop a quarrel. He sends a message to Besse, bidding her adieu and devising all his property to her. Besse employs part of this to fit out a privateer, in which she sets sail to bring home his body. Instead she rescues Spencer himself, who has recovered and been captured by Spaniards. After many adventures Besse is finally united to her lover. The first part, at least, makes a breezy and entertaining melodrama.

John Marston (1575?-1634) was born probably at Coventry, where he was educated, subsequently going to Brasenose College, Oxford. His mother was Italian. He renounced the drama in 1607 and took orders; he was incumbent of Christchurch, Hampshire, from 1616 to 1631. He quarrelled with Ben Jonson, who attacked him in "Every Man out of his Humour", "Cynthia's Revels" and "The Poetaster", where he is presented as Crispinus. But the pair made friends again. Marston published a collection of satires under the title "The Scourge of Villanie" in 1598. Some of these were studies in social vices, others were directed against literary rivals. His chief dramatic works include the tragedies. "The History of Antonio and Mellida" 1602, ("Antonio's Revenge" is the second part of this play), "The Dutch Courtesan" 1605, "Sophonisba" 1606, and "The Insatiate Countess" 1613 (sometimes attributed to William Barksstead); and the comedies "The Malcontent" 1604 (with additions by Webster) "Eastward Ho!" 1605 (in collaboration with Jonson and Chapman), "The Parasitaster" 1606, and "What You Will" 1607.

Cyril Tournour (Turnour, or Turner) (1575?-1626). Practically nothing is known of his life. Of his two plays

(assuming that they are both his, which is contested), the "Revenger's Tragedy" was published in 1607. It deals with the revenge of Vendice (Vindice) for the murder of his sweetheart by the licentious duke, and for the attempt of the duke's son Lussorioso to seduce Vendice's sister, the chaste Castiza. It is a gloomy work, relieved by the poetic beauty of several passages and the tragic intensity of the plot.

"The Atheist's Tragedy" appeared in 1611. (The dates and order of the two plays, however, are disputed.) "The Transformed Metamorphosis", published in 1600, is a lament, in allegorical form, on the political conditions of the day, the corruption of the Roman church, and the dangerous state of Ireland.

D'Amville, the "atheist", wishing to increase the wealth of his family, determines to marry his son to Castabella. But she is betrothed to Charlemont, his brother's son. He therefore sends Charlemont abroad on military service. During his absence, D'Amville and Belforest, Castabella's father, achieve their purpose, and Castabella is married to the sickly Rousard. Charlemont, falsely reported dead, now returns. D'Amville endeavours to secure his murder, but vengeance comes upon him in the death of his two sons. Finally, when he himself is about to carry out the execution of Charlemont, he dashes out his own brains by accident, and Charlemont is united to Castabella.

John Webster (1580?-1625), the son of a London tailor and himself a freeman of the Merchant Taylors' Company, collaborated with Dekker and other dramatists in a number of comedies including "Christmas comes but once a year" (1602), "Westward Ho" and "Northward Ho" (1603-1604, printed in 1607); and with Rowley in "A Cure for a Cuckold" (printed 1661). He completed for the stage Marston's "Malcontent" (1604). His tragedies, founded on Italian novelle, show that he approached in tragic power nearest of his contempo-

raries to Shakespeare; they are "The White Devil" (produced c. 1608), "Appius and Virginia" (perhaps partly by Heywood, c. 1609), and "The Duchess of Malfi" (c. 1614). The tragedies on contemporary French history are lost. Webster's tragi-comedy "The Devil's Law Case", was published in 1623.

"The Duchess of Malfi" was published in 1623, but played before 1614. The story is taken from Bandello and also shows the influence of Sidney's "Arcadia". In a charming scene the young duchess, recently widowed, reveals her love for Antonio, the steward of her court. They are secretly married, in spite of the warning of her brothers, the Cardinal and Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, that she must not remarry; a warning induced by consideration for their "royal blood of Aragon and Castile", and as Ferdinand afterwards confesses, by their desire to inherit her property. They place in her employment, to spy on her, an ex-convict Bosola, who betrays her to them. The duchess and Antonio fly and separate. The duchess is captured, subjected by Ferdinand and Bosola to fearful mental tortures and finally strangled with two of her children. Ferdinand goes mad, the Cardinal is killed by the remorseful Bosola, and Bosola by the lunatic Ferdinand. Bosola has already killed Antonio, mistaking him for the Cardinal. The often-quoted line "Cover her face. Mine eyes dazzle. She died young"; occurs in Act IV, scene 2.

"The Honest Whore" (by Dekker). Count Hippolito, making the acquaintance of Bellafront and discovering that she is a harlot, upbraids her bitterly for her mode of life and converts her to honesty. She falls in love with him, but he repels her and marries Infelice, daughter of the Duke of Milan. Bellafront is married to Matheo, who had caused her downfall.

