human nature does he emphasize? Make a little comparison between Chaucer and Shakespeare, having in mind (1) the characters described by both poets, (2) their knowledge of human nature, (3) the sources of their plots, (4) the interest of their works.

6. Describe briefly *Piers Plowman* and its author. Why is the poem called "the gospel of the poor"? What message does it contain for daily labor? Does it apply to any modern conditions? Note any resemblance in ideas between *Piers Plowman* and such modern works as Carlyle's *Past and Present*, Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, Morris's *Dream of John Ball*, etc.

7. For what is Wyclif remarkable in literature? How did his work affect our language? Note resemblances and differences between Wyclif and the Puritans.

8. What is *Mandeville's Travels*? What light does it throw on the mental condition of the age? What essential difference do you note between this book and *Gulliver's Travels*?

CHRONOLOGY, FOURTEENTH CENTURY

History	Literature
1327. Edward III	
1338. Beginning of Hundred Years' War with France	1340(?). Birth of Chaucer
1347. Capture of Calais	1356. Mandeville's Travels
1348–1349. Black Death	1359. Chaucer in French War
	1360–1370. Chaucer's early or French period
1373. Winchester College, first great public school	1370–1385. Chaucer's Middle or Italian period
1377. Richard II. Wyclif and the Lollards begin Reformation in England	1362–1395. Piers Plowman
1381. Peasant Rebellion. Wat Tyler	1385–1400. Canterbury Tales
	1382. First complete Bible in English
1399. Deposition of Richard II. Henry IV chosen by Parliament	1400. Death of Chaucer (Dante's Divina Commedia, *c*. 1310; Petrarch's sonnets and poems, 1325–1374; Boccaccio's tales, *c*. 1350.)

CHAPTER V

THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

I. HISTORY OF THE PERIOD

Political Changes. The century and a half following the death of Chaucer (1400–1550) is the most volcanic period of English history. The land is swept by vast changes, inseparable from the rapid accumulation of national power; but since power is the most dangerous of gifts until men have learned to control it, these changes seem at first to have no specific aim or direction. Henry V — whose erratic yet vigorous life, as depicted by Shakespeare, was typical of the life of his times — first let Europe feel the might of the new national spirit. To divert that growing and unruly spirit from rebellion at home, Henry led his army abroad, in the apparently impossible attempt to gain for himself three things: a French wife, a French revenue, and the French crown itself. The battle of Agincourt was fought in 1415, and five years later, by the Treaty of Troyes, France acknowledged his right to all his outrageous demands.

The uselessness of the terrific struggle on French soil is shown by the rapidity with which all its results were swept away. When Henry died in 1422, leaving his son heir to the crowns of France and England, a magnificent recumbent statue with head of pure silver was placed in Westminster Abbey to commemorate his victories. The silver head was presently stolen, and the loss is typical of all that he had struggled for. His son, Henry VI, was but the shadow of a king, a puppet in the hands of powerful nobles, who seized the power of England and turned it to self-destruction. Meanwhile all his foreign possessions were won back by the French under the magic leadership of Joan of Arc. Cade's Rebellion (1450) and the bloody Wars of the Roses (1455–1485) are names to show how the energy of England was violently destroying itself, like a great engine that has lost its balance wheel. The frightful reign of Richard III followed, which had, however, this redeeming quality, that it marked the end of civil wars and the self-destruction of feudalism, and made possible a new growth of English national sentiment under the popular Tudors.

In the long reign of Henry VIII the changes are less violent, but have more purpose and significance. His age is marked by a steady increase in the national power at home and abroad, by the entrance of the Reformation "by a side door," and by the final separation of England from all ecclesiastical bondage in Parliament's famous Act of Supremacy. In previous reigns chivalry and the old feudal system had practically been banished; now monasticism, the third mediæval institution with its mixed evil and good, received its death-blow in the wholesale suppression of the monasteries and the removal of abbots from the House of Lords. Notwithstanding the evil character of the king and the hypocrisy of proclaiming such a creature the head of any church or the defender of any faith, we acquiesce

℄ Fynyſſhed and tranſlated out of frenſſhe in to englyſſhe the viij day of Juyn the yere of our lord M iiij C lxxxvj / and the firſt yere of the regne of kyng harry the vij / And enprynted the xj day of Maye after / ℄

Laus Deo

SPECIMEN OF CAXTON'S PRINTING IN THE YEAR 1486

silently in Stubb's declaration[1] that "the world owes some of its greatest debts to men from whose memory the world recoils."

