

INITIATION INTO LITERATURE

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BY

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The Translator begs to acknowledge with appreciation the courtesy of the Author in graciously consenting to make some valuable additions, at his request, specially for the English version.

PREFACE

This volume, as indicated by the title, is designed to show the way to the beginner, to satisfy and more especially to excite his initial curiosity. It affords an adequate idea of the march of facts and of ideas. The reader is led, somewhat rapidly, from the remote origins to the most recent efforts of the human mind.

It should be a convenient repertory to which the mind may revert in order to see broadly the general opinion of an epoch—and what connected it with those that followed or preceded it. It aims above all at being a frame in which can conveniently be inscribed, in the course of further studies, new conceptions more detailed and more thoroughly examined.

It will have fulfilled its design should it incite to research and meditation, and if it prepares for them correctly.

E. FAGUET.

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CHAPTER I

ANCIENT INDIA

The *_Vedas_*. Buddhist Literature. Great Epic Poems, then very Diverse, much Shorter Poems. Dramatic Literature. Moral Literature.

THE *_VEDAS_*.—The ancient Indians, who spoke Sanscrit, possess a literature which goes back, perhaps, to the fifteenth century before Christ. At first, like all other races, they possessed a sacred literature intimately bound up with their religion. The earliest volumes of sacred literature are the *_Vedas_*. They describe and glorify the gods then worshipped, to wit, Agni, god of fire, of the domestic hearth, of the celestial fire (the sun), of the atmospheric fire (lightning); Indra, god of atmosphere, analogous to Zeus of the Greeks; Soma, the moon; Varuna, the nocturnal vault, the god who rewards the good and punishes the evil; Rudra, the irascible god, more evil than well disposed, though sometimes helpful; others too, very numerous.

The style of the *_Vedas_* is continually poetic and metaphorical. They contain a sort of metaphysics as well as continual allegories.

BUDDHA.—Buddhism, a philosophical religion, sufficiently analogous to Christianity, which Sakyamuni, surnamed Buddha (the wise), spread through India towards 550 B.C., created a new literature. It taught, as will be remembered, the equality of all castes in the sight of religion, metempsychosis, charity, and detachment from all passions and desires in order to arrive at absolute calm (*_nirvana_*). The literature it inspired was primarily *_gnomic_*, that is, sententious, analogous to that of Pythagoras, with a tendency towards little moral tales and parables, as in the Gospel.

This literature subsequently expanded into large and even immense epic poems, of which the principal are the *_Mahabharata_* and the *_Ramayana_*.

THE *_MAHABHARATA_*; THE *_RAMAYANA_*.—The *_Mahabharata_* (that is, the *_great history of the Bharatas_*) is a legend or a novel in verse intersected with moral digressions, with episodes vaguely related to the subject, with discourses and prayers. There are charming episodes full of delicate sensibility, of moving tenderness—that is to say, of human beauty, comparable to the farewells of Hector and Andromache in Homer; and everywhere, amid tediousness and monotony, is found a powerful and superabundant imagination.

The *_Ramayana_*, the name of the author of which, Valmiki, has come down to us, is a poem yet more vast and unequal. There are portions which to us are quite unreadable, and there are others comparable to the most

imposing and most touching in all epic poetry. Reduced to its theme, the subject of *Mahabharata* is extremely simple; it is the history of Prince Rama, dispossessed of his throne, who saw his beloved wife, Sita, ravished by the monstrous demon Ravana, who made alliance with the good monkeys and with them constructed a bridge over the sea to reach the island on which Sita was detained, who vanquished and slew Ravana, who re-found Sita, and finally went back happily to his kingdom, which had also been re-conquered.

The most noticeable exterior characteristic of the *Mahabharata* is the almost constant mingling of men and animals, a mingling which one feels is in conformity with the dogma of the transmigration of souls. Not only monkeys but vultures, eagles, gazelles, etc., are brought into the work and form important personages. We are in the epoch when the animals spoke. Battles are numerous and described in great detail; the *Ramayana* is the *Iliad* of the Indians; pathetic scenes, as well as those of love, of friendship, of gratitude are not rare, and are sometimes exquisite. The whole poem is imbued with a great feeling of humanity, heroism, and justice. Victory is to the good and right is triumphant; the gods permit that the just should suffer and be compelled to struggle; but invariably it is only for a time and the merited happiness is at the end of all.

After these two vast giant epics there were written among the Indians a number of shorter narrative poems, very varied both in tone and manner, which suggest an uninterrupted succession of highly important and animated schools of literature. Nearer to our own time—that is, towards the fifth or sixth century of our era, lyric poetry and the drama were, as it were, detached from the epopee and existed on their own merits. Songs of love, of hate, of sadness, or of triumph took ample scope; they were more often melancholy than sad, for India is the land of optimism, or at least of resignation.

DRAMATIC POETRY.—As for the dramatic poetry, that is very curious; it is not mixed with epopee in the precise sense of the word; but it is continually mingled with descriptions of nature, with word-paintings of nature and invocations to nature. The Indian dramatic poet did not separate man from the air he breathed nor from the world around him; in recalling the moment of the day or night in which the scene takes place, *the actual hour*, the poet, no doubt in obedience to a law dictated to him by his public, kept his characters in communication with earth and heaven, with the dawn he described, the moon he painted, the evening he caused to be seen, the plants he portrayed as withering or reviving, the birds which he showed everywhere in the country or returning to their habitation, etc.

From the purely dramatic aspect, these plays are often affecting or curious, possessing penetrating and thoughtful psychology. The most celebrated dramas still left to us of the Indian stage are *The Chariot*

of Baked Clay_ and the affecting and delicate _Sakuntala_ the gem of Indian literature, the work of the poet Kalidas, who was also a remarkable lyric poet.

GNOMIC POETRY.—Gnomic, that is sententious, poetry, which, it has been indicated, very early enjoyed high appreciation among the Indians, long continued to obtain their approval. It was always wise and often intellectual. The collection of Barthari, who belonged to the sixth or seventh century A.D., contains thoughts which would do honour to the highest moralists of the most enlightened epochs. "The fortune, ample or restricted, which the Creator hath inscribed on thy forehead thou wilt assuredly attain; wert thou in the desert or in the gold-mines of Meru, more couldst thou not acquire. Therefore, of what avail to torment thyself and to humiliate thyself before the powerful. A pot does not draw more water from the sea than from a well."

And this might be by a modern man opposing La Rochefoucauld: "The modest man is one poor in spirit, the devout a hypocrite, the honest man is artful, the hero is a barbarian, the ascetic is a fool, the unreserved a chatterbox, the prudent a waverer. Tell me, which is the virtue among all the virtues that human malice cannot vilify?"

Here, finally, is a truth for all time: "It is easy to persuade the ignorant, still easier to persuade the very wise; but he who hath a commencement of wisdom Brahma himself could not cajole."

Indian literature continued to be productive, though losing much of its fecundity, until the fifteenth or sixteenth century of our era. Without exaggeration, it is permissible to conject that its scope extended over twenty-five centuries. It possesses the uniquely honourable trait that it is, assuredly, the only one which owes nothing to any other and is literally indigenous.

CHAPTER II

HEBRAIC LITERATURE

The Bible, a Collection of Epic, Lyric, Elegiac, and Sententious Writings. The Talmud, Book of Ordinances. The Gospels.

THE BIBLE.—The Hebrew race possessed a literature from about 1050 B.C. It embodied in poems the legends which had circulated among the people since the most remote epoch of their existence. It was those poems, gathered later into one collection, which formed what, since approximately the year 400, we call the Bible—that is, the Book of

books.

In the Bible there are histories (_Genesis_, _History of the Jews_ up to Joshua, the _Book of Joshua_, _Judges_, _Kings_, etc.), then anecdotal episodes (_Ruth_, _Esdras_, _Tobit_, _Judith_, _Esther_), then books of moral philosophy (_Proverbs of Solomon_, _Ecclesiastes_, _Wisdom_, _Ecclesiasticus_), then books of an oratorical and lyrical character (_Psalms of David_ and all the _Prophets_). Finally, a single work, still lyrical but in which there are marked traces of the dramatic type (the _Song of Songs_).

THE TALMUD.—To the works which have been gathered into the Bible, it is necessary to add the Talmud, a collection of commentaries on the civil and religious laws of the Jews, which forms an indispensable supplement to the Bible, to anyone desiring to understand the Hebraic civilisation.

THE GOSPELS.—The Gospels, published in the Greek tongue, have nothing Hebraic except that they were compiled by Jews or by their immediate disciples and that they have preserved something of the manner of writing of the Jews.

