Scandal of Sheridan, all of which appeared between 1768 and 1778. Both were Irishmen, but Goldsmith has more of the Celtic grace, and Sheridan of the Celtic wit. With Sheridan we may say that the history of the English drama closes.

CHAPTER VII.

PROSE LITERATURE FROM GEORGE III. TO VICTORIA.

1760—1837.

Richardson's *Pamela*, **1740**.—Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, **1742**.—Smollett's *Roderick Random* and Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*, **1748**.—Fielding's *Tom Jones*, **1749**.—Johnson's *Dictionary*, **1755**.—Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, **1759**.—Hume's *History of England*, completed **1761**.—Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, **1766**.—Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, **1776**.—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, completed **1788**.—Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, **1791**.—Burke's *Writings*, from **1756-1797**.—Miss Austin's *Novels*, **1811-1817**.—Scott's *Novels*, **1814-1831**.

123. **Prose Literature.**—The rapid increase of manufactures, science, and prosperity which began with the middle of the eighteenth century is paralleled by the growth of Literature. The general causes of this growth were—

1st, That **a good prose style had been perfected**, and the method of writing being made easy, production increased. Men were born, as it were, into a good school of the art of composition, and the boy of eighteen had no difficulty in making sentences which the Elizabethan writer could not have put together after fifty years of study.

2ndly, The **long peace** after the accession of the House of Hanover had left England at rest, and given it wealth. The reclaiming of waste tracts, the

increased wealth and trade, made better communication necessary; and the country was soon covered with a network of highways. The leisure gave time to men to think and write: the quicker interchange between the capital and the country spread over England the literature of the capital, and stirred men everywhere to write. The coaching services, and the post carried the new book and the literary criticism to the villages, and awoke the men of genius there, who might otherwise have been silent.

3rdly, **The Press** sent far and wide the news of the day, and grew in importance till it contained the opinions and writings of men like Canning. Such seed produced literary work in the country. *Newspapers* now began to play their part in literature. They rose under the Commonwealth, but became important when the censorship which reduced them to a mere broadsheet of news was removed after the Revolution of 1688. The political sleep of the age of the two first Georges hindered their progress; but in the reign of George III., after a struggle with which the name of John Wilkes and the author of the letters of Junius are connected, the Press claimed and obtained the right to criticize the conduct and measures of Ministers and Parliament and the King; and after the struggle in 1771 the right to publish and comment on the debates in the two Houses. The great English Journals, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Post*, the *Herald*, and the *Times* gave an enormous impulse within the next twenty years to the production of books, and created a new class of literary men—the Journalists. Later on, in 1802, the publication of the *Edinburgh Review*, and afterwards of the *Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine*, started another kind of prose writing, and by their criticisms on new books improved and stimulated literature.

4thly, **Communication with the Continent** had increased during the peaceable times of Walpole,

and the wars that followed made it still easier. With its increase, two new and great outbursts of literature told upon England. France sent the works of Montesquieu, of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, D'Alembert, and the rest of the liberal thinkers who were called the Encyclopædists, to influence and quicken English literature on all the great subjects that belong to the social and political life of man. Afterwards, the fresh German movement, led by Lessing and others, and carried on by Goethe and Schiller, added its impulse to the poetical school that arose in England along with the French Revolution. These were the general causes of the rapid growth of literature from the time of George III. We turn now to the forms Literature took—first in Prose, then in Poetry.

124. **The Novel** is perhaps the most remarkable. It began in the reign of George II. No books have ever produced so plentiful an offspring as the novels of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett. The novel arranges and combines round the passion of love and its course between two or more persons a number of events and of characters which in their action on one another develop the plot of the story and bring about a sad or a happy close. The story may be laid at any time, in any class of society, in any place. The whole world and the whole of human life lies before it as its subject. Its vast sphere accounts for its vast production—its human interest for its vast numbers of readers.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON, while Pope was yet alive, wrote in the form of letters, and in two months' time *Pamela* (1740), and afterwards *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748), and *Sir Charles Grandison.* The second is the best, and all are celebrated for their subtle and tender drawing of the human heart. They are novels of Sentiment; and their intense minuteness of detail gives them reality. Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett followed him with the novel of Real life, full of events, adventures, fun, and vivid painting of various kinds of life in

