

## INTRODUCTION

THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE (p. 1) belongs for the most part, of course, to the history of English literature before the Norman Conquest; but the later records, especially those of the Peterborough version, from which our selection is taken, are of great importance for the study of modern English prose. The Chronicle seems to have been begun in the reign of Alfred the Great, perhaps in consequence of his efforts for the education of his people. It exists in six versions, differing more or less from one another both as to the events recorded and the period of time covered, but together forming, in a manner, a single work. The early entries, beginning with 60 B.C., were compiled from various sources and are, for the most part, very meager and uninteresting. Here are the complete records for two years: "An. DCCLXXII. Here (that is, in this year) Bishop Milred died;" "An. DCCLXXIII. Here a red cross appeared in the sky after sunset; and in this year the Mercians and the men of Kent fought at Otford; and wondrous serpents were seen in the land of the South-Saxons." For long, weary stretches of years, there are, with the notable exception of the vivid account of the death of Cynewulf, few more exciting entries than these. Even when great events are recorded, no effort is made to tell how or why they occurred, no attempt to produce an interesting narrative. In the time of King Alfred, however, a change appears, and, though the records still have the character of annals rather than of history, the narrative is often very detailed and interesting, especially in regard to the long and fierce contest with the Danes. After the Norman Conquest, one version of the Chronicle, that kept by the monks of Peterborough, contains entries of the greatest importance both for the history of the times and for the state of the English language then. The latest of these entries is for the year 1154, when the turbulent reign of the weak Stephen was followed by the strong and peaceful administration of Henry II. The selection we have chosen is from the entry for 1137, and gives a startling picture of the terrors of the time. It is almost astounding to recall that it was just at this time that Geoffrey of Monmouth started the story of King Arthur on its long and brilliant career in literature. The most notable things about the passage, considered as English prose, are its simplicity and straightforwardness and its strong resemblance to modern English in sentence structure and word order. These features are probably to be accounted for by the fact that, though the writer doubtless understood Latin, he did not feel that he was producing literature, but only making a plain record of facts, and consequently did not attempt the clumsy artificialities so often produced by those who tried to imitate Latin prose in English.

The OLD ENGLISH HOMILY (p. 1) may serve to illustrate the kind of sermons preached in the twelfth century. The homilies that have come down to us show scarcely any originality of conception or expression. All are reproductions of older English homilies or are based upon similar compositions in Latin by such writers as St. Anselm of Canterbury, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugo of St. Victor, and Radulphus Ardens. In both matter and manner they follow closely their chosen models. The short extract here given has been selected principally because of the curious and amusing anecdote of the young crab and the old, which is its sole touch of freshness or originality. Very noticeable in all of these homilies is the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, which was in vogue for so many centuries; and, in some of them, the mysticism which was rapidly developing

under the influence of the ideals and sentiments of chivalry. The style is determined largely by the fact that they were intended to be read aloud to a congregation. The symbol *u* here and in other early texts is to be pronounced like French *u*, German *ü*, or, less accurately, like Latin *i*.

THE ANCREN RIWLE (p. 2), as its name indicates, is a treatise for the guidance and instruction of some nuns. We learn from the book itself that it was written, at their special request, for three young ladies of gentle birth,—"daughters of one father and one mother," who had forsaken the world for the life of religious contemplation and meditation. There has been some discussion as to the author, but he is generally believed to have been Richard Poore, or Le Poor, bishop successively of Chichester, Salisbury, and Durham, who was born at Tarrent, where these nuns probably had their retreat, and whose heart was buried there after his death in 1237. At any rate, the author was evidently a man in whom learning and no little knowledge of the world were combined with a singularly sweet simplicity, which has often been taken for naïveté. His learning appears abundantly from his familiarity with the writings of the great Church Fathers and the classical Latin authors who were known in his day; his knowledge of the world appears partly in his sagacious counsels as to the more serious temptations of a nun's life, and partly in his adaptation of courtly romantic motives to spiritual themes; while the sweet simplicity of his character is constantly and lovably revealed in the tone of all that he says—even in its sly and charming humor—and in his solicitude about infinite petty details, which are individually insignificant, to be sure, but mean much for the delicacy and peace of life. Of the eight parts or books into which the work is divided only two are devoted to external, material matters, the other six to the inner life; and this proportion is a true indication of the comparative values which the good counselor sets upon these things. The style, for all the learning displayed, is simple and direct, with few traces of Latin sentence structure or word order—a fact due perhaps to the nature and destination of the book no less than to the character of the author.