BIBLICAL WRITINGS.—The Biblical writings, regarded solely from the literary point of view, form one of the finest monuments of human thought. The sentiment of grandeur and even of infinity in _Genesis_ ; the profound and simple sensibility as in the _History of Joseph_, _Tobit_, and _Esther_ ; eloquence and exquisite religious sentiment as in the _Book of Job_ and the _Psalms of David_ ; ecstatic lyricism, vehement and fiery, accompanied with incredible satiric force as in the _Prophets_ ; wisdom alike equal to that of the Stoics and of the serious Epicureans as in _Ecclesiastes_ and the _Proverbs_ ; everywhere marvellous imagination, always concise at least, if not restrained; lyrical sensuality which recalls the most perturbed creations of erotic Greeks and Latins, whilst surpassing them in beauty as in the _Song of Songs_ ; and throughout there is this grandeur, this simple majesty, this easy and natural sublimity which in the same degree is to be found only occasionally in Homer and which appears to be the privilege of the people who were the first to believe in a single God. That is what makes, almost in a continuous way, the astonishing beauty of the Bible, and which explains how whole nations, of other origin, have made down to our own day, and still continue to make, the Bible their uninterrupted study, and draw from it courage, serenity, exaltation of soul, and a singular ferment of their poetic and literary genius.

As has been the case with many other literary monuments, it is possible, without owning that it is desirable, that the Bible may even survive the numerous and important religions which have been born from it.

CHAPTER III

THE GREEKS

Homer. Hesiod. Elegiac and Lyric Poets. Prose Writers. Philosophers and Historians. Lyric Poets. Dramatic Poets. Comic Poets. Orators. Romancers.

HOMER.—The most ancient Greek writer known is Homer, and it cannot be absolutely stated in what epoch he lived.

Since the seventeenth century it has even been asked if he ever existed and if his poems are not collections of epic songs which had circulated in ancient Greece and which at a very recent epoch, that of Pisistratus, had been gathered into two grand consecutive poems, thanks to some rearrangement and editing. At the commencement of the nineteenth century the erudite were generally agreed that Homer had never existed. Now they are reverting to the belief that there were only two Homers, one the author of the *Iliad* and the other of the *Odyssey*.

THE *ILIAD*.—The *Iliad* is the story of the wrath of Achilles, of his retreat far from his friends who were endeavouring to capture Troy and of his return to them.

It is the poem of patriotism. It is filled with the spirit that when a people is divided against itself, all misfortunes fall on and overwhelm it. Achilles, unjustly offended, deprived his fellow-countrymen of his support; they are all on the point of perishing; he returns to them in order to avenge the death of his dearest friend and they are saved.

The *Iliad* is almost entirely filled with battles, which are very skillfully diversified. Some episodes, such as the farewell of Hector to his wife Andromache when he quits her for the fight, or King Priam coming, in tears, to ask Achilles for the corpse of his son Hector that he may piously inter it, are among the most beautiful passages that ever came from a human inspiration.

THE *ODYSSEY*.—The *Odyssey* is also the poem of patriotism, of the *little homeland*, of the native land. It is the story of Ulysses, after the siege of Troy, reconquering Ithaca, the small island of which he is king, and taking ten years to acquire it. What makes the unity of the poem, what forms the backbone of the poem, is the smoke which rises above the house of Ulysses, which he always perceives in the dream of his hopes and desires, which invincibly attracts him, which he desires to see again before he dies, and the thought of which sustains him in his trials and causes him to scorn all joys on his road thither. The thousand adventures of Ulysses, his sojourn with the nymph Calypso, his terrible perils in the cave of the giant Polyphemus and near the isle of the Sirens, the tempests which he survives, the hospitality he

receives from King Alcinoüs, the visit he pays to the dead—among whom is Achilles regretting the earth and preferring to be a ploughman among the living rather than king among the dead; these are vigorous, curious, interesting, touching, picturesque scenes from which all subsequent literatures have drawn inspiration and which still delight all races.

HESIOD.—Posterior, very probably, to Homer, Hesiod has left two great poems, one on the families of the gods (*Theogonia*) and the other on the works of man (*Works and Days*). The *Theogonia* is very valuable to us because we learn from it and it makes us understand how the Greeks understood the divinity, its different manifestations, and, so to say, its evolution through the world. *Works and Days* is a poem filled with both sadness and courage, the author finding the world wicked and men unjust; but always concluding that with energy, perseverance, and obstinacy it is possible to save oneself from anything, and that there is only one real misfortune, which is to know despair.

ELEGIACAL AND LYRICAL POETS.—Almost from the most remote antiquity, from the seventh century, perhaps the eighth century before the Christian era, the Greeks possessed elegiacal and lyrical poets—that is to say, poets who put into verse their personal sentiments, the joys and sorrows which they felt as men. Such were Callinos, the satiric Archilochus, the satiric Simonides of Amorgos, the martial Tyrtaeus. Then there were the poets who made verses to be set to music: Alcaeus, Sappho, Anacreon, Alcman. Alcaeus appears to have been the greatest lyrical Greek poet judging by the fragments we possess by him and by the lyrical poems of Horace, which there are reasons for believing were imitated from Alcaeus.

Of the poetess Sappho we have too little to enable us to judge her very exactly; but throughout antiquity she enjoyed a glory equal to that of the greatest. She specially sang of love and in such a manner as to lead to the belief that she herself had not escaped the passion.

Anacreon sang after the same fashion and with a charm, a grace, a witty ingenuity which are fascinating. He was the epicurean of poetry (before the birth of Epicurus) and from him was born a type of literature known as anacreontic, which extended right through ancient times and has been prolonged to modern times.

PROSE WRITERS.—Finally prose was born, in the sixth century before Christ, with the philosophers Thales, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, and with the historians, of whom only one of that epoch has remained famous, namely Herodotus.

HERODOTUS.—Herodotus, in a general history of his own time and of that immediately preceding it, is often not far from epic poetry. His style is at once limpid and warm, he possesses a pleasing power of distinction, the taste for and curiosity about the manners of foreign peoples, a laughing and easy imagination without any pretence at the philosophy of

history or of moralising through history. He was, above all, a delightful writer.

AESOP.—To this period (albeit somewhat at hazard) it is possible to ascribe Aesop, about whom nothing is known except that he wrote the fables which have been imitated from generation to generation. The collection that we possess under his name is one of these imitations, perpetrated long after his death, but as to which it is impossible to assign a date.

PINDAR.—Pindar, the Theban, broadened and extended the lyrical type. Under him it preserved its power, its high spirits, its verse and, so to say, its fine fury; but he introduced into the epic the narration of ancient legends, the acts and gestures of the ancient heroes, and effected this so admirably that the most lyrical of Grecian lyricists is an historian. Capable of sustained elevation, of sublime thoughts and expressions, of a fine disorder which has been overpraised, and which on close expression is found to be very careful, he has been regarded as the very type of dignified and poetic style, and more or less to be imitated by all ambitious poets commencing with Ronsard. The wise, like Horace, have contented themselves with praising him. From fragments left to us he is infinitely impassioned to read.

GREEK TRAGEDY.—Greek tragedy, which is one of the miracles of the human brain, began in the sixth century B.C. It was born of the dithyramb. The dithyramb is a chant in chorus in honour of a god or a hero. From this chorus emerged a single actor who sang the praises of the god, and to which the choir replied. When, instead of one actor, there were two who addressed one another in dialogue and were answered by the choir, the dramatic poem was founded. When there were three—and there were hardly ever any more—tragedy, as the Greeks understood it, existed.

THESPIA; AESCHYLUS; SOPHOCLES.—Thespis was the earliest known to us who took rudimentary tragedies from town to town in Attica. Then came Aeschylus, whose tragedy, already rigid and hieratical, was very powerful, imbued with terrible majesty; then came Sophocles, a religious philosopher, having a feeling for the old religion and the art of giving it a moral character, great lyrical poet, master of dialogue, eloquent, moving, knowing how to construct and carry on a dramatic poem with infinite skill, to whom, in fact, can be denied no quality of dramatic poetry and who attains a conception of perfection.

EURIPIDES.—Euripides, less religious as a philosopher, sometimes suggesting the sophist and a little the rhetorician, but full of ideas, eloquent, affecting, "the most tragic" (that is, the most pathetic) of all the acting dramatists, as Aristotle observed, the most modern, too, and the one we best understand, has been the true source whence have been freely drawn the tragedies of modern times, more particularly of our own.

The greatest works of Aeschylus are *Seven Against Thebes* and *Prometheus Bound*; the greatest of Sophocles: *Antigone*, *Oedipus the Tyrant* and *Oedipus at Colonus*; the greatest of Euripides: *Hippolytus* and *Iphigenia*.

After Euripides tragedy was exhausted and only produced very second-rate works.