England. FIELDING began with *Joseph Andrews* (1742), SMOLLETT with *Roderick Random* (1748). Both wrote many other stories, but in truth of representation of common life, and in the natural growth and winding up of the story, Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) is our English masterpiece and model. Ten years then sufficed to create an entirely new literature. LAURENCE STERNE, in his *Tristram Shandy*, (1759) introduced the novel of Character in which events are few. His peculiar vein of labyrinthine humour and falsetto sentiment has been imitated, but never attained. We mention Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759) as the first of our Didactic tales, and the *Fool of Quality*, by Henry Brooke, as the first of our Theological tales. Under George III. new forms of fiction appeared—GOLDSMITH'S *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) was the first, and perhaps the most charming, of all those novels which we may call Idyllic, which describe the loves and the simple lives of country people in country scenery. MISS BURNEY'S *Evelina* (1778) and *Cecilia* were the first novels of Society. Mrs. Inchbald's *Simple Story* (1791) introduced the novel of Passion, and Mrs. Radcliffe, in her wild and picturesque tales, the Romantic novel. The interest kindled in political questions by the French Revolution showed itself in another class of novels, and the Political stories of Holcroft and William Godwin opened a new realm to the novelist, while the latter excluded love altogether from his story of *Caleb Williams.* Mrs. Opie made Domestic life the sphere of her graceful and pathetic stories (1806). MISS EDGEWORTH, in her Irish stories, gave the first impulse to the novel of National character, and in her other tales to the novel with a Moral purpose (1801-1811). MISS AUSTIN, with "an exquisite touch which renders commonplace things and characters interesting from truth of description and sentiment," produced the best stories we have of Everyday English society. *Sense and Sensibility*,

Pride and Prejudice, *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Persuasion*, were all written between 1811 and 1817.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, the great Enchanter, now began the long series of his novels. Men are still alive who well remember the wonder and delight of the land when *Waverley* (1814) was published. In the rapidity of his work Scott recalls the Elizabethan time. *Guy Mannering*, his next tale, was written in six weeks. The *Bride of Lammermoor*, as great in fateful pathos as *Romeo and Juliet*, was done in a fortnight. His National tales, such as *The Heart of Midlothian*, and *The Antiquary*, are written as if he saw directly all the characters and scenes, and when he saw them enjoyed them so much that he could not help writing them down. And the art with which this was done was so inspired, that since Shakespeare there is nothing we can compare to it. "All is great in the Waverley Novels," says Goethe, "material, effects, characters, execution." In the vivid portraiture and dramatic story of such tales as *Kenilworth* and *Quentin Durward*, he created the Historical Novel. His last tale of power was the *Fair Maid of Perth* in 1828; his last effort in 1831 was made the year before he died. He raised the whole of the literature of the novel into one of the greatest influences that bear on the human mind. The words his uncle once said to him, may be applied to the work he did,—"God bless thee, Walter, my man! Thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good."

John Galt and Miss Ferrier followed him in describing Scottish life and society. With the peace of 1815 arose new forms of fiction, and travel, which became very popular when the close of the war with Napoleon opened the world again to Englishmen, gave birth to the tale of Foreign scenery and manners. Thomas Hope's *Anastasius* (1819) was the first. Lockhart began the Classical novel in *Valerius*. Fashionable

society was now painted by Theodore Hook, Mrs. Trollope, and Mrs. Gore; and Rural life by Miss Mitford in *Our Village*. Edward Bulwer Lytton began with the Fashionable novel in *Pelham* (1827), and followed it with a long succession of tales on historical, classical, and romantic subjects. Towards the close of his life, he changed his manner altogether, and *The Caxtons* and those that followed are novels of Modern Society. The tone of them all from the beginning to the end is too high-pitched for real life, but each of them being kept in the same key throughout has a reality of its own. CHARLOTTE BRONTË revived in *Jane Eyre* the novel of Passion, and Miss Yonge set on foot the Religious novel in support of a special school of theology. We need only mention Captain Marryatt, whose delightful sea stories carry on the seamen of Smollett to our own times. Miss Martineau and Mr. Disraeli carried on the novel of Political opinion and economy, and Charles Kingsley applied the novel to the social and theological problems of our own day. Three other great names are too close to us to admit of comment: Charles Dickens, William M. Thackeray, and the novelist who is known as George Eliot. It will be seen then that the Novel claims almost every sphere of human interest as its own, and it has this special character, that it is the only kind of literature in which women have done excellently.