THE ENGLISH PROCLAMATION OF HENRY III (p. 4) has, of course, no place in the history of literature, though it has in the history of prose style. As the first royal proclamation in the English language after the Conquest its importance is great, but may be easily misunderstood or exaggerated. It does not mark the real beginning of the use of the English language for such purposes; that did not come until many years later. It was issued in English as a political measure, to secure for the king support against his enemies from the large portion of the commonwealth who understood no Latin or French, and as such it is an important evidence of the power of the English-speaking people and the value of their support. In view of its peculiar nature its spelling has been retained without modification. The only features worthy of special notice are the sign *þ*, which means *th*, the sign *ȝ*, which represents a spirant *g* that has become in modern English either *g*, *gh*, *y*, or *w*, and the use of *v* for *u* and *u* for *v*.

RICHARD ROLLE (p. 5), the greatest of the English mystics, was both a poet and a writer of Latin and English prose. His favorite theme of meditation was the love of Christ, a subject which so exalted him that he heard in his meditations music of unearthly sweetness and felt that he had tasted food of heavenly savor. It is in the descriptions of these mystical experiences that he is most interesting and most poetical, but unfortunately for us they are written in Latin. His English prose is, however, more remarkable than his verse. The note of mysticism is unmistakable in the extract here given from one of his epistles. His importance in the history of English religious thought is very great, especially in emphasizing the significance of the inner life in contrast to the mere externals of religious observance—a tendency which we have already noted in English literature in connection with *The Ancren Riwle*.

THE VOIAGE AND TRAVAILLE OF SIR JOHN MAUNDEVILE, KT. (p. 6), is one of the

greatest and most successful literary impostures ever perpetrated. It seems first to have been issued about 1371 in French, from which it was very soon translated into Latin, English, and many other languages. Its popularity was enormous, as is attested by the immense number of Mss. which have come down to us, and by the frequency with which it has been reprinted ever since 1475, the date of the first printed edition. Incredible as are many of the stories it contains, the apparent simplicity and candor of the author, his careful distinction between what he himself had seen and what he reported only on hearsay, his effort to avoid all exaggeration even in his most absurd statements, gained ready belief for his preposterous fabrications, and this was confirmed by the fact that some of the statements which at first seemed most incredible—such as the roundness of the earth—were actually true and were proved to be so by the discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The book was really compiled from many sources, principally the travels of William of Boldensele, a German traveler of the previous century, and Friar Odoric of Pordenone, an Italian who visited Asia in 1316–1320, the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, a great mediæval compilation of history and legend, and Pliny's *Natural History*, that great storehouse of the marvelous. As to the identity of the author, he is now believed to have been one Jean de Bourgogne, an Englishman who fled from England after the execution of his lord, John baron de Mowbray, in 1322, but it is not certainly known whether Mandeville or Bourgogne was his real name. Two witnesses of the sixteenth century record having seen at Liège a tomb to the memory of Dominus Johannes de Mandeville, on which was an epitaph giving the date of his death as Nov. 17, 1371, and some verses declaring him to have been the English Ulysses. In any event, the book is one of the most fascinating books of marvels ever written, and the English version, although a translation, is of the highest importance for the history of English prose.

Of JOHN WICLIF (p. 9) no account is necessary here. Whatever may have been his own part in the translations of the Bible which go under his name, these translations are of great importance for the history of English prose style. The same selection (the fifth chapter of St. Matthew) has therefore been given from both the earlier and the later version. The differences between them are very striking and instructive. In order to afford opportunity for further study of the gradual development of the matchless style of the Authorized Version of the English Bible, the same chapter is given from Tyndale's version (p. 34, below). Both the Authorized and the Revised versions are so easily accessible that it seems unnecessary to print the same chapter from them, but they should not be neglected in the comparison.