While England during this period was in constant political strife, yet rising slowly, like the spiral flight of an eagle, to heights of national greatness, intellectually it moved forward with bewildering rapidity. Printing was brought to England by Caxton (c. 1476), and for the first time in history it was possible for a book or an idea to reach the whole nation. Schools and universities were established in place of the old monasteries; Greek ideas and Greek culture came to England in the Renaissance, and man's spiritual freedom was proclaimed in the Reformation. The great names of the period are numerous and significant, but literature is strangely silent. Probably the very turmoil of the age prevented any literary development, for literature is one of the arts of peace; it requires quiet and meditation rather than activity, and the stirring life of the Renaissance had first to be lived before it could express itself in the new literature of the Elizabethan period.

[1] *Constitutional History of England.*

The Revival of Learning. The Revival of Learning denotes, in its broadest sense, that gradual enlightenment of the human mind after the darkness of the Middle Ages. The names Renaissance and Humanism, which are often applied to the same movement, have properly a narrower significance. The term Renaissance, though used by many writers "to denote the whole transition from the Middle Ages to the modern world,"[1] is more correctly applied to the revival of art resulting from the discovery and imitation of classic models in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Humanism applies to the revival of classic literature, and was so called by its leaders, following the example of Petrarch, because they held that the study of the classics, *literæ humaniores,* — i.e. the "more human writings," rather than the old theology, — was the best means of promoting the largest human interests. We use the term Revival of Learning to cover the whole movement, whose essence was, according to Lamartine, that "man discovered himself and the universe," and, according to Taine, that man, so long blinded, "had suddenly opened his eyes and seen."

We shall understand this better if we remember that in the Middle Ages man's whole world consisted of the narrow Mediterranean and the nations that clustered about it; and that this little world seemed bounded by impassable barriers, as if God had said to their sailors, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther." Man's mind also was bounded by the same narrow lines. His culture as measured by the great deductive system of Scholasticism consisted not in discovery, but rather in accepting certain principles and traditions established by divine and ecclesiastical authority as the basis of all truth. These were his Pillars of Hercules, his mental and spiritual bounds that he must not pass, and within these, like a child playing with lettered blocks, he proceeded to build his intellectual system. Only as we remember their limitations can we appreciate the heroism of these toilers of the Middle Ages, giants in intellect, yet playing with children's toys; ignorant of the laws and forces of the universe, while debating the essence and locomotion of angels; eager to learn, yet forbidden to enter fresh fields in the right of free exploration and the joy of individual discovery.

The Revival stirred these men as the voyages of Da Gama and Columbus stirred the mariners of the Mediterranean. First came the sciences and inventions of the Arabs, making their way slowly

The World

[1] Symonds, *Revival of Learning.*

against the prejudice of the authorities, and opening men's eyes to the unexplored realms of nature. Then came the flood of Greek literature which the new art of printing carried swiftly to every school in Europe, revealing a new world of poetry and philosophy. Scholars flocked to the universities, as adventurers to the new world of America, and there the old authority received a deathblow. Truth only was authority; to search for truth everywhere, as men sought for new lands and gold and the fountain of youth, — that was the new spirit which awoke in Europe with the Revival of Learning.

II. LITERATURE OF THE REVIVAL

The hundred and fifty years of the Revival period are singularly destitute of good literature. Men's minds were too much occupied with religious and political changes and with the rapid enlargement of the mental horizon to find time for that peace and leisure which are essential for literary results. Perhaps, also, the floods of newly discovered classics, which occupied scholars and the new printing presses alike, were by their very power and abundance a discouragement of native talent. Roger Ascham (1515–1568), a famous classical scholar, who published a book called *Toxophilus* (School of Shooting) in 1545, expresses in his preface, or "apology," a very widespread dissatisfaction over the neglect of native literature when he says, "And as for ye Latin or greke tongue, every thing is so excellently done in them, that none can do better: In the Englysh tonge contrary, every thinge in a maner so meanly, both for the matter and handelynge, that no man can do worse."

