writes, and who desires to give to others the same fine pleasure by his poems which he had in writing them. The thing he most cares about is that the form in which he puts his thoughts or feelings may be perfectly fitting to the subject, and as beautiful as possible—but for this he cares very greatly; and in this Chaucer stands apart from the other poets of his time. Gower wrote with a moral object, and nothing can be worse than the form in which he puts his tales. The author of *Piers the Plowman* wrote with the object of reform in social and ecclesiastical affairs, and his form is uncouth and harsh. Chaucer wrote because he was full of emotion and joy in his own thoughts, and thought that others would weep and be glad with him, and the only time he ever moralizes is in the tales of the Yeoman and the Manciple, written in his decay. He has, then, the best right to the poet's name. He is our first English artist.

40. **Mandeville.**—I have already noticed the prose of Wyclif under the religious class of English work. I have kept Sir John Mandeville for this place, because he belongs to light literature. He is called our "first writer in formed English." Chaucer himself however wrote some things, and especially one of his Tales, in rhythmical prose, and John of Trevisa translated into English prose, 1387, Higden's *Polychronicon*. Mandeville wrote his *Travels* first in Latin, then in French, and finally put them into our tongue about 1356, "that every man of the nation might understand them." His quaint delight in telling his "traveller's tales," and sometimes the grace with which he tells them, rank him among the story-tellers of England.

CHAPTER III.

FROM CHAUCER, 1400, TO ELIZABETH, 1559.

Thomas Occleve (Henry V.'s reign); J. Lydgate, *Falls of Princes* (in Henry VI.).—Sir John Fortescue's prose work, and Sir T. Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (Edward IV.).—Caxton's prints at Westminster, 1477.—Paston Letters, 1422—1505.—Hawes' *Pastime of Pleasure*, 1506.—John Skelton's poems, 1508—1529.—Sir T. More's *History of Richard III.*, 1513.—Tyndale's *Translation of the Bible*, 1525.—*English Prayer Book*, 1549.—Ascham's *Toxophilus*, 1545.—Poems of Wyatt and Surrey, in *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557.

SCOTTISH POETRY, begins with Barbour's *Bruce*, 1375-7; James I.'s *King's Quhair*, 1424.—T. Henryson dies, 1508.—Dunbar's *Thistle and Rose*, 1503.—Gawin Douglas dies, 1522.—Sir D. Lyndsay born, 1490; *Satire of Three Estates*, 1536; dies 1555.

41. **The Fifteenth Century Prose.**—The last poems of Chaucer and Langland bring our story up to the year 1400. The century that followed is the most barren in our literature. History sank down into a few Latin chroniclers, of whom *Thomas of Walsingham* is best known. Two *Riming Chronicles* were written in Henry V.'s time by Andrew of Wyntoun, a Scotchman, and John Harding, an Englishman. John Capgrave wrote in English, in Edward IV.'s reign, a *Chronicle of England* which began with the Creation. Political prose is then represented by SIR JOHN FORTESCUE'S book on the *Difference between Absolute and Limited Monarchy*. It is our second important book in the history of English prose. The religious war between the Lollards and the Church went on during the reign of Henry V. and VI., and in the reign of the latter, REGINALD PECOCK took it out of Latin into homely English. He fought the Lollards with their own

weapons, with public sermons in English, and with tracts in English; and after 1449, when Bishop of Chichester, published his work, *The Repressor of overmuch Blaming of the Clergy*. It pleased neither party. The Lollards disliked it because it defended the customs and doctrines of the Church. Churchmen burnt it because it agreed with the "Bible-men," that the Bible was the only rule of faith. Both abjured it because it said that doctrines were to be proved from the Bible by reason. Pecock is the first of all the Church theologians who wrote in English, and the book is a fine example of our early prose.