JOHN DE TREVISA (p. 11) translated into English in 1387 the *Polychronicon* of Ranulph Higden, a sort of universal history and geography written about half a century earlier. Higden's work is largely a compilation from other authors, whose names he often gives,—sometimes wrongly, to be sure,—but he added a good deal from his own personal knowledge. Trevisa, in his turn, made some additions in his translation. The chapter here given is interesting as a specimen of fourteenth-century English prose, but still more so for the glimpses it affords as to the state of the language in the time of Higden and the changes that took place between then and the time when Trevisa wrote.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (p. 12) is also too well known to require an additional note. It may, however, be remarked that the simplicity of the *Prologue to the Astrolabe* and the skill shown in the translation of *Boethius* indicate that, had prose been regarded as a proper medium for literary art in his day, Chaucer could have told his tales in a prose as simple, as musical, and as flexible as his verse, for he obviously could have wrought out such a prose had there been the incentive to do so.

THE REPRESSOR OF OVER MUCH BLAMING OF THE CLERGY (p. 16) is the most important monument of English prose in the first two thirds of the fifteenth century. It is

clear and vigorous in style, and well organized and arranged as a discussion. It was intended as a defense of the practices of the Church of England against the criticisms of the Lollards, and is distinguished by great ingenuity and subtlety. Its author, Reginald Pecock, bishop successively of St. Asaph and Chichester, was very proud of his skill as a logician and delighted to undertake a difficult discussion. In this book he alienated some of the officials of the Church by the arguments used to defend it, and completed this alienation by the publication of heretical doctrines, such as his denial of the authenticity of the Apostles' Creed. He was seized and compelled to recant his opinions and to see his books burnt as heretical. He died a disappointed and broken man.

The *Morte Darthur* of SIR THOMAS MALORY (p. 18) has long been famous, not only as the source of most of the modern poems about King Arthur and his Knights, but also as one of the most interesting books in any language. It has recently been shown by Professor Kittredge that Sir Thomas was not, as some have supposed, a priest, but, as the colophon of his book tells us, a soldier, with just such a career as one would wish for the compiler of such a volume. He was attached to the train of the famous Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and perhaps was brought up in his service. As Professor Kittredge says, "No better school for the future author of the *Morte Darthur* can be imagined than a personal acquaintance with that Englishman whom all Europe recognized as embodying the knightly ideal of the age." The Emperor Sigismund, we are informed on excellent authority, said to Henry V, "that no prince Cristen for wisdom, norture, and manhode, hadde such another knyght as he had of therle Warrewyk; addyng therto that if al curtesye were lost, yet myght hit be founde ageyn in hym; and so ever after by the emperours auctorite he was called the 'Fadre of Curteisy.'" Sir Thomas derived his materials from old romances, principally in French, which he attempted to condense and reduce to order. His style, though it may have been affected to some extent by his originals, is essentially his own. Its most striking excellence is its diction, which is invariably picturesque and fresh, and this undoubtedly must be ascribed to him. The syntax, though sometimes faulty, has almost always a certain naïve charm. On the whole, regarding both matter and manner, one can hardly refuse assent to Caxton when he says, "But thystorye (*i.e.* the history) of the sayd Arthur is so gloryous and shynyng, that he is stalled in the fyrst place of the moost noble, beste, and worthyest of the Cristen men."

WILLIAM CAXTON (p. 21) of course rendered his greatest services to English literature as a printer and publisher, but the charming garrulity of his prefaces, as well as their intrinsic interest, richly entitles him to be represented here. The passage chosen is, in its way, a classic in the history of the English language. I have tried to make it easier to read by breaking up into shorter lengths his rambling statements, — they can hardly be called sentences, — but I somewhat fear that, in so doing, a part, at least, of their quaint charm may have been sacrificed.