On the Continent, also, this new interest in the classics served to check the growth of native literatures. In Italy especially, for a full century after the brilliant age of Dante and Petrarch, no great literature was produced, and the Italian language itself seemed to go backward.[1] The truth is that

[1] Sismondi attributes this to two causes: first, the lack of general culture; and second, the absorption of the schools in the new study of antiquity. See *Literature of the South of Europe*, II, 400 ff.

these great writers were, like Chaucer, far in advance of their age, and that the mediæval mind was too narrow, too scantily furnished with ideas to produce a varied literature. The fifteenth century was an age of preparation, of learning the beginnings of science, and of getting acquainted with the great ideals, — the stern law, the profound philosophy, the suggestive mythology, and the noble poetry of the Greeks and Romans. So the mind was furnished with ideas for a new literature.

With the exception of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (which is still mediæval in spirit) the student will find little of interest in the literature of this period. We give here a brief summary of the men and the books most "worthy of remembrance"; but for the real literature of the Renaissance one must go forward a century and a half to the age of Elizabeth.

The two greatest books which appeared in England during this period are undoubtedly Erasmus's[1] *Praise of Folly* (*Enco-*
Praise of *mium Moriæ*) and More's *Utopia*, the famous "King-
Folly dom of Nowhere." Both were written in Latin, but were speedily translated into all European languages. The *Praise of Folly* is like a song of victory for the New Learning, which had driven away vice, ignorance, and superstition, the three foes of humanity. It was published in 1511 after the accession of Henry VIII. Folly is represented as donning cap and bells and mounting a pulpit, where the vice and cruelty of kings, the selfishness and ignorance of the clergy, and the foolish standards of education are satirized without mercy.

More's *Utopia*, published in 1516, is a powerful and original study of social conditions, unlike anything which had ever appeared in any literature.[2] In our own day we have seen its influence in Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, an enormously

[1] Erasmus, the greatest scholar of the Renaissance, was not an Englishman, but seems to belong to every nation. He was born at Rotterdam (*c.* 1466), but lived the greater part of his life in France, Switzerland, England, and Italy. His *Encomium Moriæ* was sketched on a journey from Italy (1509) and written while he was the guest of Sir Thomas More in London.

[2] Unless, perchance, the reader finds some points of resemblance in Plato's "Republic."

successful book, which recently set people to thinking of the unnecessary cruelty of modern social conditions. More learns from a sailor, one of Amerigo Vespucci's compan-
Utopia   ions, of a wonderful Kingdom of Nowhere, in which all questions of labor, government, society, and religion have been easily settled by simple justice and common sense. In this *Utopia* we find for the first time, as the foundations of civilized society, the three great words, Liberty, Fraternity, Equality, which retained their inspiration through all the violence of the French Revolution and which are still the unrealized ideal of every free government. As he hears of this wonderful country More wonders why, after fifteen centuries of Christianity, his own land is so little civilized ; and as we read the book to-day we ask ourselves the same question. The splendid dream is still far from being realized ; yet it seems as if any nation could become Utopia in a single generation, so simple and just are the requirements.

Greater than either of these books, in its influence upon the common people, is Tyndale's translation of the New Testament (1525), which fixed a standard of good English, and at the same time brought that standard not only
Tyndale's
New Testa-   to scholars but to the homes of the common people.
ment   Tyndale made his translation from the original Greek, and later translated parts of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. Much of Tyndale's work was included in Cranmer's Bible, known also as the Great Bible, in 1539, and was read in every parish church in England. It was the foundation for the Authorized Version, which appeared nearly a century later and became the standard for the whole English-speaking race.

Wyatt and Surrey. In 1557 appeared probably the first printed collection of miscellaneous English poems, known as *Tottel's Miscellany*. It contained the work of the so-called courtly makers, or poets, which had hitherto circulated in manuscript form for the benefit of the court. About half of

these poems were the work of Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503 ?–1542) and of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517 ?–1547). Both together wrote amorous sonnets modeled after the Italians, introducing a new verse form which, although very difficult, has been a favorite ever since with our English poets.[1] Surrey is noted, not for any especial worth or originality of his own poems, but rather for his translation of two books of Virgil "in strange meter." The strange meter was the blank verse, which had never before appeared in English. The chief literary work of these two men, therefore, is to introduce the sonnet and the blank verse, — one the most dainty, the other the most flexible and characteristic form of English poetry, — which in the hands of Shakespeare and Milton were used to make the world's masterpieces.

Malory's Morte d'Arthur. The greatest English work of this period, measured by its effect on subsequent literature, is undoubtedly the *Morte d'Arthur*, a collection of the Arthurian romances told in simple and vivid prose. Of Sir Thomas Malory, the author, Caxton[2] in his introduction says that he was a knight, and completed his work in 1470, fifteen years before Caxton printed it. The record adds that "he was the servant of Jesu both by day and night." Beyond that we know little[3] except what may be inferred from the splendid work itself.