42. **Poetical Literature.**—The only literature which reached any strength was poetical, but even that is almost wholly confined to the reign of Henry VI. The new day of poetry still went on, but its noon in Chaucer was now succeeded by the grey afternoon of Lydgate, and the dull twilight of Occleve. JOHN LYDGATE, a monk of Bury, who was thirty years of age when Chaucer died, wrote nothing of importance till Henry VI.'s reign. Though a long-winded and third-rate poet, he was a delightful man; fresh, natural, and happy even to his old age when he recalls himself as a boy, "weeping for nought, and anon after glad." There was scarcely any literary work he could not do. He rimed history, ballads, and legends, till the monastery was delighted. He made pageants for Henry VI., masks and May-games for aldermen, mummeries for the Lord Mayor, and satirical ballads on the follies of the day. Educated at Oxford, a traveller in France and Italy, he knew all the literature of his time, and he even dabbled in the sciences. He enjoyed everything, and if the *Flower and the Leaf*, usually attributed to Chaucer, be by him, it proves that which his other poems confirm, that he was as much a lover of nature as Chaucer. It is his story-telling which brings him closest to Chaucer. His three chief poems

were the *Falls of Princes*, *The Storie of Thebes*, and the *Troye Book*. The first is a translation of a book of Boccaccio's. It tells the tragic fates of great men from the time of Adam to the capture of King John of France, at Poitiers. There is a touch of the drama in the plan, which was suggested by the pageants of the time. The dead princes appear before Boccaccio, pensive in his library, and each relates his downfall. The *Storie of Thebes* is an additional Canterbury Tale, and the *Troye Book* is a version from the French of the prose romance of Guido della Colonna, a Sicilian poet, if the book be not in truth originally French. The *Complaint of the Black Knight*, usually given to Chaucer, is stated to be Lydgate's by Shirley, the contemporary of him and Chaucer. I should like to be able to call him the author of the pretty little poem called the *Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, included in Chaucer's works. But its authorship is unknown.

THOMAS OCCLEVE, who wrote chiefly in Henry V.'s reign, about 1420, was nothing but a bad versifier. His one merit is that he loved Chaucer. With his loss "the whole land smartith," he says, and he breaks out into a kind of rapture once :—

> "Thou wert acquainted with Chaucer! Pardie,
> God save his soul,
> The first finder of our faire langage."

And it is in the MS. of his longest poem, *The Governail of Princes* that he caused to be drawn, with "fond idolatry," the portrait of his master. With this long piece of verse we mark the decay of the poetry of England. Romances and lays were still translated; there were verses written on such subjects as hunting and alchemy. Caxton himself produced a poem; but the only thing here worth noticing is that at the end of the century some of our ballads were printed.

43. **Ballads**, lays, fragments of romances, had been sung in England from the earliest times, and popular

tales and jokes took form in short lyric pieces to be accompanied by music and dancing. We have seen war celebrated in Minot's songs, and the political ballad is represented by the lampoon made by some follower of Simon de Montfort, on the day of the battle of Lewes, and by the *Elegy on Edward I.'s Death*. But the ballad went over the whole land among the people. The trader, the apprentices, and poor of the cities, the peasantry, had their own songs. They tended to collect themselves round some legendary name like Robin Hood, or some historical character made legendary, like Randolf, Earl of Chester. Sloth, in *Piers Plowman's Vision*, does not know his paternoster, but he does know the rimes of these heroes. A crowd of minstrels sang them through city and village. The very friar sang them "and made his Englissch swete upon his tunge." A collection of Robin Hood ballads was soon printed under the title of *A Lytel Geste of Robin Hood*, by Wynken de Worde. *The Nut Brown Maid*, *The Battle of Otterburn*, and *Chevy Chase*, may belong to the end of the century, though probably not in the form we possess them. It was not however till much later that any collection of ballads was made; and few, as we possess them, can be dated farther back than the reign of Elizabeth.