COMEDY.—Comedy enjoyed a longer existence. Very obscure in origin, no doubt proceeding from the opprobrious jests exchanged by the lower classes in mirthful hours, it was at first freely fantastical, composed in dialogue, oratorical, lyrical, satirical, even epical at times. Like tragedy, it possessed a chorus for which the lyrical part was specially reserved. It was personal—that is, it directly attacked known contemporaries, often by name and often by bringing them on the stage. The celebrated authors of this "ancient comedy" were Eupolis, Cratinos, of whom we have only fragments, and Aristophanes, whose work has come down to us.

ARISTOPHANES.—Aristophanes was a great poet, with incisive humour and also incomparable lyrical power, with voluntary vulgarity which is often shocking and an elevation of ideas and language which frequently raise him to the heights of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Here was one of the grandest poetic minds that the world has produced. His most considerable achievements are *The Frogs*, the earliest known work of literary criticism, in dramatic form too, wherein he sets up a parallel between Aeschylus and Euripides and cruelly jeers at the latter; *The Clouds*, in which he mocks the sophists; *The Wasps*, wherein he ridicules the Athenian mania for judging, and magnificently praises the old Athenians of the time of Marathon.

MENANDER.—To this "ancient comedy," immediately succeeded the "middle comedy," in which it was forbidden to introduce personalities and of which Aristophanes gave an example and a model in his *Plutus*. Later, in the fourth century before Christ, with the refined, witty, and discreet Menander, the "new comedy" was analogous to that of Plautus, of Terence, and that of our own of the seventeenth century.

THUCYDIDES.—To return to the time of Pericles; Attic prose developed in the hands of historians, sages, and philosophers. Thucydides founded true history, scientific, drawn from the sources, supported and strengthened by all the information and corroboration that the skilled historian can gather, examine, and control. As a writer, Thucydides was terse, bare, limpid, and possessed an agreeable sober elegance. He introduced into his history imaginary discourses between great historical personages which allowed him to show the general state of Greece or of particular portions of Greece at certain important times. It is not known why these

discourses were written in a style differing from that of the rest of the work, wise, even beautiful, but so extremely concise and elliptic as, in consequence, to be extremely difficult to understand.

HIPPOCRATES.—Hippocrates created scientific medicine, the medicine of observation, denying prodigies, seeking natural causes for diseases, and already setting up rational therapeutics. There are seventy-two works called "Hippocratical," which belong to his school; some may be by himself.

SOPHISTS AND ORATORS.—The language grew flexible in the hands of the learned, subtle, and ingenious sophists (Gorgias, Protagoras) who attacked Socrates by borrowing his weapons, as it were, and making them perfect.

A new type of literature was created: the oratorical. Antiphon was the earliest in date alike of the Athenian orators and of the professors of eloquence. In a crowd after him came Isocrates, Andocides, Lysias, Aeschines, Hyperides, and the master of them all, that astonishing logician, that impassioned and terrible orator, Demosthenes.

THE PHILOSOPHERS: PLATO.—Contemporaneously the philosophers, quite as much as the sophists, even confining the matter to the literary aspect, cast immortal glory on Attica. Imbued with the spirit of Socrates, even when more or less unfaithful to him, Plato, psychologist, moralist, metaphysician, sociologist, marvellous poet in prose, seductive and fascinating mythologist, really created philosophy in such fashion that even the most modern systems, if not judged by how much they agree or differ from him, at least invariably recall him, whether they seem a distant echo of him or whether they challenge and combat him.

ARISTOTLE; XENOPHON; THEOPHRASTUS.—Aristotle, pre-eminently learned, admirably cultivated naturalist, acquainted also with everything known in his day, more prudent metaphysician than Plato but without his depth, a precise and sure logician and the founder of scientific logic, a clear and dexterous moralist, an ingenious and pure literary theorist; Xenophon, who commanded the retreat of the ten thousand, moralist and Intelligent pedagogue displaying much attractiveness in his *Cyropoedia*., the sensible, refined, and delightful master of familiar and practical life in his *Economics*.; Theophrastus, botanist, very witty satirical moralist, highly caustic and realistic—these three established Greek wisdom for centuries, and probably for ever, erecting a solid and elegant temple wherein humanity has almost continuously sought salutary truths, and where some at least of our descendants, and those not the least illustrious, will always perform their devotions.

The chief works of Plato are the *Socratic Dialogues*, the *Gorgias*, the *Timoeus*, the *Phaedo* (immortality of the soul), the *Republic*, and the *Laws*. The principal books of Aristotle are his *Natural History*, *Metaphysics*, *Logic*, *Rhetoric*, *Poetica*. The most notable volumes of Xenophon are the *Cyropoedia*, the *Economics* and the *Memorabilia of Plato*. The only work of Theophrastus we possess is his *Characters*, which was translated and *continued* by La Bruyère.

STOICS AND EPICUREANS.—In the fourth and even the third century, philosophy spoke to mankind through two principal schools: those of the Stoics and of the Epicureans. The chief representatives of the Stoics were Zeno and Cleanthes. Chrysippus taught an austere morality which may be summed up in these words: "Abstain and endure." The Epicureans, whose chief representatives were Epicurus and Aristippus, taught, when all was taken into account, the same morality but starting from a different principle, which was that happiness must be sought, and in pursuance of this principle they advised less austerity, even in their precepts. Although these are schools of philosophy, yet they must be taken into account here because each of them has exercised much influence over writers, the first on Seneca and much later on Corneille; the second on Lucretius and Horace; both sometimes on the same man, one example being Montaigne.

After Alexander, intellectual Greece extended and enlarged itself so that instead of having one centre, Athens, it possessed five or six: Athens, Alexandria, Antioch, Pergamos, Syracuse. This was an admirable literary efflorescence; the geniuses were less stupendous but the talents were innumerable.

In the cities named, and in others, history, rhetoric, geography, philosophy, history of philosophy, philology, were taught with ardour and learnt with enthusiasm; the literary soil was rich and it was assiduously cultivated.

ALEXANDRINE LITERATURE.—From this soil rose a fresh literature—more erudite, less spontaneous, less rich in popular vigour, yet very interesting. This is the literature known as *Alexandrine*. With this literature first appeared the *romance*, unknown to the ancients. The historical romance began with Hecataeus of Abdera, the philosophical romance with Evemerus of Messenia, who pretended to have found an ancient inscription proving that the gods of ancient Greece were old-time kings of the land deified after death, an ingenious invention from which was to come a whole school of criticism of ancient mythology.

THE ELEGY AND IDYLL: THEOCRITUS.—True and, at the same time, great poets belonged to this period. One was Philetas of Cos, founder of the Grecian elegy, celebrated and affectionately saluted centuries later by André

Chénier. Of his works only a few terse fragments remain. Another was Asclepiades of Samos, both elegiac and lyric, of whose *epigrams*, (short elegies) those preserved to us are charming. Yet another was the sad and charming Leonidas of Tarentum. The two leaders of this choir were Theocritus and Callimachus. Theocritus, a Sicilian, passes as the founder of the idyll which he did not invent, but to which he gave the importance of a type by marking it with his imprint. The idyll of Theocritus was always a picture of popular customs and even a little drama of popular morals; but at times it had its scene set in the country, at others in a town, or again by the sea, and consequently there are rustic idylls (properly *bucolics*), maritime idylls, popular urban idylls. An astonishing sense of reality united to a personal poetic gift and a highly alert sensitiveness made his little poems alike beautiful for their truth and also for a certain ideal of ardent and profound passion. It is curious without being astonishing that the idyll of Theocritus often suggests the poetry of the Bible.

PUPILS OF THEOCRITUS.—Moschus and Bion were the immediate pupils of Theocritus. He had more illustrious ones, commencing with Virgil in his *Eclogues*, continuing with the numerous idylls of the Renaissance in France and Italy, as well as with Segrais in the seventeenth century, and ending, if it be desired, with André Chénier, though others more modern can be traced.

CALLIMACHUS.—Callimachus, more erudite, more scholastic, was what is termed a neoclassic, which is that he desired to treat in a new way the same subjects that had been dealt with by the great men of ancient Greece, and so far as possible to conceive them in the same spirit. Therefore he wrote tragedies, comedies, "satiric dramas" (a kind of farce in which secondary deities were characterised), lyric and elegiac poems after the manner of Alcaeus or Sappho, a familiar epopee, a romance in verse, which was perhaps a novel type, but more probably imitated from certain poems of ancient Greece which we no longer possess. To us his poetry seems cold and calculated, although clever and dexterous. It was held in high esteem not only in his own day but to the close of antiquity.