THE CRONYCLE OF SYR JOHN FROISSART (p. 22), written in French in the fourteenth century, is as charming in manner and almost as romantic in material as *Le Morte Darthur* itself. Sir John was intimately acquainted with men who were actors or eyewitnesses of nearly all the chivalric deeds performed in his day in England and France, and indeed in the whole of western Europe, and his chronicle has all the interest of a personal narrative combined with the charm of his shrewd simplicity and his fine enthusiasm for noble deeds. The age in which he lived was one of the most picturesque in history. Chivalry had reached the height of its splendid development, and, though doomed by the new forces that had come into the world, — gunpowder, cannon, and the growing importance of commerce, — its ideals were cherished with perhaps a greater intensity of devotion than ever before. It was the age of Chaucer and the author of *Gawain and the Green Knight* in literature, and of Edward III and the Black Prince with their brilliant train of followers in tourney and battle. Froissart wrote professedly "to the intent that the honourable

and noble adventures of feats of arms, done and achieved by the wars of France and England, should notably be enregistered and put in perpetual memory, whereby the prewe (noble) and hardy may have ensample to encourage them in their well-doing." His accounts of events are sometimes colored by this pious intention, as well as by the prejudices of his informants; and that is the case with the selection here given. It appears from other sources that the young king did not act as nobly and bravely at Mile-end Green as Froissart represents him, but no doubt his friends persuaded themselves and Froissart that he did, and it seemed a fine example to record for the encouragement of high-spirited young men. The interest and importance of the passage may excuse its length; it has been quoted or paraphrased by every historian who has written about the famous Revolt of 1381. The style of the translator, Lord Berners, is admirable in its simple dignity and its wonderful freshness and vividness of diction.

SIR THOMAS MORE (p. 29) is one of the most striking and charming figures in the brilliant court of Henry VIII, and is known to all students of literature as the author of *Utopia*. Unfortunately for our purposes that interesting book was written in Latin and, though soon translated into English, cannot represent to us the author's English style. I have chosen a selection from his *Dialogues* rather than from the *History of Richard III*, partly because the style seems to me more touched with the author's emotion, and partly because the passage presents the attitude of the writer on a question which may interest many modern readers. It is characteristic in its mixture of dignity, good sense, prejudice, enlightenment, spiritual earnestness, and playfulness of temper.

The *Sermon* by HUGH LATIMER, an extract from which is here given (p. 36), represents English pulpit oratory of the middle of the sixteenth century at its very best. Latimer was famous for his sound learning, his sturdy common sense, his pithy colloquial style, and his intellectual and spiritual fearlessness. A very fair conception of the man may be obtained from this sermon and Foxe's account of his death (p. 41, below).

ROGER ASCHAM, tutor to Queen Elizabeth and one of the most learned men of his time, declared that he could more easily have written his *Scholemaster* (p. 38) in Latin than in English, and no doubt he could; but, fortunately, other considerations than ease induced him to write in English. The book is intensely interesting, because of the thoroughly wholesome attitude towards learning, not as of value for its own sake, but as a means for the cultivation of mind and spirit and an aid toward the development of the perfect man, perfect in body, in mind, and in soul, in agility and strength, in intellectual power and knowledge, in courtesy and honor and religion, which was the finest ideal of the leaders of that great intellectual and spiritual awakening which we call the Renaissance. The same attitude is displayed in his other interesting book, the *Toxophilus*, which is also well worth reading, especially by all who care both for learning and for outdoor sports. The methods of training children and of teaching Latin outlined in the *Scholemaster* are so humane and sane and effective, that it is hard to believe that, having once been practiced or even suggested, they could have been forgotten and neglected, and needed to be rediscovered within our own time, — indeed have not yet been discovered in their entirety by all teachers. In spite of Ascham's facility in Latin, his English is simple, clear, and idiomatic, and is permeated by the attractiveness of his nature.

FOXES'S *Acts and Monuments of these latter and perillous Dayes* (p. 41), better known as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, was for many years one of the most popular books in the English language and was reprinted many times. It is, of course, in many respects a barbarous book, the product of an age when scarcely any one, Catholic or Protestant, doubted that cruel torture was a proper means of inculcating the true faith, and death a proper penalty for refusing to accept it. The book long kept alive the bitter and distorted memories of that time. The style is usually plain and a trifle stiff, but occasionally rises to eloquence.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S famous book, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (p. 45), is too leisurely in movement and too complicated in structure to be well illustrated by a continuous selection, except as to its style, but the passage here presented seems better suited than any other of similar length to convey an idea of the nature of the story and the sources of its charm for Sidney's contemporaries.