In Part II we find the converted Bellafront as the de-

voted wife of the worthless Matheo, who, to get money for his vices, tries to force her to return to her old way of life. Hippolito, now falling in love with her, tries to seduce her. She stoutly resists temptation, and is finally rescued from misery by her father, Orlando Friscobaldo. The painful character of the play, one of the great dramas of the age, heightened by Dekker's powerful treatment and by scenes in Bedlam and Bridewell, is somewhat alleviated by the admirable character of Orlando Friscobaldo, and by the comic underplot, dealing with the eccentricities of the patient husband, Candido the linen-draper.

Francis Beaumont (1584-1616), was born in Leicestershire of an ancient family. He was educated at Broadgates Hall, Oxford, and was entered at the Middle Temple in 1600. He made the acquaintance of Jonson, for several of whose plays he wrote commendatory verses, and of Drayton. He collaborated with John Fletcher in dramatic works from about 1606 to 1616. "The Woman-Hater" (1607), a comedy showing the influence of Jonson and based on the "humour" of the principal character, was probably written by him alone. Dryden states that Beaumont was "so accurate a judge of plays that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and 'tis thought used his judgement in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots". This superior faculty for the construction of plots is discernible in some of the plays that he wrote in collaboration with Fletcher. Beaumont was buried in Westminster Abbey, near Chaucer and Spenser.

John Fletcher (1579-1625), was born at Rye in Sussex, of which place his father was then minister. He was educated at Benet College, Cambridge. He died of the plague and was buried at St. Saviour's, Southwark. He collaborated with Francis Beaumont in the production of plays, the exact number of which is not known but probably does not

exceed fifteen. He was sole author of not less than sixteen plays, and collaborated with Massinger, Rowley, and others in many more.

Probably by Fletcher alone: "The Faithful Shepherdess", printed by 1610; "The Loyal Subject", acted in 1618, etc.

Certainly or probably by Beaumont and Fletcher: "The Knight of the Burning Pestle" 1609, printed in 1623; "Philaster" 1614, printed 1620; "The Maid's Tragedy", and "A King and no King" 1611, printed 1619 etc.

"The Faithful Shepherdess", a pastoral play, which deals with the love-affairs of various shepherds and shepherdesses. Glorin, the Faithful Shepherdess, has vowed fidelity to her dead lover and lives by his grave. Thenot is in love with her, but only so long as she remains faithful to her dead lover. Perigot is in love with Amoret, and Amarillis with Perigot. All are now entangled. Amarillis, being repulsed, enlists the services of the Sullen Shepherd to cross Perigot's love for Amoret. Complications follow, and are finally resolved. Though without much dramatic interest, the play is full of passages of poetic beauty, and ranks, as a pastoral, with Ben Jonson's "Sad Shepherd" and Milton's "Comus".

"The Knight of the Burning Pestle" is probably in the main the work of Beaumont.

The play is at once a burlesque of knight-errantry and of T. Heywood's "The Four Prentices of London". It is both the first English parody play and a sparkling comedy of manners. The plot is very slight. A grocer and his wife in the audience insist that their apprentice, Ralph, shall have a part in the play. He therefore becomes a Grocer-Errant, with a Burning Pestle portrayed on his shield, and undertakes various absurd adventures, including the release of the patients held "captive" by a barber (Barbaroso). These

incidents are interspersed in the real plot, in which Jasper, a merchant's apprentice, is in love with his master's daughter Luce. He carries her off when she is about to be married to his rival, Humphrey, who is favoured by her father. The father and Humphrey recover her, and she is locked up. Jasper, feigning death, has himself conveyed to her in a coffin, frightens her father by assuming the character of his own ghost, and finally obtains his consent to the match.

"Philaster, or Love lies a-bleeding", a romantic drama. The King of Calabria has usurped the crown of Sicily. The rightful heir, Philaster, loves, and is loved by, Arethusa, daughter of the usurper, but the latter intends to marry her to Pharamond, prince of Spain. To secure communication with her, Philaster places his page Bellario, in her service. Arethusa reveals to the king an amour between Pharamond and Megra, a lady of the court, who in revenge accuses Arethusa of misconduct with Bellario. Philaster bids farewell to the princess, being assured that the accusation is true, and dismisses Bellario. The events that follow lead to the discovery that Bellario is the daughter of a Sicilian lord, who, having fallen in love with Philaster, has assumed the disguise of a page in order to serve him.

"The Maid's Tragedy" is often regarded as the best of Beaumont and Fletcher's dramas.