44. **Growth of interest in Literature.**—This was then the literature of this century. Little creative work was done, and that little was poor. There was small learning in the monasteries, and few books were written. But a good deal of interest in literature was scattered about the country, and it increased as the century went on. The Wars of the Roses stopped the writing, but not the reading, of books. We have in the *Paston Letters*, 1422-1505—the correspondence of a country family from Henry VI. to Henry VII., pleasantly, even correctly written—passages which refer to translations of the classics, and to manuscripts being sent to and fro for reading. Henry VI.,

Edward IV., and some of the great nobles were lovers of books. Men like Duke Humphrey of Gloucester made libraries and brought over Italian scholars to England to translate Greek works. There were fine scholars in England, like John Lord Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, who had won fame in the schools of Italy. Before 1474, when Caxton finished the first book said to have been printed in this country, *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, a number of French translations of the Latin authors were widely read. There was, therefore, in England, a general, though an uninformed interest in the ancient writers.

45. **First Influence of the Italian Revival.**—Such an interest was added to by the revival of letters which arose at this time in Italy, and the sixteenth century had not long begun before many Englishmen went to Italy to read and study the old Greek authors on whom the scholars driven from Constantinople by the Turks were lecturing in the schools of Florence. Printing enabled these men on their return to turn the classic books they loved into English for the English people. We began to do our own work as translators; and from the time of Henry VIII. onwards, there is scarcely any literary fury equal to that with which the young English scholars fell upon the ancient authors and filled the land with English versions of them. It is, then, in the slow upgrowth during this century of interest in and study of the ancients that we are to see the gathering together at its source of one of the streams which fed that great river of Elizabethan literature which it is so great a mistake to think burst suddenly up through the earth.

46. **Influence of Caxton's Work.**—We find another of these sources in the work of our first printer, William Caxton. The first book that bears the inscription: "Imprynted by me, William Caxton, at Westmynstre" is *The Dictes and Sayings of*

Philosophers. Caxton did little or nothing for classical learning. His translation of the *Æneid* of Vergil is from a contemptible French romance. But he preserved for us Chaucer, and Lydgate, and Gower, with zealous care. He printed the Chronicles of Brut and Higden; he translated the *Golden Legend*: and the *Morte d'Arthur*, written by Sir Thomas Malory in the reign of Edward IV., and one of our finest and simplest examples of early prose, was printed by him with all the care of one who loved "the noble acts of chivalry." He had a tradesman's interest in publishing the romances, for they were the reading of the day, but he could scarcely have done better for the interests of the coming literature. These books nourished the imagination of England, and supplied poet after poet with fine subjects for work, or fine frames for their subjects. He had not a tradesman's, but a loving literary interest in printing the old English poets; and in sending them out from his press Caxton kept up the continuity of English poetry. The poets after him at once began on the models of Chaucer and Gower and Lydgate; and the books themselves, being more widely read, not only made poets but a public that loved poetry. If classic literature then was one of the sources in this century of the Elizabethan literature, the recovery of old English poetry was another.

47. **Prose Literature.**—With the exception of Caxton's work all the good prose of the fifteenth century was written before the death of Edward IV. The reigns of Richard III. and of Henry VII. produced no prose of any value, but the country awakened from its dulness with the accession of Henry VIII., 1509. A band of new scholars who had studied in Italy taught Greek in Oxford, Cambridge and London. John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, with John Lilly, the grammarian, set on foot a school where the classics were taught in a new and practical

way. Erasmus, who had all the enthusiasm which sets others on fire, came to England, and with Grocyn, Linacre, Sir Thomas More, and Archbishop Warham formed a centre from which a liberal and wise theology was spread. The new learning which had been born in Italy came to England. It stirred and gave life to everything, and it woke up English Prose from its sleep. Much of the new life of English Literature was due to the patronage of the young king. It was Henry VIII. who supported Sir Thomas Elyot, and encouraged him to write books in the vulgar tongue that he might delight his countrymen. It was the king who asked Lord Berners to translate Froissart, a book which "made a landmark in our tongue," and who made Leland, our first English writer on antiquarian subjects, the "King's Antiquary." It was the king to whom ROGER ASCHAM dedicated his first work, 1545, and the king sent him abroad to pursue his studies. This book, the *Toxophilus*, or the *School of Shooting*, 1545, was written for the pleasure of the yeomen and gentlemen of England in their own tongue. Ascham apologizes for this, and the apology marks the state of English prose. "Everything has been done excellently in Greek and Latin, but in the English tongue so meanly that no man can do worse." He has done his work well, and in quaint but charming English.