The selection from JOHN LYLY'S *Euphuus and his England* (p. 57) may seem to some teachers shorter than is warranted by Lyly's reputation and his indubitable services to English prose. But the characteristics of his style are such as can be exhibited in comparatively small compass; and its excessive ornamentation soon becomes monotonous and unendurable. Moreover, it is not by its ornamental but by its structural features that it rendered its services to English prose, and the most significant of these, as Professor Morsbach has recently shown, is exact balance of accents in correlative phrases and clauses. This very important feature can easily and quickly be worked out by teacher or pupils; and the process, if applied to several authors, cannot fail to be profitable.

ROBERT GREENE (p. 64) is fully discussed in all histories of English Literature. I wish here only to explain that I have given three selections from works attributed to him, not because I regard him as more important for the history of English prose than some others less generously represented, but for other reasons. In the first place, if all three are really by Greene, they deserve attention as presenting three different styles and kinds of writing; in the second place, at least two of them are of special interest to historians of literature and are often quoted for the illustration of Elizabethan life. I confess that, in my opinion, the most famous of the three, the *Groat's Worth of Wit*, is, as some of Greene's friends declared when it was published (after his death), not the product of Greene's pen, but the work of Henry Chettle. Professor Vetter's arguments against Greene's authorship<sup>1</sup> seem to me conclusive, and it would not be difficult to add to them.

The length of the extract from DEKKER'S *Gull's Hornbook* (p. 89) will no doubt be excused, even by the student, for the sake of its vivid picture of the way in which the "young bloods" of Shakspeare's day and those who wished to be thought such conducted themselves. The advice is of course ironical throughout, but, like many another humorist who has poked fun at men with a grave face, Dekker has been supposed by some readers to have written a serious guide for frivolous men.

ROBERT BURTON (p. 97) will doubtless be little to the taste of the ordinary modern reader, not only because of his love for Latin phrases and quotations with uncouth references, but also because of the quaint style and fantastic humor which have endeared him to so many of the greatest lovers of literature. His book is, as might be expected, the product of an uneventful life of studious leisure, passed in the quiet shades of the University of Oxford. The best way to learn to love it is to read it in the same circumstances in which it was produced; the leisure of a long and lazy summer day or a quiet winter night is almost indispensable for a full appreciation of its shrewd sense and whimsical humor. The passage here given contains not only the brief anecdote from which Keats developed his beautiful poem *Lamia*, but also, if not the sources, at least analogues, of Balzac's remarkable story, *A Passion in the Desert*, and F. Anstey's *A Tinted Venus*. The notes not in brackets are those of the author himself. They have been retained in their original form because, not only in their range, but even in their occasional vagueness, they are characteristic of the author.

*Leviathan* (p. 102) is the strange title given by THOMAS HOBBS to his book on government, or, as he calls it, "the matter, form, and power of a commonwealth." The most distinguishing features of Hobbes are his entire freedom from mysticism, his conviction that all error and all ignorance are the results of a failure to reason clearly and sensibly,

<sup>1</sup> Abhandl. d. 44ten Sammlung d. deut. Schulmänner (Teubner, 1897).

and his thoroughgoing application of his principle that "there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense." His own thought is always clear and simple; all that he could see in the world he could understand, and all that he could understand he could express in its entirety. He conceived of all men (and of God) as made in his own image, differing from himself only in that some are very foolish and none so clear and consistent in reasoning as he. His style is very characteristic, clear, vigorous, rapid, and full of phrases that stick in the memory.

THOMAS FULLER (p. 117) is famous as antiquary, biographer, historian, pulpit orator, and wit. His wit — the quality which has most effectively kept his work alive for modern lovers of literature — is displayed at its best, not in the limning of a picture or the development of a theme, but by flashes, in quaint and impressive phrases or in glances at unnoted aspects of a subject. It therefore does not appear so strikingly in a continuous extract as in such a collection of brief paragraphs as Charles Lamb made for the delectation of himself and spirits akin to his. The short biographical sketch of Sir Francis Drake here given does not, indeed, illustrate the versatility of his genius, but it presents a good specimen of his sustained power as a writer of English prose.