125. **History**, to which we now turn, was raised into the rank of literature in the latter half of the eighteenth century by three men. DAVID HUME'S *History of England*, finished 1761, is, in the importance it gives to letters, in its clear narrative and style, and in the writer's endeavour to make it a philosophic whole, our first literary history. Of Dr. Robertson's *Histories of Scotland*, *of Charles V.*, and *of America*, the two last are literary by their descriptive and popular style, and show how our historical

interests were reaching beyond our own land. EDWARD GIBBON excelled the others in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, completed in 1788. The execution of his work was as accurate and exhaustive as a scientific treatise. Gibbon's conception of the whole subject was as poetical as a great picture. Rome, eastern and western, was painted in the centre, dying slowly like a lion. Around it he pictured all the nations and hordes that wrought its ruin, told their stories from the beginning, and the results on themselves and on the world of their victories over Rome. The collecting and use of every detail of the art and costume and manners of the times he described, the reading and use of all the contemporary literature, the careful geographical detail, the marshalling of all this information with his facts, the great imaginative conception of the work as a whole, and the use of a full and perhaps too heightened style to add importance to the subject, gave a new impulse and a new model to historical literature. The contemptuous tone of the book is made still more remarkable by the heavily-laden style, and the monotonous balance of every sentence. The bias Gibbon had against Christianity illustrates a common fault of historians. The historical value of Hume's history was spoiled by his personal dislike of the principles of our Revolution. W. Mitford's *History of Greece*, completed in 1810, is made untrue by his hatred of a democracy; and Dr. Lingard's excellent *History of England*, 1819, is influenced by his dislike of the Reformation. HENRY HALLAM was the first who wrote history in this country with so careful a love of truth, and with so accurate a judgment of the relative value of facts and things, that prejudice was excluded. His *Europe during the Middle Ages*, 1818, and his *Literature of Europe*, 1837-8, are distinguished for their exhaustive and judicial summing up of facts; and his *Constitutional History of England*, 1827, set

on foot a new kind of history in the best way. Our own history now engaged a number of writers. LORD MACAULAY'S great work told the story of the Revolution of 1688 in a style sometimes too emphatic, often monotonous from its mannerism, but always clear. Its vivid word-painting of characters and great events, and the splendid use in such descriptions of his vast knowledge of details, gave as great an impulse to the literature of history as Gibbon had done in his day, and his *Historical Essays* on the times and statesmen between the Restoration and Pitt are masterpieces of their kind.

Sir Francis Palgrave gave interest to the study of the early English period, and in our own day, a critical historical school has arisen, of which Mr. Freeman and Professor Stubbs are the leaders.

As the interest in the history of our own land increased, our interest in the history of the world increased. Dean Milman's *History of Latin Christianity* well deserves, by its brilliant and romantic style, the title of fine literature. Greece old and new found her best historians in Bishop Thirlwall, George Grote, and Mr. Finlay; Rome in Dr. Arnold. The history of events near at hand on the Continent was also taken up with care. Among the books of this class, I mention, for their special literary character and style, Sir William Napier's *History of the Peninsular War*, and Thomas Carlyle's *History of the French Revolution*. Both are written in too poetic prose, and the latter is a kind of epic, and full of his realistic, fantastic, and unequal power of representing persons and things. With him we close this account of historical literature, and return to the eighteenth century.

126. **Biography and Travel** are linked at many points to History. The first was lifted into a higher place in literature by Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, 1779-81, and by *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, 1791. Since that time a multitude of biographies have poured from

the press, and have formed useful materials for history. Few of them have reached literary excellence. Southey's *Life of Nelson*, Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, Moore's *Life of Lord Byron;* or in our own days, Forster's *Life of Goldsmith*, and Dean Stanley's *Life of Arnold*, rise out of a crowd of inferior books.

The production of books of Travel since James Bruce left for Africa in 1762 till the present day has increased as rapidly almost as that of the Novel, and there is scarcely any part of the world that has not been visited and described. In this way a vast amount of materials has been collected for the use of philosophers, poets, and historians. Travel has rarely produced literature, but it has been one of its assistants.

127. **Theological Literature** received a new impulse in 1738-91 from the evangelising work of John Wesley and Whitfield; and their spiritual followers, John Scott, Newton, and Cecil made by their writings the Evangelical school. William Paley, in his *Evidences*, and Sydney Smith, well known as a wit and an essayist, defended Christianity from the common-sense point of view; while the sermons of Robert Hall and of Dr. Chalmers are, in different ways, fine examples of devotional and philosophical eloquence.