48. **Prose and the Reformation.**—But the man who did best in English prose was SIR THOMAS MORE in our earliest English history, the *History of Edward V. and Richard III.* The simplicity of his genius showed itself in the style, and his wit in the picturesque method and the dramatic dialogue that graced the book. English prose grew larger and richer under his pen, and began that stately step which future historians followed. The work is said to have been written in 1513 but it was not printed till 1557. The most famous book More wrote, *The Utopia*, was not

written in English. The most famous controversy he had was with JOHN TYNDALE, a man who in his *translation of the New Testament*, 1525, "fixed our tongue once for all." His style was as purely English as More's, and of what kind it was may be read in our Bibles, for our authorized version is still in great part his translation. In this work Tyndale was assisted by William Roy, a runaway friar, and his friend Rogers, the first martyr in Queen Mary's reign, added to it a translation of the *Apocrypha*, and made up what was wanting in Tyndale's translation from Chronicles to Malachi out of Coverdale's translation. It was this Bible which, revised by Coverdale and edited and re-edited as *Cromwell's Bible*, 1539, and again as *Cranmer's Bible*, 1540, was set up in every parish church in England. It got north into Scotland and made the Lowland English more like the London English, and after its revisal in 1611 went with the Puritan fathers to New England and fixed the standard of English in America. There is no book which has had so great an influence on the style of English literature. In Edward VI.'s reign also Cranmer edited the *English Prayer Book*, 1549-52. Its English is a good deal mixed with Latin words, and its style is some times weak and heavy, but on the whole it is a fine example of stately prose. LATIMER, on the contrary, whose *Sermon on the Ploughers* and others were delivered in 1549 and in 1552, wrote in a plain, shrewd style, which by its humour and rude directness made him the first preacher of his day.

49. **Poetry in the Sixteenth Century under the Influence of Chaucer.**—We shall speak in this section only of the poets in England whose work was due to the publication of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate by Caxton, and go back also to the Scotch poetry which owed itself to the impulse of Chaucer. After a short revival that influence died, and a new one entered from Italy into English verse in the poems of Surrey

and Wyatt. The transition period between the one influence and the other is of great interest. We see how the old poets had been neglected by the way in which the new poets speak of them, as of something wonderful, and by the indignant reproach a man like Hawes makes when he says that people care for nothing but ballads, and will not read these old books. But the reproach was unwise. It is better to make a new ballad than to read an old poem, and the ballads of England kept up the original vein of poetry of the land. It is one of the signs of a new poetic life in a nation when it is fond of poetry which, like the ballad, has to do with the human interests of the present: and when that kind of human poetry pleases the upper classes as well as the lower a resurrection of poetry is at hand.

50. **Hawes and Skelton.**—At such a time we are likely to find imitators of the old work, and in the reign of Henry VII. STEPHEN HAWES recast a poem of Lydgate's (?) *The Temple of Glass*, and imitated Chaucer's work and the old allegory in his *Pastime of Pleasure*, 1506. We shall also find men who, while they still follow the old, leave it for an original line, because they are more moved by human life in the present than in the past. Their work will be popular, it may even resemble the form of the ballad. Such a man was JOHN SKELTON, who wrote in Henry VII. and Henry VIII.'s reign, and died 1529. His earliest poems were after the manner of Chaucer, but he soon took a manner of his own, and being greatly excited by the cry of the people for Church reformation, wrote a bitter satire on Wolsey for his pride, and on the clergy for their luxury. His poem *Why come ye not to Court?* was a fierce satire on the great Cardinal. That of *Colin Clout* was also the cry of the country Colin, and of the Clout or mechanic of the town against the corruption of the Church. Both are written in short "rude rayling