JEREMY TAYLOR (p. 136) was a master of elaborate and involved prose rhythms and as such will always retain his place in the history of English literature. Whether his fondness for themes of decay and death was due to a morbid liking for the subjects themselves, or to the value which religious teachers in general at that time attached to the contemplation of physical corruption, or whether such themes offered a specially favorable opportunity for lyrical movements in prose ending in minor cadences, may admit of discussion. Certainly one hears even in the most soaring strains of his eloquence the ground tone of the futility and vanity of life.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE (p. 143) was not a great writer, but his prose is so good in technique that it may serve to call attention to the fact that the secrets of prose style had been mastered and a flexible and effective instrument of expression had been created by the long line of writers who had wrought at the problem. Henceforth, while great writing was, as always, possible only to that special temperamental organization which we call genius, clear and graceful prose was within the scope of any intelligent man of good taste and good training, as is distinctly shown by the high level maintained in the eighteenth century even by writers of mediocre ability.

*The Diary* of SAMUEL PEPYS (p. 168) is probably the most honest and unsophisticated self-revelation ever given to the world. This is due partly to the fact that Pepys did not suppose that it would ever be read by any one but himself, and partly to an intellectual clearness and candor which enabled him to describe his actions and feelings without self-deception. Other autobiographies — even the most famous — have, without exception, been written with half an eye on the public; either the author has, consciously or half-consciously, posed to excite admiration for his cleverness or to shock by his unconventionalities, or he has become secretive at the very moment when he was beginning to be most interesting. But the reader would judge unjustly who estimated Pepys's character solely on the basis of the diary. He was in his own day regarded as a model of propriety and respectability and a man of unusual business capacity. He may be said, indeed, with little exaggeration, to have created the English navy; when he became Secretary to the Generals of the Fleet, the Admiralty Office was practically without organization, before the close of his career he had organized it and, as a recent Lord of the Admiralty says, provided it with "the principal rules and establishments in present use." That he was not altogether averse to what we now call "graft," is true; but in an age of universal bribery he was a notably honest and honorable official, and he never allowed his private interests to cause injury or loss to the service. No document of any sort gives us so full and varied and vivid an account of the social life and pursuits of the Restoration period;

Pepys is often ungrammatical, but he is never dull in manner or unprovided with interesting material. The carelessness of his style is due in no small measure to the nature of his book. He wrote for his own eye alone, using a system of shorthand which was not deciphered until 1825. That he was a man of cultivation is proved by the society in which he moved, by his interest in music and the drama, by the valuable library of books and prints which he accumulated and bequeathed to Magdalene College, Cambridge, by his interest in the Royal Society, and by the academic honors conferred upon him by the universities.

SHAFTESBURY'S *Characteristics* (p. 197) is another notable example of the high development which English prose style had obtained at the beginning of the eighteenth century. His philosophy, like most of the philosophy of the time, seems to us of the present day to be singularly lacking in breadth, depth, and solidity of content, but there can be no question of the clearness and grace of his presentation of it. Occasionally, to be sure, Shaftesbury's style becomes florid and acquires a movement inappropriate to prose, but such occasions are rare and in the main his prose will bear comparison with the best of its time.

In such a volume as this it is, of course, impossible to illustrate the work of the novelists as novelists; and considerations of space have made necessary the omission of all but a few of the most notable. In some cases it has been necessary to choose an extract from a novel in order to present the writer at his best; but wherever it is possible a selection has been chosen with a view to presenting the writer only as a writer of prose, leaving the more important aspect of his work to be presented in some other way. Thus from Fielding chapters have been chosen which give his theory of narrative art.

Whatever may have been the real basis for MACPHERSON'S so-called translation of the *Poems of Ossian* (p. 275), the work exercised a great, and, indeed, almost immeasurable, influence upon English and other literatures. Some persons may be disposed to criticise the inclusion of an extract from this translation in this volume rather than in the volume of poetry, but the translation itself is rhythmical prose, and it would not be difficult to show that it has exercised an equal or even greater influence upon prose than upon poetry. The question as to Macpherson's responsibility for the poems will probably never be entirely resolved. Celtic poems bearing considerable resemblance to his translations undoubtedly existed in considerable number, but it seems certain that his work was in no case merely that of a translator.