DIDACTIC POETRY: ARATUS; APOLLONIUS.—Didactic poetry, of the cultivation of which there had been no trace since Hesiod, was destined to be revived in this clever period; and, in fact, at this time Aratus wrote his *Phenomena*, which is a course of astronomy and meteorology in conformity with the science of his era. More ambitious, and desirous not only of writing an epic fragment like Callimachus, but also of restoring the old-time grand epic poem after the manner of Homer (Callimachus and he had a violent quarrel on the subject), Apollonius of Rhodes in his *Argonautics* narrated the expedition of Jason. It was a fine epic poem and especially an astonishing psychological poem. The study of passion and of the progress and catastrophe of the infatuation of Medea

form a masterpiece. Assuredly Virgil in his *„Dido“*, and perhaps Racine in his *„Phèdre“* remembered Apollonius.

LYCOPHRON.—Lycophron also belongs to this period. He left such an admirable poem (*„Alexandra“*, that is Cassandra) that his contemporaries themselves failed to understand it in spite of all their efforts. He is the head and ancestor of that great school of inaccessible or impenetrable poets who are most ardently admired. Maurice Scève in the sixteenth century is the illustrious example.

THE EPIGRAMMATISTS: MELEAGER.—To these numerous men of great talent must be added the epigrammatists—that is, those who wrote very short, very concise, very limpid poems wherein they sought absolute perfection. They were almost innumerable. The most illustrious was Meleager, in whom we can yet appreciate delicate genius and exquisite sensibility.

POLYBIUS.—Reduced to Roman provinces (successively greater Greece, Greece proper, Egypt, Syria), the Grecian world none the less continued to be an admirable intellectual haven. As early as the Punic wars, the Greek Polybius revealed he was an excellent historian, military, political, and philosophical, inquisitive about facts, inquisitive, too, about probable causes, constitutions, and social institutions, the morals, character, and the underlying temperament of races. His principal work is the *„Histories“*—that is, the history of the Graeco-Roman world from the second Punic war until the capture of Corinth by the Romans. He was an intellectual master; unfortunately he wrote very badly.

EPICLETUS; MARCUS AURELIUS.—It must, however, be recognised that in the first century before Christ and in the first after, Greece—even intellectually—was in a state of depression. But dating from the Emperor Nerva—that is, from the commencement of the second century—there was a remarkable Hellenic revival. Primarily, it was the most brilliant moment since Plato in Grecian philosophy. Stoicism exerted complete sway over the cultivated classes; Epictetus gave his *„Enchiridion“* and *„Manual“*, wherein are condensed the elevated and profound thoughts most deeply realised of the doctrine of Zeno; later, the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, in his solitary meditations entitled *„For Myself“*, depicts his own soul, admirable, chaste, pure, severe to himself, indulgent to others, pathetically resigned to the universal order of things and adhering to them with a renunciation and a faith that are truly religious. Less severe, even playful and smiling, Dion Chrysostom (that is, mouth of gold, nickname given to him because of his eloquence) is penetrated with the same spirit a little mingled with Platonism, which makes him, therefore, perhaps, penetrate more easily than the over-austere pure Stoics.

PLUTARCH.—Plutarch, as historian discreetly romantic, as philosophical moralist decidedly dexterous, gently obstinate in conciliation and

concord, in a large portion of his *Parallel Lives* narrated those of illustrious Romans and Greeks to show how excellent they were and how highly they ought to esteem one another; elsewhere, in his moral works, he sought to conciliate philosophy and paganism, no doubt believing in a single God, as did Plato, but also believing in a crowd of intermediary spirits between God and man, which allowed him to regard the deities of paganism as misunderstood beings and even in a certain sense to admit their authority. Emphatically a man who observed the golden mean, he opposed the Stoics for being too severe on human nature and the Epicureans for being too easy or for too lightly risking the future. He was an elegant writer—gracious, self-restraining; nearer, all said and done, to eclecticism than to simplicity, and he must not be judged by the geniality which was virtually imparted to him by Amyot in translating him. Throughout Europe, since the Renaissance, of all the Grecian authors he has perhaps been the most read, the most quoted, the best loved, and the most carefully edited.

THE GREEK HISTORIANS.—Greek historians multiplied about this period. To mention only the most notable: Arrian, philosopher, disciple of Epictetus, and historian of the expedition of Alexander; Appian, who wrote the history of the Roman people from their origin until the time of Trajan; Dion Cassius, who also compiled Roman history in a sustained manner full of elegance and nobility; Herodian, historian of the successors of Marcus Aurelius, who would only narrate what he had himself witnessed, a showy writer who seems over-polished and a little artificial.

A historian of a highly individualistic character was Diogenes of Laertius, who wrote the *Lives of Philosophers*., being very little of a philosopher himself and too prone to drop into anecdote, but interesting and invaluable to us because of the scanty information we possess about ancient philosophy.

LUCIAN.—Immeasurably superior to those just cited since Plutarch, Lucian of Samosata (Syria) may be regarded as the Voltaire of antiquity—witty, sceptical, amusing, even comic. He was primarily a lecturer, wandering like a sophist from town to town, in order to talk in vivacious, animated, nimble, and paradoxical fashion. Then he was a polygraphic writer, producing treatises, satires, and pamphlets on the most diverse subjects. He wrote against the Christians, the pagans, the philosophers, the prejudiced, sometimes against common sense. Amongst his works were *The Way to Write History*., partly serious, partly sarcastic; *The Dialogues of the Dead*., moralising and satirical, imitated much later in very superior fashion by Fontenelle; *The Dialogues of the Gods*., against mythology; *True History*., a parody of the false or romantic histories then so fashionable, more especially about Alexander. He certainly possessed little depth, but his talent was incredible: alertness, causticity, amusing logic, burlesque dialectics, an astonishing instinct for caricature, the art of natural dialogue, gay

insolence, light but vivid psychological penetration, an almost profound sense of the ridiculous, joyous fooling; above all, that first essential of satire, to be himself amused by what he wrote to amuse others; all these he possessed in a high degree. Rabelais has been called the Homeric buffoon, Lucian is certainly the Socratic.

POETRY AND ROMANCE.—Greek poetry no longer existed at this period. Hardly is it permissible to cite the didactic Oppian, with his poem on sin, and the fabulist Babrius, imitator of Aesop in his fables. In reparation, the romance was born and the scientific literature was important. The romance claimed among its representatives Antonius Diogenes, with his *Marvels Beyond Thule*.; Heliodorus, with his *Aethiopica* or *Theagenes and Chariclea*., the love-story so much admired by Racine in his youth; Longus, with his *Daphnis and Chloe*., which still retains general approval and which possesses real, though somewhat studied grace, and of which the ability of the style is quite above the normal.

SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.—Scientific literature includes the highly illustrious mathematician and astronomer Ptolemy, whose system obtained respect and belief until the advent of Copernicus; the physician Galen; the philosopher-physician Sextus Empiricus, who was a good historian, highly sceptical, but well informed and intelligent about philosophical ideas.

DECADENCE OF THE GREEK SPIRIT.—Vitality was slowly withdrawn from the Grecian world, although not without revivals and highly interesting semi-renaissances. In the fourth century, the sophist—that is, the professor of philosophy and of rhetoric—Libanius left a vast number of official or academic discourses and letters which were dissertations. Like his friend the Emperor Julian, he was a convinced pagan, and with kindly but firm spirit combated the Christian bishops, priests, and particularly the monks, who were objects of veritable repulsion to him. He possessed talent of a secondary but honourable rank.

THE EMPEROR JULIAN.—The Emperor Julian, a Christian in childhood, but who on attaining manhood reverted to paganism, which earned him the title of "the Apostate," was highly intelligent, pure in heart, and filled with a spirit of tolerance; but he was a heathen and he wrote against Christianity. He possessed satiric force and wit, even a measure of eloquence. A pamphlet by him, the *Misopogon*., directed against the inhabitants of Antioch, who had chaffed him about his beard, makes amusing reading. He died quite young; he would, in all probability, have become a very great man.

PROCOPIUS.—It is necessary to advance to the sixth century to mention the historian Procopius, that double-visaged annalist who, in his official histories, was lost in admiration of Justinian, and who, in his

„Secret History“, only published long after his death, related to us the turpitude, real or imagined, of Theodora, wife of the Emperor Justinian, and of Antonina, wife of Belisarius.

POETRY.—Greek poetry was not dead. Quintus of Smyrna, who was of the fourth century, perhaps later, wrote a „Sequel to Homer“, without much imagination, but with skill and dexterity; Nonnus wrote the „Dionysiaca“, a poetic history of the expedition of Bacchus to India, declamatory, copious, and powerful, full alike of faults and talent; Musaeus (date absolutely unknown) has remained justly celebrated for his delicious little poem „Hero and Leander“, countless times translated both in prose and verse.