Malory groups the legends about the central idea of the search for the Holy Grail. Though many of the stories, like Tristram and Isolde, are purely pagan, Malory treats them all in such a way as to preserve the whole spirit of mediæval Christianity as it has been preserved in no other work. It

[1] See Wordsworth's sonnet, *On the Sonnet*. For a detailed study of this most perfect verse form, see Tomlinson's *The Sonnet, Its Origin, Structure, and Place in Poetry*.
[2] William Caxton (c. 1422–1491) was the first English printer. He learned the art abroad, probably at Cologne or Bruges, and about the year 1476 set up the first wooden printing press in England. His influence in fixing a national language to supersede the various dialects, and in preparing the way for the literary renaissance of the Elizabethan age, is beyond calculation.
[3] Malory has, in our own day, been identified with an English country gentleman and soldier, who was member of Parliament for Warwickshire in 1445.

was to Malory rather than to Layamon or to the early French writers that Shakespeare and his contemporaries turned for their material; and in our own age he has supplied Tennyson and Matthew Arnold and Swinburne and Morris with the inspiration for the "Idylls of the King" and the "Death of Tristram" and the other exquisite poems which center about Arthur and the knights of his Round Table.

In subject-matter the book belongs to the mediæval age; but Malory himself, with his desire to preserve the literary monuments of the past, belongs to the Renaissance; and he deserves our lasting gratitude for attempting to preserve the legends and poetry of Britain at a time when scholars were chiefly busy with the classics of Greece and Rome. As the Arthurian legends are one of the great recurring motives of English literature, Malory's work should be better known. His stories may be and should be told to every child as part of his literary inheritance. Then Malory may be read for his style and his English prose and his expression of the mediæval spirit. And then the stories may be read again, in Tennyson's "Idylls," to show how those exquisite old fancies appeal to the minds of our modern poets.

Summary of the Revival of Learning Period. This transition period is at first one of decline from the Age of Chaucer, and then of intellectual preparation for the Age of Elizabeth. For a century and a half after Chaucer not a single great English work appeared, and the general standard of literature was very low. There are three chief causes to account for this: (1) the long war with France and the civil Wars of the Roses distracted attention from books and poetry, and destroyed or ruined many noble English families who had been friends and patrons of literature; (2) the Reformation in the latter part of the period filled men's minds with religious questions; (3) the Revival of Learning set scholars and literary men to an eager study of the classics, rather than to the creation of native literature. Historically the age is noticeable for its intellectual progress, for the introduction of printing, for the discovery of America, for the beginning of the Reformation, and for the growth of political power among the common people.

In our study we have noted: (1) the Revival of Learning, what it was and the significance of the terms Humanism and Renaissance; (2) three influential literary works,—Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, More's *Utopia*, and Tyndale's translation of the New Testament; (3) Wyatt and Surrey, and the

so-called courtly makers or poets; (4) Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, a collection of the Arthurian legends in English prose. The Miracle and Mystery Plays were the most popular form of entertainment in this age; but we have reserved them for special study in connection with the Rise of the Drama, in the following chapter.

Selections for Reading. Malory's Morte d'Arthur, selections, in Athenæum Press Series, etc. (It is interesting to read Tennyson's Passing of Arthur in connection with Malory's account.) Utopia, in Arber's Reprints, Temple Classics, King's Classics, etc. Selections from Wyatt, Surrey, etc., in Manly's English Poetry or Ward's English Poets; Tottel's Miscellany, in Arber's Reprints. Morris and Skeat's Specimens of Early English, vol. 3, has good selections from this period.

Bibliography.[1] *History. Text-book*, Montgomery, pp. 150–208, or Cheyney, pp. 264–328. Greene, ch. 6; Traill; Gardiner; Froude; etc.

Special Works. Denton's England in the Fifteenth Century; Flower's The Century of Sir Thomas More; The Household of Sir Thomas More, in King's Classics; Green's Town Life in the Fifteenth Century; Field's Introduction to the Study of the Renaissance; Einstein's The Italian Renaissance in England; Seebohm's The Oxford Reformers (Erasmus, More, etc.).

Literature. General Works. Jusserand; Ten Brink; Minto's Characteristics of English Poets.