The long chapter from BOSWELL'S *Life of Johnson* is full of the prejudice and injustice of the author toward Oliver Goldsmith, whose ideas were often too advanced for such stanch worshipers of the established order as both Boswell and his master, Johnson, were, and whose personal sensitiveness made him, despite his intellectual independence, constantly the victim of the great dictator's methods of argument. That this chapter has had no little influence in the formation of false opinion about Goldsmith and even in promoting misunderstanding of his work, there can be little doubt; but it illustrates Boswell's method so well and presents Johnson so interestingly that I have not hesitated to print it.

THE LETTERS OF JUNIUS (p. 292) produced in their day a very great sensation, and their fame has been heightened by the mystery surrounding their authorship. Many of the prominent men of the time were accused of writing them and not a few either shyly admitted or boldly claimed the credit and the infamy. The reason why the real author did not appear and establish his claims was, as De Quincey long ago pointed out, that he could not assert his right to the literary fame without at the same time convicting himself of having made improper use of his official position under the government to obtain the information which made his attacks so effective. Historians of English literature have long accustomed us to believe that these letters depended for their success solely upon their literary style, their bitterness of invective, and their sardonic irony; but, although they

are remarkable as literature, the special feature which aroused the fears of the government was the fact that no state secret seemed safe from the author and that he might at any moment reveal matters which it was important to keep unknown. Recent researches have made it practically certain that Junius was Sir Philip Francis, who was a clerk in the war office during the period of the publication of the letters.

If FRANCIS JEFFREY (p. 320) was unjust in his reviews of Wordsworth, lovers of Wordsworth — and who is not? — have been at least equally unjust in their treatment of Jeffrey. Sentences have been quoted, often in garbled form and always without the context, to illustrate the unfairness and stupidity and poetic insensibility of Jeffrey. Most sane critics of the present day differ from Jeffrey mainly in emphasis, they recognize that Wordsworth really had the defects which Jeffrey pointed out, and that they are grave. But in literature only the successes count, the failures fall away and should be forgotten. The selection here printed presents Jeffrey in his most truculent mood; another selection, the review of the *Excursion*, was planned for this volume, but the limitation of our space necessitated its omission.

LEIGH HUNT (p. 354) hardly deserves to be retained in a book from which it has been necessary, on account of lack of space, to exclude so many of his betters, but the interest of comparing his version of the *Daughter of Hippocrates* with Sir John Mandeville's prose (p. 6) and William Morris's poem (*English Poetry*, p. 551) was too great for my powers of resistance. Mandeville's version is a masterpiece of simple vivid narration, Morris's a wonder of visualized color and form and action, while Hunt's is a bit of clever but feeble prettiness, the work of a man totally deficient in distinction and power. These versions may help the student to understand when borrowing is not plagiarism — a task apparently too difficult for many who are sincerely interested in the problem.

The long selection from MACAULAY'S famous chapter on the state of England at the time of the Revolution of 1688 (p. 382) is of course out of proportion to his importance among writers of English prose; but teachers who are tired of reading over and over again his biographical sketches will doubtless welcome it as a change, and both teachers and pupils will surely find it valuable for the vivid picture it gives of the physical and social background against which so large a part of English literature must be seen if it is to be seen truly. Moreover, in style it presents Macaulay at his best.

The title *Mabinogion* (p. 521) was given by LADY CHARLOTTE GUEST to the Welsh tales which she translated from the Red Book of Hergest, a collection of bardic materials. The Red Book was apparently written in the fourteenth century, but all of the stories probably took their present form earlier, and some of them are, in some form, of great antiquity. The term *Mabinogion*, though it has been generally accepted, does not properly include the tale here given. A young man who aspired to become a bard was called a *Mabinog* and was expected to learn from his master certain traditional lore called *Mabinogi*. Four of the tales included in the Red Book are called "branches of the Mabinogi." Lady Charlotte Guest treated *Mabinogi* as a singular, meaning a traditional Welsh tale, and from it formed the plural *Mabinogion*, which has since been widely used as she used it. Her translation was published in 1838-1849, and has been greatly admired for its preservation of the simplicity and charm of the originals. The story here printed is not purely Welsh, but has been affected in greater or less degree by the form and ideas of Arthurian romance as developed in France and England under the influence of chivalry.