The decay of the Evangelical school was hastened by the writings of COLERIDGE, whose religious philosophy, in the *Aids to Reflection* and other books, created the school which has been called the Broad Church. Dr. Arnold's sermons supplied it with an element of masculine good sense. Frederick Maurice in his numerous works added to it mystical piety and one-sided learning, Charles Kingsley a rough and ready power, and Frederick Robertson gave it passion, sentiment, subtilty, and a fine form. At the same time that Maurice began to write (1830-32) the common-sense school of theology was continued by Archbishop Whately's works; and in strong reaction against the Evangelicals, the High Church party rose into

prominence in Oxford, and was chiefly supported by the tracts and sermons of John Henry Newman, whose work, with Keble's *Christian Year*, a collection of exqusitely wrought hymns, belongs to literature.

128. **Philosophical and Political Literature** were both stimulated by the great movement of thought on all subjects pertaining to the natural rights of man, which was led by Voltaire and Rousseau. In *philosophy* the historian David Hume (1738—1755) led the way, and the transparent clearness of his style gave full force to opinions which made utility the only measure of virtue, and the knowledge of our ignorance the only certain knowledge. An eloquent school of Scotch metaphysicians came after him, and for the most part opposed the ideal system on which Hume had founded his famous argument on causation. Dr. Reid, Dr. Stewart, and Dr. Brown carry this school on to 1820. The Utilitarian view of morals was put forth with great power by Jeremy Bentham, and in our own day by John Stuart Mill, whose name, with Sir W. Hamilton's and Professor Whewell's, belongs to the literature of philosophy. The philosophy of Jurisprudence may be said to have been founded by JEREMY BENTHAM, and law was for the first time made a little clear to common minds by Blackstone's Commentaries.

129. **In political literature,** EDMUND BURKE is our greatest, almost our only, writer of this time. From 1756 to 1797, when he died, his treatises and speeches proved their right to the title of literature by their extraordinary influence on the country. Philosophical reasoning and poetic passion were wedded together in them on the side of conservatism, and every art of eloquence was used with the mastery that imagination gives. His *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, 1773, was perhaps the best of his works in point of style. The *Reflections on the French Revolution*, 1790, and the *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, 1796-7, were the most powerful. The first of these

two spread all over England a terror of the principles of the Revolution; the second increased the eagerness of England to carry on the war with France. All his work is more literature then oratory. Many of his speeches enthralled their hearers, but many more put them to sleep. The very men, however, who slept under him in the House read over and over again the same speech when published with renewed delight. Goldsmith's praise of him—that he "wound himself into his subject like a serpent"—gives the reason why he sometimes failed as an orator, why he always succeeded as a writer.

130. Before Burke, a new class of political writings had arisen which concerned themselves with **social and economical reform.** The immense increase of the industry, wealth, and commerce of the country from 1720 to 1770, aroused inquiry into the laws that regulate wealth, and ADAM SMITH, a professor at Glasgow, who had in 1759 written his book on the *Moral Sentiments*, published in 1776 the *Wealth of Nations*. By its theory, that labour is the source of wealth, and that to give the labourer absolute freedom to pursue his own interest in his own way is the best means of increasing the wealth of the country; by its proof that all laws made to restrain, or to shape, or to promote commerce, were stumbling-blocks in the way of the wealth of any state, he created the Science of Political Economy, and started the theory and practice of Free Trade. All the questions of labour and capital were now placed on a scientific basis, and since that time the literature of the whole of the subject has engaged great thinkers. Connected with this were all the writings on the subjects of the *poor*, and *education*, and *reform*. The Methodist movement gave the first impulse to popular education, and stirred men to take interest in the cause of the poor. This new philanthropy, stirred still more by the theories of the French Revolution concerning the right of men to

freedom and equality, took up the subjects of slavery, of prison reform, of the emancipation of the Catholics, and of a wider representation of the people, and their literature fills a large space till 1832, when Reform brought forward new subjects, and the old subjects under new forms.