Special Works. Saintsbury's Elizabethan Literature; Malory's Morte d'Arthur, edited by Sommer; the same by Gollancz (Temple Classics); Lanier's The Boy's King Arthur; More's Utopia, in Temple Classics, King's Classics, etc.; Roper's Life of Sir Thomas More, in King's Classics, Temple Classics, etc.; Ascham's Schoolmaster, in Arber's English Reprints; Poems of Wyatt and Surrey, in English Reprints and Bell's Aldine Poets; Simonds's Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Poems; Allen's Selections from Erasmus; Jusserand's Romance of a King's Life (James I of Scotland) contains extracts and an admirable criticism of the King's Quair.

Suggestive Questions. 1. The fifteenth century in English literature is sometimes called "the age of arrest." Can you explain why? What causes account for the lack of great literature in this period? Why should the ruin of noble families at this time seriously affect our literature? Can you recall anything from the Anglo-Saxon period to justify your opinion?

2. What is meant by Humanism? What was the first effect of the study of Greek and Latin classics upon our literature? What excellent literary purposes did the classics serve in later periods?

3. What are the chief benefits to literature of the discovery of printing? What effect on civilization has the multiplication of books?

4. Describe More's *Utopia*. Do you know any modern books like it? Why should any impractical scheme of progress be still called Utopian?

[1] For titles and publishers of general works see General Bibliography at the end of this book.

5. What work of this period had the greatest effect on the English language? Explain why.

6. What was the chief literary influence exerted by Wyatt and Surrey? Do you know any later poets who made use of the verse forms which they introduced?

7. Which of Malory's stories do you like best? Where did these stories originate? Have they any historical foundation? What two great elements did Malory combine in his work? What is the importance of his book to later English literature? Compare Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" and Malory's stories with regard to material, expression, and interest. Note the marked resemblances and differences between the *Morte d'Arthur* and the *Nibelungen Lied*.

CHRONOLOGY

HISTORY	LITERATURE
1413. Henry V	
1415. Battle of Agincourt	1470. Malory's Morte d'Arthur
1422. Henry VI	1474(*c*.). Caxton, at Bruges, prints the
1428. Siege of Orleans. Joan of Arc	first book in English, the
1453. End of Hundred Years' War	Recuyell of the Historyes of
1455–1485. Wars of Roses	Troye
1461. Edward IV	1477. First book printed in England
1483. Richard III	1485. Morte d'Arthur printed by
1485. Henry VII	Caxton
1492. Columbus discovers America	1499. Colet, Erasmus, and More
1509. Henry VIII	bring the New Learning to
	Oxford
	1509. Erasmus's Praise of Folly
	1516. More's Utopia
	1525. Tyndale's New Testament
1534. Act of Supremacy. The Reformation accomplished	1530(*c*.). Introduction of the sonnet and blank verse by Wyatt and Surrey
	1539. The Great Bible
1547. Edward VI	
1553. Mary	1557. Tottel's Miscellany
1558. Elizabeth	

CHAPTER VI

THE AGE OF ELIZABETH

I. HISTORY OF THE PERIOD

Political Summary. In the Age of Elizabeth all doubt seems to vanish from English history. After the reigns of Edward and Mary, with defeat and humiliation abroad and persecutions and rebellion at home, the accession of a popular sovereign was like the sunrise after a long night, and, in Milton's words, we suddenly see England, "a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself, like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks." With the queen's character, a strange mingling of frivolity and strength which reminds one of that iron image with feet of clay, we have nothing whatever to do. It is the national life that concerns the literary student, since even a beginner must notice that any great development of the national life is invariably associated with a development of the national literature. It is enough for our purpose, therefore, to point out two facts: that Elizabeth, with all her vanity and inconsistency, steadily loved England and England's greatness; and that she inspired all her people with the unbounded patriotism which exults in Shakespeare, and with the personal devotion which finds a voice in the *Faery Queen*. Under her administration the English national life progressed by gigantic leaps rather than by slow historical process, and English literature reached the very highest point of its development. It is possible to indicate only a few general characteristics of this great age which had a direct bearing upon its literature.

Characteristics of the Elizabethan Age. The most characteristic feature of the age was the comparative religious tolerance, which was due largely to the queen's influence. The fright-Religious Toleration ful excesses of the religious war known as the Thirty Years' War on the Continent found no parallel in England. Upon her accession Elizabeth found the whole kingdom divided against itself; the North was largely Catholic, while the southern counties were as strongly Protestant. Scotland had followed the Reformation in its own intense way, while Ireland remained true to its old