rimes, pleasing only the popular ear," and Skelton chose them for that purpose. Both have a rough, impetuous power; their language is coarse, full even of slang, but Skelton could use any language he pleased. He was an admirable scholar. Erasmus calls him the "glory and light of English letters," and Caxton says that he improved our language. *Colin Clout* represents the whole popular feeling of the time just before the movement of the Reformation took a new turn by the opposition of the Pope to Henry's divorce. It was not only in this satirical vein that Skelton wrote. We owe to him some pretty and new love lyrics; and the *Boke of Phyllyp Sparowe*, which tells the grief of a nun called Jane Scrope for the death of her sparrow, is one of the gayest and most inventive poems in the language. Skelton stands quite alone between the last flicker of the influence of Chaucer, whose last true imitator he was, and the rise of a new Italian influence in England in the poems of Surrey and Wyatt. In his own special work he was entirely original, and standing thus between two periods of poetry, he is a kind of landmark in English literature. The *Ship of Fooles*, 1508, by Barclay is of this time, but it has no value. It is a recast of a work published at Basel, and was popular because it attacked the follies and questions of the time. It was written in Chaucer's stanza. But far better work in poetry was being done at this time in Scotland than in England.

SCOTTISH POETRY.

51. **Scottish Poetry** is poetry written in the English tongue by men living in Scotland. These men though calling themselves Scotchmen are of good English blood. But the blood, as I think, was mixed with an infusion of Celtic blood.

Old Northumbria extended from the Humber to the Firth of Forth, leaving however on its western border a line of unconquered land, which took in Lancashire, Cumberland, and Westmoreland in our England, and over the border most of the western country between the Clyde and Solway Firth. This unconquered country was the Welsh kingdom of Strathclyde, and it was dwelt in by the Celtic race. The present English part of it was soon conquered and the Celts driven out. But in the part to the north of the Solway Firth the Celts were not driven out. They remained, lived with the Englishmen who were settled over the old Northumbria, inter-married with them and became under Scot kings one mixed people. Literature in the Lowlands then would have Celtic elements in it; literature in England was purely Teutonic. The one sprang from a mixed, the other from an unmixed race. I draw attention to this, because it seems to me to account for certain peculiarities in Scottish poetry which colour the whole of it, which rule over it, and are specially Celtic.

52. **Celtic Elements of Scottish Poetry.**—The first of these is *the love of wild nature for its own sake.* There is a passionate, close, and poetical observation and description of natural scenery in Scotland from the earliest times of its poetry, such as we do not possess in English poetry till the time of Wordsworth. The second is *the love of colour.* All early Scottish poetry differs from English in the extraordinary way in which colour is insisted on, and at times in the lavish exaggeration of it. The third is *the wittier, more rollicking humour* in the Scottish poetry, which is distinctly Celtic in contrast with that humour which has its root in sadness and which belongs to the Teutonic races. Few things are really more different than the humour of Chaucer and the humour of Dunbar, than the humour of Cowper and the humour of Burns. These are the special Celtic elements in the Lowland poetry.

53. **Its National Elements** came into it from the circumstances under which Scotland rose into a separate kingdom. The first of these is the strong, almost fierce assertion of national life. The English were as national as the Scots, and felt the emotion of patriotism as strongly. But they had no need to assert it; they were not oppressed. But for nearly forty years the Scotch resisted for their very life the efforts of England to conquer them. And the war of freedom left its traces on their poetry from Barbour to Burns and Walter Scott in the almost obtrusive way in which Scotland, and Scottish liberty, and Scottish heroes are thrust forward in their verse. Their passionate nationality appears in another form in their descriptive poetry. The natural description of Chaucer, Shakespeare, or even Milton, is not distinctively English. But in Scotland it is always the scenery of their own land that the poets describe. Even when they are imitating Chaucer, they do not imitate his conventional landscape. They put in a Scotch landscape, and in the work of such men as Gawin Douglas the love of Scotland and the love of nature mingle their influences together to make him sit down, as it were, to paint, with his eye on everything he paints, a series of Scotch landscapes. It is done without any artistic composition; it reads like a catalogue, but it is work which stands quite alone at the time he wrote. There is nothing even resembling it in England for centuries after.