131. **Miscellaneous Literature.**—During the whole of this time, from the days of Johnson till 1832, the finer literature of prose had flourished. With SAMUEL JOHNSON began the literary man such as we know him in modern times, who, independent of patronage or party, lives by his pen, and finds in the public his only paymaster. His celebrated letter to Lord Chesterfield gave the death-blow to patronage. The great *Dictionary of the English Language*, 1755, at which he worked unhelped, and which he published without support, was the first book that appealed solely to the public. He represents thus a new class. But he was also the last representative of the literary king who, like Dryden and Pope, held a kind of court in London. When he died (1784) London was no longer the only literary centre, and poetry and prose were produced from all parts of the country.

The *miscellaneous literature of the latter half of the eighteenth century*, passing over Johnson and Goldsmith, whom we have already touched on, includes the admirable *Letters of Gray* the poet; Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* which founded a new school of poetic criticism; the many collections of periodical essays all of which ceased in 1787; Burke's *Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful;* and the *Letters of Junius*, political invectives written in a style which has preserved them to this day.

The *miscellaneous literature of the early part of the nineteenth century* took mainly the form of long essays, most of which were originally published in the Reviews and Magazines. It was in *Blackwood's*

Magazine that Christopher North (Professor Wilson) published the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*—lively conversations that treated of all the topics of the day. It was in the *Edinburgh Review* that Macaulay and Sydney Smith and Jeffrey wrote essays on literature, politics, and philosophy. It was in *Fraser's Magazine* that THOMAS CARLYLE first came before the public with *Sartor Resartus* and the *Lectures on Heroes*, books which gave an entirely new impulse to the generation in which we live. Of all these miscellaneous writers, Carlyle was the most original, and Thomas De Quincey the greatest writer of English prose. DE QUINCEY'S style has so peculiar a quality that it stands alone. The sentences are built up like passages in a fugue, and there is nothing in English literature which can be compared in involved melody to the prose of the *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. One man alone in our own day is as great a master of English Prose, John Ruskin. He has created a new literature, that of art, and all the subjects related to it; and the work he has done has more genius and is more original than any other prose work of his time. Some of De Quincey's best work was done on the lives of the poets of his day; and indeed a great part of the miscellaneous literature consisted of *Criticism on poetry*, past and present. Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and Campbell carried on that study of the Elizabethan and earlier poetry which Warton had begun in the eighteenth century. Wordsworth wrote admirable prose on poetry, and the prose of his Essays just now published, especially of that *on the Convention of Cintra*, is quite stately. W. Hazlitt, W. S. Landor, Jeffrey, and a host of others added to the literature of criticism, and the ceaseless discussion of the works of the poets made them the foremost literary figures of the day. It is the work of the poets that we now take up, and in tracing it from the time of Pope to 1832 we shall complete this Primer.

CHAPTER VIII.

POETRY, FROM 1730 TO 1832.

Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*, **1725**.—Thomson's *Seasons*, **1730**.—Gray and Collins, *Poems*, **1746-1757**.—Goldsmith's *Traveller*, **1764**.—Chatterton's *Poems*, **1770**.—Blake's *Poems*, **1777-1794**.—Crabbe's *Village*, **1783**.—Cowper's *Task*, **1785**.—Burns's *first Poems*, **1786**.—Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*, **1799**.—Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*, **1798**; his *Prelude*, **1806**; *Excursion*, **1814**.—Coleridge's *Christabel*, **1805**.—Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, *Lady of the Lake*, **1805-8-10**.—Byron's *Poems*, **1807-1823**.—Shelley's *Poems*, **1813-1821**.—Keats' *Poems*, **1817-1820**.—Tennyson's *first Poems*, **1830**.

132. **The Elements and Forms of the New Poetry.**—The poetry we are now to study may be divided into *two periods*. The first dates from about the middle of Pope's life, and closes with the publication of Cowper's *Task*, 1785; the second begins with the *Task* and closes in 1832. The first is not wrongly called a time of transition. The influence of the poetry of the past lasted; new elements were added to poetry, and new forms of it took shape. There was a change also in the style and in the subject of poetry. Under these heads I shall bring together the various poetical works of this period.

(1.) *The influence of the didactic and satirical poetry of the critical school lingered* among the new elements which I shall notice. It is found in Johnson's two satires on the manners of his time, the *London*, 1738, and the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, 1749; in Robert Blair's dull poem of *The Grave*, 1743; in Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, 1743, a poem on the immortality of the soul, and in his satires on *The Universal Passion of Fame;* in the tame work of Richard Savage, Johnson's poor friend; and