GRECIAN CHRISTIAN WRITERS.—It is necessary to revert to the fourth century in order to enumerate Grecian Christian writers. As might be expected these were almost all controversial orators. Saint Athanasius of Alexandria was an admirable man of action, a fiery and impassioned orator, the highly polemical historian of the Church, after the manner of Bossuet in his „History of Variations“. Saint Basil, termed by his admirers „the Great,“ without there being much hyperbole in the qualification, was an incomparable orator. He, as it were, reigned over Eastern Christianity, thanks to his word, his skill, and his courage. Even to us his works possess charm. He intermingled the finest ideas of Plato and of Christianity in the happiest and most orthodox manner. The humanists held him in esteem for having rendered justice to antiquity in his „Lecture on Profane Authors“ and having advised Christians to study it with prudence but with esteem. Saint Gregory of Nazianzen, the intimate friend of Saint Basil, was also a great orator, exalted, ardent, and lyrical, whilst he was also as a poet, refined, gracious, and full of charm. Saint Gregory of Nyssa, brother of Saint Basil, was essentially a theologian and in his day a theological authority.

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.—The most splendid figure of the Greek Church was

Saint John Chrysostom, celebrated in political history for his struggle with the Emperor Arcadius and the Empress Eudoxia, and for the persecutions he had in consequence to suffer. His heated, fiery, and violent eloquence, which was altogether that of a tribune of the people, can still profoundly affect us because therein can be felt a deeply sincere ardour, a passion for justice, charity, and love. A bellicose moralist, he was, like Bourdaloue, a realist and therefore an exact and cruel delineator of the customs of his time, which were not good; and he teaches us better than anyone else what was the sad state of Eastern morality in his day. His widely varied genius, passing from the most spiritually familiar of tones to the height of moving and imposing eloquence, was one of the grandest of all antiquity.

EUSEBIUS.—Allusion should be made to that good historian Eusebius, who narrated Christian history from its origins until the year 323.

THE BYZANTINE PERIOD.—What is termed the Byzantine period extended from the close of the reign of Justinian to the definite fall of the Eastern Empire (565-1453). This long epoch, practically corresponding to the Middle Ages of the West, is very weak from the literary point of view, but yet possessed a number of interesting and valuable historians (Joseph of Byzantium, Comnenus, etc.) and skilled and learned grammarians, that is professors of language and literature (Eustathius, Cephalon, Planudes, Lascaris). It was the later of these grammarians, among them Lascaris, who after the fall of Constantinople being welcomed in France and Italy, brought the Greek writers to the West, commentated on them, made them known, and thence came the Renaissance of Literature.

CHAPTER IV

THE LATIN

The Latins, Imitators of the Greeks. Epic Poets, Dramatic Poets. Golden Age: Virgil, Horace, Ovid. Silver Age: Prose Writers, Historians and Philosophers:—Titus-Livy, Tacitus, Seneca. Decadence Still Brilliant.

LATIN LITERATURE.—Latin literature is little more than a branch of Greek literature. It commenced much later, finished earlier, and has always poured into the others at least a portion of its living force. Roman literature really begins only at the moment when the Romans came into contact with the Greeks, read their works, and were tempted to imitate them; that is to say, it commences in the third century before Christ. The first manifestation of this literature was epic. Naevius and Livius Andronicus made epopees. They are destitute of talent. Ennius made one: it possessed merit; what the Latin critics have quoted of his *Annals* is marked, first by an energetic patriotic sentiment which affords pleasure; then it possesses energy and sometimes even a certain brilliance. In addition, Ennius wrote several didactic and satiric poems. Among the Romans, Ennius was the great ancestor and father of Latin literature.

LUCILIUS.—Lucilius was a satirist. Judging by the fragments of his work which have come down to us, he was a very acute and penetrating political satirist. Horace, despite his sovereign disdain for all that preceded his own century, did not fail to value him and agreed that there was something to be drawn and appreciated from this "muddy torrent."

COMEDY: PLAUTUS; TERENCE.—Comedy and tragedy existed at this period. It may be apposite here to point out that it was later and in the finest period of Latin literature that they ceased to exist. Plautus conceived

the plan of transporting to Rome Grecian comedies of the time of the new comedy and of adapting them more or less to Latin morals. He possessed a strong and brutal verve which did not lack power, and more than once Molière did him the honour of taking inspiration from him. Terence, after him, the friend of Scipio the second Africanus, and perhaps in collaboration with him, in a way widely different from that of Plautus so far as type of talent, tender, gentle, romantic, sentimental, smiling rather than witty, so far as can be judged directly inspired by Menander, wrote comedies which are highly agreeable to read, but it is doubtful if they could ever have been widely appreciated on the stage. However, the Roman writers held him in great esteem, and at one epoch of our own history, in the seventeenth century, he enjoyed remarkable and unanimous appreciation.

L'ATELLANE.—To comedy strictly defined, whether it dealt with Romans or Greeks, the Romans also added the atellane, which came to them from the Etruscans (Atella, a city of Etruria) and which was a sort of farce with stereotyped characters (the fat glutton, the lean glutton, the old miser always baffled, etc.). Pomponius and Naevius endeavoured to raise this popular recreation to a literary standard and succeeded. It then became a thoroughly national characteristic. There was considerable analogy between it and the modern popular Italian comedy, showing its *Cassandras*, its *Pantaloon*, and its *Harlequin*, without it being possible to assert that the Italian comedy proceeded from the atellane. The atellane enjoyed much success in the second century before Christ. It was, however, ousted by the mime, which was the kind of comic literature thoroughly national at Rome. The mime was a farce of popular morals, particularly of the lower classes; it was a portrayal of the dregs of society in their comic aspects. It maintained its sway until the close of the Roman Empire without becoming more dignified; rather the reverse. The names of some authors of mimes have survived: Publius Syrus and Laberius, in the time of Caesar. What is curious is that these mimes, licentious and even obscene though they were, throughout gave occasional utterance to highly moral observations which Latin grammarians have preserved for us. This curious mixture may be explained or contrasted at pleasure; perhaps it was only a conventional habit.

TRAGEDY.—As for what there was of tragedy, it was destined to be yet shorter-lived than comedy, but it was evidently very brilliant and it is regrettable that it has not been preserved. Livius Andronicus and Nasvius wrote tragedies, but the three greatest tragedians were Ennius, his nephew Pacuvius, and Attius. Ennius imitated Euripides, Pacuvius Sophocles, and Attius Aeschylus. All three soared to the grand, the majestic, and the sublime; all seem to have been very sententious and replete with maxims; but it is needful to be cautious: these authors are known to us only by the citations made by grammarians, and grammarians who, having naturally cited phrases rather than fragments of dialogue, make it possible that these authors appear to us sententious when they were in reality not abnormally so.

PROSE LITERATURE.—Prose literature at Rome appeared almost at the same time as the poetic. Cicero has given us the names of great orators, contemporaries of Ennius, and there were historians and didacticians in prose of the same period. The elder Cato, the great censor, was an historian; he wrote a work, *„The Origins.,* which seems to have been the history not only of Rome but of all Italy since the foundation of Rome; he was didactic; he wrote a *„De Re Rustica. (On Rural Life)* which has come down to us and is infinitely valuable as showing the simplicity, the hardness, and the avarice of the old Roman proprietors, all qualities which Cato thoroughly well knew they possessed.

THE AGE OF CAESAR.—The age of Caesar was a great literary epoch. Before all and almost over all was Caesar himself: great orator, letter-writer, grammarian, and historian. His *„Commentaries.,* that is, his memoirs, history of his campaigns, are admirable in their conciseness and precision of rapid and running narrative. Apart from him, Cornelius Nepos made a very clear abridgment, characterised by marked sobriety, of universal history under the title of *„Chronica. Varro, a kind of encyclopaedist, wrote a „De Re Rustica.,* also a work on the Latin language, *„Menippic Satires—*satires it is true, but mixtures of prose and verse—and a work on *„Roman Life.,* as well as a crowd of small books dealing with every possible subject. Cicero told him, "You have taught us all things human and divine." He possessed immense erudition and a violent mind not without charm. He can be imagined as a sage of our own sixteenth century.

CICERO.—Cicero was perhaps the greatest *„littérateur. that has ever lived. It is obvious that all tastes were in his soul at the same time, as Voltaire said of himself, and he gratified them all. He was politician, lawyer, orator, poet, philosopher, professor of rhetoric, moralist, grammarian, political writer, correspondent; he encompassed all human knowledge, involved himself in all human matters and was a very great writer. What to-day interests us most in his immense output are his political discourses, his letters and his moral treatises. His political discourses are those of an honest man who always held upright views and the sentiment of the great interests of his country; his letters are those of a witty man and of an excellent friend; his moral treatises, more particularly his „De Officiis. (On Duties), are in a very elevated spirit which subordinatates all other human duties beneath obligations towards one's country. He did not always rise to circumstances; he was well content, on the contrary, that they should serve him.*

SALLUST.—Sallust, who as an individual seems to have been contemptible, was a highly sagacious and excellent historian. He has left a history of Catiline and another of Jugurtha. They are masterpieces of lucidity and of dramatic vivacity. Admirable especially are his maxims, which seem as

well thought out as those of La Rochefoucauld: "Friendship is to desire the same things and to hate the same things"; "the spirit of faction is the friendship of scoundrels."