54. **Its Individual Element.**—There is one more special element in early Scottish poetry which arose, I think, out of its political circumstances. All through the struggle for freedom, carried on as it was at first by small bands under separate leaders till they all came together under a leader like Bruce, a much greater amount of individuality, and a greater habit of it, was created among the Scotch than among the English. Men fought for

their own land and lived in their own way. Every little border chieftain, almost every border farmer was or felt himself to be his own master. The poets would be likely to share in this individual quality, and in spite of the overpowering influence of Chaucer, to strike out new veins of poetic thought and new methods of poetic expression. And this is what happened. Long before forms of poetry like the short pastoral or the fable had appeared in England, the Scottish poets had started them. They were less docile imitators than the English, but their work in the new forms they started was not so good as the after English work in the same forms.

55. The first of the Scottish poets, omitting Thomas of Erceldoune, is JOHN BARBOUR, Archdeacon of Aberdeen. His long poem of *The Bruce* represents the whole of the eager struggle for Scottish freedom against the English which closed at Bannockburn; and the national spirit, which I have mentioned, springs in it, full grown, into life. But it is temperate, it does not pass into the fury against England which is so plain in writers like Blind Harry, who, about 1461, composed a long poem in the heroic couplet of Chaucer on the deeds of *William Wallace*. Barbour was often in England for the sake of study, and his patriotism though strong is tolerant of England. The date of his poem is 1375, 7; it never mentions Chaucer, and Barbour is the only early Scottish poet on whom Chaucer had no influence. In the next poet we find the influence of Chaucer, and it is hereafter continuous till the Elizabethan time. JAMES THE FIRST of Scotland was prisoner in England for nineteen years, till 1422. There he read Chaucer, and fell in love with Lady Jane Beaufort, niece of Henry the Fourth. The poem which he wrote—*The King's Quhair* (the quire or book)—is done in imitation of Chaucer, and in Chaucer's seven-lined stanza, which from James's use of it is called Rime

Royal. In six cantos, sweeter, tenderer and purer than any verse till we come to Spenser, he describes the beginning of his love and its happy end. "I must write, he says, "so much because I have come so from Hell to Heaven." Nor did the flower of his love and hers ever fade. She defended him in the last ghastly scene of murder when his kingly life ended. There is something especially pathetic in the lover of Chaucer, in the first poet of sentiment in Scotland being slain so cruelly. He was no blind imitator of Chaucer. We are conscious at once of an original element in his work. The natural description is more varied, the colour is more vivid, and there is a modern self-reflective quality, a touch of spiritual feeling which does not belong to Chaucer at all. The poems of *The Kirk on the Green* and *Peebles to the Play* have been attributed to him. If they be his, he originated a new vein of poetry, which Burns afterwards carried out—the comic and satirical ballad poem. But they are more likely to be by James V.

ROBERT HENRYSON, who died before 1508, a schoolmaster in Dunfermline, was also an imitator of Chaucer, and his *Testament of Cresseid* continues Chaucer's *Troilus*. But he set on foot two new forms of poetry. He made poems out of the *fables*. They differ entirely from the short, neat form in which Gay and La Fontaine treated the fable. They are long stories, full of pleasant dialogue, political allusions, and with elaborate morals attached to them. They have a peculiar Scottish tang, and are full of descriptions of Scotch scenery. He also began the short pastoral in his *Robin and Makyne*. It is a natural, prettily turned dialogue; and a subtle Celtic wit, such as charms us in *Duncan Grey*, runs through it. The individuality which struck out two original lines of poetic work in these poems appears again in his sketch of the graces of womanhood in the *Garment of Good Ladies;* a poem of the same type as those thoughtful lyrics which

describe what is best in certain phases of professions, or life, such as Sir H. Wotton's *Character of a Happy Life*, or Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior*.