Amintor, a gentleman of Rhodes, engaged to marry Aspatia, daughter of Callanax, the Lord Chamberlain, at the order of the king, breaks off the match and marries Evadne, the sister of his friend Melantius. On the wedding night Evadne declares herself the king's mistress and denies Amintor her bed. Amintor's loyalty makes him conceal the position, but Melantius learns the cause of his melancholy, terrifies Evadne into murdering the king, and obtains from Callanax possession of the citadel. Meanwhile Aspatia, broken-hearted, disguises herself as her own brother and

forces Amintor to fight a duel with her, in the course of which he kills her. Evadne comes to Amintor after the murder of the king, expecting to be pardoned by him, and being rejected commits suicide. Melantius, holding the citadel, secures pardon for himself and his associates.

"A King and no King", a romantic drama. Arbaces, King of Iberia, defeats Tigranes, King of Armenia, in single combat, thus bringing to an end a long war. Arbaces offers his prisoner freedom if he will marry his sister Panthea, who has grown up to womanhood during his long absence. Tigranes loves Spaconia, an Armenian lady, declines the offer, and sends Spaconia to persuade Panthea to oppose the match. But when Tigranes, Arbaces and Panthea meet, not only is Tigranes shaken in his fidelity by the sight of Panthea's beauty, but Arbaces is smitten with a guilty passion for her, which he in vain endeavours to check. An interview with Panthea reveals that she shares his love. Gobrias, who has been Lord Protector of the kingdom since the late king's death, now confesses that Arbaces is his son, adopted secretly by the queen-mother and passed off as her own son when she despaired of issue, Panthea being born six years later. Panthea is thus Queen of Iberia, Arbaces is unrelated to her, and the lovers can be united. Tigranes, repenting his infidelity, takes Spaconia as his queen, and is released from captivity. Bessus, a cowardly braggart captain in Arbaces' army, provides comic relief.

#### End of the Renaissance drama

Philip Massinger (1583-1640), was born at Salisbury and educated at St. Alban Hall, Oxford. His father had been in the service of the Herbert family, to members of which

the poet addressed various dedications and other pieces. He soon became a famous playwright, collaborating frequently with Fletcher, and also with Nathaniel Field and Dekker. He was buried at St. Saviour's, Southwark.

The plays written entirely by him include "The Duke of Milan" (1623), "The Bondman" (1624), "The Renegado" (1630), "The Unnatural Combat" (1639), "The Parliament of Love" (licensed 1624), "The Emperor of the East" (1632), "The Great Duke of Florence" (1636) and many others. In collaboration with Fletcher he wrote "The False One", "The Elder Brother", and "The Custom of the Country". Some see his hand also in portions of "Henry VIII" and of "Two Noble Kinsmen" (1634), in both of which a share is attributed to Shakespeare. In collaboration with Dekker he wrote "The Virgin Martyr" (1622), and with Field "The Fatal Dowry" (1632). His principal field was romantic drama, of which his best examples are perhaps "The Duke of Milan", "The Great Duke of Florence", and "The Fatal Dowry" (1632). His best known work is the fine comedy "A New Way to pay Old Debts" (1633). His democratic political views, and his sympathy with the Church of Rome are freely expressed in his plays; in "The Bondman" he denounced Buckingham under the guise of Gisco.

James Shirley (1596-1666), was born in London and educated at Merchant Taylors' School, St. John's College, Oxford, and Catherine Hall, Cambridge. He took orders, but was presently converted to the Church of Rome and became a schoolmaster. He was in Dublin from 1636 to 1640. He died as a result of terror and exposure on the occasion of the Great Fire of London.

Shirley wrote some forty dramas, of which the greater number are extant. The tragedies include: "The Maid's Revenge" (1626, printed 1639), "The Traitor" (1631, printed 1635), "Love's Cruelty" (1631, printed 1640) and "The Cardinall" (1641, printed 1653). He also wrote comedies



of manners and romantic comedies, including "Changes or Love in a Maze" (1632), describing the interchanges of affection between three pairs of lovers, and "The Lady of Pleasure" (1635), showing how a wife's desire for a life of fashionable folly is cured by her husband's feigning to engage in gambling and intrigue. Shirley also wrote "The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses" (1659) for the armour of the dead Achilles, a dramatic entertainment ending with the famous dirge: "The glories of our blood and state

Are shadows, not substantial things",

"the fine song which old Bowman used to sing to King Charles" and which is said to have terrified Oliver Cromwell.

John Ford (fl. 1639), was born in Devonshire and was admitted at the Middle Temple in 1602. He probably spent his last years in Devonshire. Some of his plays have perished. Of those which have survived the chief are the "Lover's Melancholy" (1629), "Love's Sacrifice" (1633), "'Tis Pity she's a Whore" (1633) and "The Broken Heart" (1633). He collaborated with Dekker and Rowley in "The Witch of Edmonton". The principal characteristic of his work is the powerful depiction of melancholy, sorrow and despair. A vivid little portrait of him has been preserved in the couplet, from the "Time-Poets" ("Choice Drollery", 1656):

Deep in a dump John Ford was alone got,  
With folded arms and melancholy hat.

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ДЛЯ СТУДЕНТОВ ФИЛОЛОГОВ

I

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