POETRY: CATULLUS.—Poetry was not less brilliant than prose in the time of Caesar. It was the era of Lucretius and of Catullus. Catullus, a delightful man of the world, a charming voluptuary, passionate and eloquent lover, formidable epigrammatist, a little coloured by Alexandrianism (but barely, for this trait has been much exaggerated), comes very close to being a great poet. In many respects he closely recalls André Chénier, who, it may be added, was thoroughly conversant with his writing.

LUCRETIUS.—Lucretius is a very noble poet. If we knew Epicurus otherwise than by fragments, it is highly probable we should be tempted to assert that Lucretius was only a translator; but on that we cannot pronounce, and of the didactic part of the poem of Lucretius (*On Nature*), even if it were a simple translation, all the oratorical and the descriptive portions would remain, and they are the most beautiful of the work. In his invocations to Epicurus, in his *prosopoeia* of nature to man inviting resignation to death, in his descriptions of the immolation of Iphigenia and of the cow wandering in the fields in search of her lost heifer, there are a breadth, a grasp, and an epic grandeur, which recall Homer, arouse thoughts of Dante, and which Virgil himself, whilst much less unequal though never greater, has not attained.

THE AUGUSTAN AGE.—The Augustan Age, which was only really very great if under this title is also included the epoch of Caesar and also that of Octavius, and thus it was understood by our ancestors, does not fail to offer writers of fine genius. These are Virgil, Horace, and Titus-Livy.

TITUS-LIVY.—Titus-Livy, who is one of the purest and most beautiful writers and an orator of seductive talent in his own chamber, wrote a Roman history composed, as to the first portion, of the legends transmitted at Rome from generation to generation, and in which it is impossible for us to distinguish the false from the true; for two-thirds of the work made very accurate investigations of all that previous historians and the annals of the pontiffs could give the author. As has been observed, Titus-Livy, being a Cisalpine, was a Gaul who already possessed the French qualities: order, clearness, regulated development, sustained and careful style, oratorical tastes. An ardent patriot, republican at his soul, yet treated in friendly fashion by Augustus, he wrote Roman history at first, no doubt, to make it known, but above all to inspire the Romans of his own time with admiration, respect, and love for the austere morals and exalted virtues of their ancestors. He erected a monument, one portion of which is unhappily destroyed, but into which modern tragedians have often quarried and which orators have not scorned when desiring to instruct themselves in their art.

VIRGIL.—Virgil came from almost the same country. His was a charming soul, tender and gentle, infinitely capable of friendship, very pure and white, as Horace said, with a tendency to melancholy. The two sources of his inspiration were Homer and love of Rome; add, for a time, Theocritus. Lover of the country and of moral life, he first wrote those delicious *Bucolics* wherein he did not venture to be as realistic as the Sicilian poet, but in which there is not only infinite grace and delicate sensibility, but also, in certain verses, admirable descriptions that arouse memories of those of La Fontaine. Lover of the soil and desirous, in harmony with Augustus, to attract the Italians back to a taste for agriculture, he wrote the *Georgics*: that is, the toils of the field, describing these labours with singular exactitude and precision; then, to give the reader variety, he introduced from time to time an episode which is a fragment of history or of mythological legend. At length, desirous of attributing to Rome the most glorious past possible, he revived the old legend which claimed that the ancient kings of Rome descended from the famous kings of Troy in her zenith, and he composed the *Aeneid*. The *Aeneid* is at once both an *Odyssey* and an *Iliad*. The first five books containing the adventures of Aeneas after the fall of Troy until his arrival in Italy form an *Odyssey*; the last six books, containing the combats of Aeneas in Italy in order to conquer a place for himself, form an *Iliad*. In the middle, the sixth book is a descent into hell, again an imitation of Homer, yet altogether new, enriched as it is with very fine philosophical ideas which Homer could never have known. The main theme of the poem and what gives it unity is Rome, which does not yet exist, but which is always to be seen looming in the future. All the poem leans in that direction, and alike by ingenious artifices, by prophecies more and more exact, by the description of the shield of Aeneas, Roman history itself, in its broad lines, is traced.

The sovereign merit of Virgil is his artistic sense. Others are more powerful or more profound. No man has written better verse than he on any subject on which he wrote.

HORACE.—Horace was a man of infinite wit, profoundly conversant with the Grecian poets. With that knowledge of the poets he filled his odes with recollections of Alcaeus and Stesichorus; they were minutely and finely polished, accustoming the Romans to find in Latin words the musical phrases of the Greeks, but withal remaining very cold. With his wit, his verve, his very lively sense of humour, his pretty moral philosophy borrowed a little from the Stoics but mainly from the Epicureans, he created his *Satires* and his *Epistles*, which form the most delicate feast and which have no more lost their interest for us than Montaigne has. Here was a charming man. He was not a great poet. He was the most witty of poets, the poet of the men of wit.

TIBULLUS; PROPERTIUS; OVID.—Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid immediately

followed him. Tibullus was a tender and sad elegiast, less passionate and less powerful than Catullus, but gracious and touching. All the elegiacal poets, and André Chénier in particular, have evinced recollections of him. Propertius possessed great talent for versification, but was more erudite than inspired; being almost pure Alexandrine, he is more interesting to the humourist than to the ordinary man. Ovid, gifted with facility and the skill of a prodigious versifier, dexterous descriptist in his *Metamorphoses*., ingenious and cold in his *Art of Love*., has found some pathetic notes in his elegies wherein as an exile he weeps over his own misfortunes.

DECADENCE.—With the second century arrived the commencement of decadence. The rhetoricians, who in Rome were what the sophists were in Athens, only far less intelligent, directed the public mind. They did not spoil it completely, but they did not give it strength, and the Latins, believing they had reached the zenith of the Greeks, seemed to draw less inspiration from the eternal models.

QUINTUS CURTIUS.—However, the Latin sap is still strong. Quintus Curtius, romantic historian, who wrote a history of Alexandria which is too generous towards the legendary, narrates brilliantly and strews his pages with vigorously phrased maxims and apothegms. He is a remarkable author. The elder Pliny, a very erudite sage and a somewhat precious writer, is a worthy successor of Varro.

SENECA.—Seneca, who certainly was well nurtured in Greek philosophy, preached stoicism in concise, antithetic, and epigrammatic styles, all in highly thoughtful points which sometimes attain power.

PETRONIUS; LUCIAN; MARTIAL.—Petronius was a man possessing highly refined taste who painted extremely ugly morals. Tragedy endeavoured to obtain renaissance with Seneca the tragic, who is perhaps the same as the moralist Seneca, alluded to above, and the effort was sufficiently brilliant for our tragedians of the sixteenth century, and even Racine in his *Phèdre*., frequently to follow it. Perseus, pupil of Horace so far as his satires are concerned, was concise to the point of obscurity, but often displayed such vigour and ruggedness as to be powerfully moving. Lucian, spoilt by a certain taste for declamation, is really a sound poet, more especially as a poetic orator, and in this respect he is often admirable. Silius Italicus, Valerius Flaccus, Statius, revert to the school of Virgil and display talent for versification. Martial, almost exclusively epigrammatic, was extremely witty.

JUVENAL.—Juvenal, arising sardonically from the crowd, is the prince of satirists for all time. He possessed a passion for honesty, spirit, and oratorical breadth, and incredible vigour as colourist, the gift of verse cast in medallions and also the gift of energetic metallic sonorousness. Victor Hugo, in the satiric portion of his work, not merely drew inspiration from but seemed saturated with him.

THE TRAJAN EPOCH.—now came the Trajan epoch. Quintilian, in elegant fashion, with point and rather affected graces, taught us excellent rhetoric full of sense and taste. Pliny the Younger, gentle and gay, honest and amusing, pleaded as an insinuating orator, and, under the pretext of *Letters* to his friends, wrote essays of amiable morality which evoke recollections of Montaigne.

TACITUS.—Tacitus is a great psychological historian and moralist. He is, as Racine observed, "the greatest painter of antiquity," and Racine meant the greatest painter of portraits. He possessed an entirely fresh style of his own creation: nervous, articulate, coloured, concise, with brief metaphors which reveal not only a poet, but a fine poet, in the vein of Michelet, but with the difference of febrility to the potent discharge of power.