But among lesser men, whom we need not mention, the greatest is WILLIAM DUNBAR. He carries the influence of Chaucer on to the end of the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth. Few have possessed a more masculine genius, and its work was as varied in its range as it was original. He followed the form and plan of Chaucer in his two poems of *The Thistle and the Rose*, 1503, and *The Golden Terge*, 1508, the first on the marriage of James IV. to Margaret Tudor, the second an allegory of Love, Beauty, Reason, and the Poet. In both, though they begin with Chaucer's conventional May morning, the natural description becomes Scottish, and in both the national enthusiasm of the poet is strongly marked. But he soon ceased to imitate. The vigorous fun of the satires and the satirical ballads that he wrote is only matched by their coarseness, a coarseness and a fun that descended to Burns. Perhaps Dunbar's genius is still higher in a wild poem in which he personifies the seven deadly sins, and describes their dance, with a mixture of horror and humour which makes the little thing unique.

A man almost as remarkable as Dunbar is GAWIN DOUGLAS, Bishop of Dunkeld, who died in 1522, at the Court of Henry VIII., and was buried in the Savoy. He is the author of the first metrical English translation from the original of any Latin book. He translated Ovid's *Art of Love*, and afterwards, with truth and spirit, the *Æneid* of Vergil, 1513. To each book of the *Æneid* he wrote a prologue of his own. And it is chiefly by these that he takes rank among the Scottish poets. Three of them are descriptions of the country in May, in autumn, and in winter. The scenery is altogether Scotch, and the few Chaucerisms that appear seem absurdly out of place in a picture of nature which is as close as if it had been done by Keats in his early

time. The colour is superb, the landscape is described with an excessive detail, but it is not composed by any art into a whole. Still it astonishes the reader, and it is only by bringing in the Celtic element of love of nature that we can account for the vast distance between work like this and contemporary work in England such as Skelton's. Of Douglas's other original work, one poem, *The Palace of Honour*, 1501, continues the influence of Chaucer.

There were a number of other Scottish poets belonging to this time who are all remembered and praised by SIR DAVID LYNDSAY, whom it is best to mention in this place, because he still connects Scottish poetry with Chaucer. He was born about 1490 and is the last of the old Scottish school, and the most popular. He is the most popular because he is not only the Poet, but also the Reformer. His poem *The Dreme*, 1528, connects him with Chaucer. It is in the manner of the old poet. But its scenery is Scottish, and instead of the May morning of Chaucer, it opens on a winter's day of wind and sleet. The place is a cave over the sea, whence Lyndsay sees the weltering of the waves. Chaucer goes to sleep over Ovid or Cicero, Lyndsay falls into dream as he thinks of the "false world's instability," wavering like the sea waves. The difference marks not only the difference of the two countries, but the different natures of the men. Chaucer did not care much for the popular storms and loved the Court more than the Commonweal. Lyndsay in the *Dreme* and in two other poems—the *Complaint to the King*, and the *Testament of the King's Papyngo*"—is absorbed in the evils and sorrows of the people, in the desire to reform the abuses of the Church, of the Court, of party, of the nobility. In 1539 his *Satire of the Three Estates*, a Morality interspersed with interludes, was represented before James V. at Linlithgow. It was first acted in 1535, and was a daring attack on the ignorance, profligacy and exactions of the priesthood, on the vices and flattery of the favourites—"a mocking of abuses used in the country by diverse sorts of estate." A still bolder poem, and one thought so even by himself, is the *Monarchie*, 1553, his last work. Reformer as he was, he was more a social and political than a religious one. He bears the same relation to Knox as Langland did to Wiclif. When he was sixty-five years old he saw the fruits of his work. Ecclesiastical councils met to reform the Church. But the reform soon went beyond his temperate wishes. In 1557 the Reformation in Scotland was fairly launched when in December the Congregation signed the Bond of Association. Lyndsay had died three years before; he is as much the reformer as he is the poet, of a transition time. "Still his verse hath charms," but it was neither sweet nor imaginative. He had genuine satire, great moral breadth, much preaching power in verse, coarse, broad humour in plenty, and more dramatic power and invention than the rest of his fellows, and he lived an active, bold and brave life in a very stormy time.