AULUS GELLIUS; APULEIUS.—Under Marcus Aurelius Latin literature fell into decay. Aulus Gellius was only a rather untidy or at least not very methodical scholar who wrote feebly; Apuleius with his *Golden Ass* was merely a fantastic romancist, very complex, curious about everything, more especially with regard to singularities, lively, amusing, mystical at times; in short, distinctly disconcerting.

WRITERS ON CHRISTIANITY.—Christianity was at an adult age. There were writers of importance and some who were really great; the energetic and violent Tertullian, beloved by Bossuet; Saint Cyprian, full of unction, gentleness, and charity; Lactantius, skilful Christian philosopher, ingenious and possessing insinuating subtlety; Saint Hilarius, an ardent polemist, impetuous and torrential; Saint Ambrose, exalted, wise, serene, very well read, very "Roman," who may be styled the Cicero of Christianity; Saint Jerome, ardent, impassioned, possessing lively sensibility, an animated and seductive imagination, who—excluding all idea of scandal—suggests what is purest and most beautiful in Jean Jacques Rousseau; finally, that great doctor and noble philosopher of the Church, Saint Augustine.

SAINT AUGUSTINE.—Saint Augustine is pre-eminently a philosopher, a man who analysed ideas and saw all that they contained, their first principle and their trend as well as their ultimate consequences. He was in addition a great orator; he was also a historian, or at least a philosopher of history, in his *City of God*; finally, he was a poet at heart and imbued with the most exquisite sensibility in his immortal *Confessions*. Probably he was the most extraordinary man of the world of antiquity.

CHRISTIAN POETS.—Christianity even had its poets: Commodian, Juven-
cus,
the impassioned and skilful Prudentius, St. Paulinus of Nola. None were very prominent, all possessed lively sentiment, such as Chateaubriand

evinced, for what is profoundly poetic in Christianity.

SECULAR POETS.—The last mundane poets were more brilliant than those of Christianity. Avienus possessed charming elegance and rather effeminate grace. It should be noted that he (with Prudentius) was the sole lyric poet after Horace. Ausonius had sensibility and remarkable descriptive talent; Claudian, rhetorician in verse, rose sometimes to veritable eloquence and maintained a continual brilliance which is fatiguing because it is continual, but does not fail to be a marvellous fault. Finally must be cited Rutilius, first because he had talent, then because even amid the invasions of the barbarians he made an impassioned eulogy of Rome which is, involuntarily, a funeral oration; finally, because, despite being a bitter foe to Christianity, he once more involuntarily defined the great and noble change from paganism to Christianity: *„Tunc mutabantur corpora, nunc animi.“* (“Formerly bodies were metamorphosed, now souls”).

CHAPTER V

THE MIDDLE AGES: FRANCE

—*Chansons de Geste: Song of Roland*— and Lyric Poetry. Popular Epopee: *Romances of Renard*. Popular Short Stories: Fables. Historians. The Allegorical Poem: *Romance of the Rose*. Drama.

—*CHANSONS DE GESTE*.—The literature of the Middle Ages freed itself from Latin about the tenth century. This was the moment when the great epopees which are called *chansons de geste* began to be heard. The most celebrated is the one entitled *The Song of Roland*. It is the story of the last struggle in which Roland engaged on returning from Spain at the pass of Roncevaux and of his death. The form of this poem is rather dry and a little monotonous; but there are admirable passages such as the benediction of the dying by the Bishop Turpin, the farewell of Roland to Oliver, Roland holding out his glove to his Lord God at the moment of death, etc. The *chansons de geste* were numerous. Some commemorated Charlemagne and his comrades, others Arthur, King of Britain, and his knights, others, as a rule less interesting, were about the heroes of antiquity, Troy, Alexander, not well known but not forgotten. The *chansons de geste* permeated the whole of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

JOINVILLE; VILLEHARDOUIN.—In the thirteenth century appeared an historian, Joinville, friend of St. Louis, who described the crusade in which he took part with his master. He possessed *naïvété*, grace,

naturalness, and picturesqueness. Villehardouin, who described the fourth crusade, in which he played his part, was a realist—exact, precise, luminous—in whom the strangeness and grandeur of the things he had witnessed sometimes inspired a true nobility, simple enough but singularly impressive.

THE TROUBADOURS.—Lyric poetry barely existed during these centuries except south of the Loire, in the Latin country, among the poets called troubadours; nevertheless, in the north, the noble Count Thibaut of Champagne, to cite only one, wrote songs possessing amiable inspiration and happily turned. Beside him must be instanced the highly remarkable Ruteboeuf, narrator, elegiast, lyric orator, admirably gifted, who, to be a great poet, only needed to live in a more favourable period and to have at his disposition a more flexible language, one more abundant and more widely elaborated.

THE ROMANCES OF RENARD.—In the fourteenth century, the *Romances of Renard* enjoyed remarkably wide popularity and multiplied in abundance. Each was like a fable by La Fontaine expanded to the proportions of an epic poem. Under the names of animals they were human types in action and concerned in multifarious adventures: the lion was the king; the bear, called Bruin, was the seigneurial lord of the soil; the fox was the artful, circumspect citizen; the cock, called Chanticleer, was the hero of warfare, and so on. Some of the *Romances of Renard* are insipid; others possess a satiric and parodying spirit that is extremely diverting.

THE FABLES.—Contemporaneously the *Fables* amused our ancestors. They were anecdotes, tales in verse for the most part dealing with adventures of citizens, analogous to the tales of La Fontaine. The majority were jeering, bantering, and satirical; some few were affecting and refined. They were certainly the most living and characteristic portion of old French literature.

THE BIBLES.—The Middle Ages, after the manner of the ancients, delighted in gathering into one volume all the knowledge current. These didactic books were called bibles. Some were celebrated: the *Bible* of Guyot of Provence, the *Bible* of Hugo of Berzi. As a rule, whilst learned as far as the resources of the times permitted, they were also satiric, precisely as almost the whole of the literature of the Middle Ages is satiric.

THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE.—The *Romance of the Rose*, which was by two authors writing with almost half a century of interval between them, was in the first portion, of which the author is William of Lorris, an art of love in the form of a romance in verse; and the second part, written by John de Meung, formed in some measure a continuation of the first, but above all was a work of erudition and instruction, in which

the poet put all that he knew as well as his philosophical conceptions, often of a remarkable and highly unexpected boldness. Aptly John de Meung has been compared with Rabelais, and it is not astonishing that the popularity of this poem should have lasted more than two centuries nor that it should have charmed or irritated our ancestors according to the tendency of their minds.

FROISSART.—The representative of history in the fourteenth century was Froissart, a picturesque chronicler, very vital, always full of interest, although it is indisputable that he was lacking in historical criticism; and among the orators, polemicists, and controversialists of the times must at least be cited the impassioned and virtuous Gerson, who expended his life in incessant struggles on behalf of his Christian faith.

To him, without decisive proof, has often been attributed the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*., which, in any case, whoever wrote it, must be emphasised as one of the purest products of the religious spirit of the Middle Ages.

CHARLES OF ORLEANS; VILLON.—The fifteenth century, otherwise somewhat sterile, introduced one distinguished poet, Charles of Orleans, graceful and pleasing; and one who at moments rose to the height of being almost a great poet: this was Francis Villon, the celebrated author of *The Ballade of Dames of Ancient Times*., of which the yet more famous refrain was, "Where are the snows of last year?"

MYSTERIES AND MIRACLES.—To deal with the theatre of the Middle Ages it is necessary to go further back. Without considering as drama those pious performances which the clergy organised or tolerated even in the churches from the tenth century and probably earlier, there was already a popular drama in the twelfth century outside the church whereat were performed veritable dramas drawn from holy writ or legends of saints. This developed in the thirteenth century, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth it was prolific in immense dramatic poems which needed several days for their performance. These were *Mysteries*., as they were termed, or *Miracles*., wherein comedy and tragedy were interwoven and a great deed in religious history or sometimes in national history commemorated, such as the *Mystery of the Siege of Orleans*., by Greban.

FARCES; FOLLIES; MORALITIES.—The comic theatre also existed. It provided *farces*., which were really little comedies (the most famous was the *Farce of the Lawyer Patelin*.); *follies*., which are farcical but good-humoured caricatures of students and clerks; and *moralities*., which are small serious dramas, interspersed with comedy, having real personages mingled with allegorical ones. The drama of the Middle Ages was very living and highly original, coming from the soil and exactly adapted to the sentiments, passions, and ideas of the

people for whom and, a little later, by whom it was written.

CHAPTER VI

THE MIDDLE AGES: ENGLAND

Literature in Latin, in Anglo-Saxon, and in French. The Ancestor of English Literature: Chaucer.

THE THREE LITERATURES.—In England, prior to the Norman invasion, that is before 1066, England possessed Saxon bards who sang of the prowess of forbears or contemporaries, and monks who wrote in Latin the lives of saints or even lay histories.