56. **Italian Influence: Wyatt and Surrey.**—While poetry under Skelton and Lyndsay became an instrument of reform, it revived as an art at the close of Henry VIII.'s reign in SIR THOMAS WYATT and the EARL OF SURREY. They were both Italian travellers, and in bringing back to England the inspiration they had gained from Petrarca they re-made English poetry. They are our first really modern poets; the first who have anything of the modern manner. Though Italian in sentiment, their language is more English than Chaucer's, that is, they use fewer romance words. They handed down this purity of English to the Elizabethan poets, to Sackville, Spenser, and Shakespeare. They introduced a new kind of poetry, the amourist poetry. The "AMOURISTS," as they are called, were poets who composed a series of

poems on the subject of love—sonnets mingled with lyrical pieces after the manner of Petrarca, and in accord with the love philosophy he built on Plato. The *Hundred Passions* of Watson, the sonnets of Sidney, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Drummond, are all poems of this kind and the same impulse in a changed form appears in later literature, in the poems of Herrick and his school. The subjects of Wyatt and Surrey were chiefly lyrical, and the fact that they imitated the same model has made some likeness between them. Like their personal characters, however, the poetry of Wyatt is the more thoughtful and the more strongly felt, but Surrey's has a sweeter movement and a livelier fancy. Both did this great thing for English verse—they chose an exquisite model, and in imitating it "corrected the ruggedness of English poetry." Such verse as Skelton's became impossible. A new standard was made below which the after poets could not fall. They also added new stanza measures to English verse, and enlarged in this way the "lyrical range." Surrey was the first, in his *translation of Vergil's Æneid* to use the ten-syllabled, unrimed verse, which we now call **blank verse.** In his hands it is not worthy of praise; it had neither the true form nor harmony into which it grew afterwards. SACKVILLE, Lord Buckhurst, introduced it into drama; MARLOWE, in his *Tamburlaine*, made it the proper verse of the drama, and Shakespeare, Beaumont, and Massinger used it splendidly. In plays it has a special manner of its own; in poetry proper it was, we may say, not only created but perfected by Milton.

The new impulse thus given to poetry was all but arrested by the bigotry that prevailed during the reigns of Edward VI. and Mary, and all the work of the New Learning seemed to be useless. But Thomas Wilson's book in English on *Rhetoric and Logic* in 1553, and the publication of Thos. Tusser's *Pointes of Husbandrie* and of Tottel's *Miscellany of Uncertain Authors*, 1557, in the last years of Mary's reign, proved that something was stirring beneath the gloom. The latter book contained the poems of Surrey and Wyatt, and others by Grimald, by Lord Vaux, and Lord Berners. The date should be remembered, for it is the first printed book of modern English poetry. It proves that men cared now more for the new than the old poets, that the time of imitation of Chaucer was over, and that of original creation begun. It ushers in the Elizabethan literature.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM 1559 to 1603.

Sackville's *Mirror of Magistrates*, **1559**.—Lyly's *Euphues*.—Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*, **1579**.—Sidney's *Arcadia*, **1580**.—Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, **1594**.—Bacon's *Essays*, **1597**.—Spenser born, **1552**; *Faerie Queen*, **1590-1595**; died, **1598**.—W. Warner's, S. Daniel's, M. Drayton's *historical poems*, **1595-1598**.—Sir J. Davies's and Lord Brooke's *philosophical poems*, **1599-1620**.

The Drama.—First Miracle Play, **1120**.—Interludes of T. Heywood, **1533**.—First English Comedy, **1540**.—First English Tragedy, **1562**.—First English Theatre, **1576**.—Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, **1587**.—Shakespeare born, **1564**; *Love's Labour's Lost*, **1588**; *Merchant of Venice*, **1596**; *Hamlet*, **1602**; *Cymbeline*, **1610**; *Henry VIII.*, **1613**; died, **1616**.—Ben Jonson begins work, **1596**; dies, **1637**.—Beaumont and Fletcher.

Webster's first play, **1612**.—Massinger begins, **1620**; dies, **1640**.—John Ford's first play, **1628**.—James Shirley, last Elizabethan Dramatist, lives to **1666**; Theatre closed, **1642**; opens again, **1656**.

57. **Elizabethan Literature,** as a literature, may be said to begin with Surrey and Wyatt. But as their poems were published the year before Elizabeth came to the throne, we date the beginning of the