From 1066 must be distinguished in England three parallel literatures: the Latin literature of the cloister, the Anglo-Saxon literature, and the French literature of the conquerors.

Latin literature, so far as prose is regarded, was devoted exclusively to philosophy and history; in verse the subjects are more diversified, satire more especially flourished.

The poets of the French tongue wrote more particularly *chansons de geste*, and those of such songs which form what is termed the *Cycle of Artus* are for the most part the work of poets born in England.

Finally, in the different popular dialects, Saxon, Western English, etc., epic poems were written in verse, or romances, discourses, homilies, different religious work in prose. The Normans, ardent, energetic, and practical, had founded universities whence issued, endowed and equipped, those who by patriotic sentiment or taste were destined to write in Anglo-Saxon or in English.

CHAUCER; GOWER.—The greatest name of the period and the one which radiates most brilliantly is that of Chaucer in the fourteenth century, author of *The Canterbury Tales* and a crowd of other works. He possessed very varied imagination, sometimes vigorous, sometimes humorous, an extraordinary sense of reality, much spirit, and a fertility of mind which made him the ancestor and precursor of Shakespeare. To his illustrious name must be added that of his friend and pupil Gower, who is curious because he is representative of the three literatures still in use in his day, having written his *Speculum Meditatus* in French, his *Vox Clamantis* in Latin, and his *Confessio Amantis* in English. So far as I am aware this phenomenon was never repeated.

CHAPTER VII

THE MIDDLE AGES: GERMANY

Epic Poems: *Nibelungen*. Popular Poems. Very numerous Lyric Poems. Drama.

FIRST LITERARY WORK.—The most ancient monument of German literature is the *Song of Hildebrand*, which goes back to an unknown antiquity, perhaps to the ninth century, and a very beautiful fragment of which has been preserved by a happy chance. We are entirely ignorant of works written in German between the *Song of Hildebrand* and the *Nibelungen*, except for some religious poems such as the *Heliand* in low German and the *Book of the Gospels* in high German.

THE NIBELUNGEN.—The *Nibelungen* form a vast poem, written probably in the thirteenth century (or, at that epoch, formed by juxtaposition of more ancient popular songs). It is a great national monument wherein are collected the legendary exploits of all the ancestors of the Germans, Huns, Goths, Burgundians and Franks especially. Portions possess admirable dramatic qualities. The analogy with the *Iliad* is remarkable, and the comparison may be made even from the literary point of view.

VARIOUS PRODUCTIONS.—Then come productions less national in type, imitations of French poems. *Song of Roland*, *Alexander*, songs of the *Cycle of Arthur* or of the *Round Table*, imitations of Latin poems: for instance, the *Aeneid*, etc. Here, too, was spread the *Story of Renard*, as in France, and even now the question is unsettled whether the first poem of *Renard* is French or German. Religious and satiric poems were abundant in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but what is highly characteristic is the large number of lyrical poets (Dietmar of Ast, Kürenberg, Frederic of Hausen, the Emperor Henry VI, etc.) produced by the Middle Ages in Germany. This poetry was generally amorous and melancholy, sometimes full of the warlike ardour which is found among our own troubadours. The poets who, as in France, wandered through Germany, from court to court and from castle to castle, called themselves minnesingers (singers of love). The one who has remained most famous is Tannhäuser. A fantastic and touching legend has formed about his name.

Germany, like France, possessed a popular drama, less prolific possibly, but very similar. Among the most ancient popular tragedies now known may be cited *The Prophets of Christ* and the *Game of Antichrist*, which are curious because of the juxtaposition of biblical acts and

contemporaneous events. Later came *The Miracles of the Virgin*-, *The Wise and Foolish Virgins*-, dramas more varied, with more numerous characters, more elaborate mounting, and with the interest relatively more concentrated.

COMEDY.—Comedy, as a rule very gross in character, enjoyed wide esteem, especially in the fourteenth century. What were performed under the title of *Carnival Games* were generally nothing but *fables* in dialogue, domestic scenes, incidents in the market, interludes at the cross-roads. Here was the vulgar plebeian joy allowing itself full licence. The literary activity of Germany in the Middle Ages was at least equal to that of the three literary western nations.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MIDDLE AGES: ITALY

Troubadours of Southern Italy. Neapolitan and Sicilian Poets. Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio.

THE TROUBADOURS.—The Italian literature of the Middle Ages is intimately associated with the literature of the Troubadours in the south of France. To express the case more definitely, the literature styled "Provençal," apart from mere differences of dialect, extended from the Limousine to the Roman campagna, and French literature existed only in the northern and central provinces of France, the rest being Provençal-Italian literature. The Italian Troubadours, by which I mean those born in Italy, who must at least be cited, are Malaspina, Lanfranc Cicala, Bartolomeo Ziorgi (of Venice), Bordello (of Mantua), etc.

NAPLES AND SICILY.—Naples and Sicily, where were founded large universities, were the seat of a purely Italian literature in the thirteenth century, thanks to the impetus of the Emperor Frederick II. At this seat were Peter of Vignes (*Petrus de Vineis*), who passes as inventor of the sonnet; Ciullo of Alcamo, author of the first known Italian *canzone*-, etc. The influence of Sicily on all Italy was such that for long in Italy all writing in verse was termed Sicilian.

BOLOGNA; FLORENCE.—The literary centre then passed, that is in the thirteenth century, to Bologna and Florence. Among the celebrated Tuscans of this epoch was Guittone of Arezzo, mentioned by Dante and Petrarch with more or less consideration; Jacopone of Todi, at once both mystic and buffoon, in whom it has been sought, in a manner somewhat flattering to him, to trace a predecessor of Dante; Brunetto Latini, the authentic master of Dante, who was encyclopaedic, after a fashion, and who

published, first in French, whilst he was in Paris, *„The Treasure,* a compilation of the knowledge of his time, then, in Italian, *„Tesoretto,* a collection of maxims drawn from his previous work, besides some poetry and translations from Latin.

The fourteenth century, which for the French, Germans, and English was the last or even the last century but one of the Middle Ages, was for the Italians the first of the Renaissance. Two great names dominate this century: Dante and Petrarch.

DANTE: *„THE DIVINE COMEDY.*—Dante, highly erudite, theologian, philosopher, profound Latin scholar, not ignorant of Greek, much involved in the agitations of his age, exiled from his home, Florence, in the tumult of political discords, proscribed and a wanderer, coming as far as France, studied at the University of Paris, wrote "songs," that is to say, lyrical poetry gathered into the volume entitled *„The Canzoniere,* the *„Vita Nuova,* which is also a collection of lyric efforts, though more philosophical, and finally *„The Divine Comedy,* which is a theological epic poem. *„The Divine Comedy* is composed of three parts: hell, purgatory, and heaven. Hell is composed of nine circles which contract as they approach the centre of the earth. There Dante placed the famous culprits of history and his own particular enemies. The most popular episodes of hell are Ugolino in the tower of hunger devouring his dead children, Francesca of Rimini relating her guilty passions and their disastrous consequence, the meeting with Sordello, the great Lord of Mantua, ever invincibly proud, looking "like the lion when he reposes." Purgatory is a cone of nine circles which contract as they rise to heaven. Heaven, finally, is composed of nine globes superimposed on one another; over each of the first seven presides a planet, the eighth is the home of the fixed stars, and the last is pure infinity, home of the Trinity and of the elect. The power of general imagination and of varied invention always renewed in style, and the warmth of passion which throws life and heat into each part, have assured Dante universal admiration. The community of literature pre-eminently admires the hell; the eclectic have been compelled to assert and therefore to believe that the paradise is infinitely superior.

PETRARCH.—Petrarch, a Florentine born in exile, brought up at Avignon, Carpentras, and Montpellier, during four fifths of his life thought only of being a great scholar, of writing in Latin, and of obtaining the repute of an excellent humanist. Hence his innumerable works in Latin. But when twenty-three he was deeply affected by love for a maiden of Avignon, and he sang of her living and dead and still triumphant in glory and eternity, and hence his poems in Italian, the *„Rhymes* and *„Triumphs.* The sensitiveness of Petrarch was admirable; never did pure love, growing mystical and mingling with divine love, find accents alike more profound and noble than came from this Platonist refined with Italian subtlety. Petrarchism became a fashion among the mediocre and a school among these above the common. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were innumerable imitators of Petrarch in Italy, and

later still in France. It is impossible not to instance Lamartine as the last in date.

BOCCACCIO: _THE DECAMERON_.—Immediately after these two great men came Boccaccio, born in Paris but of Italian parentage, who resided at Naples at the court of King Robert. He was a great admirer of Dante and Petrarch, and himself wrote several estimable poems, but, in despair no doubt of attaining the height of his models and also to please the taste of Mary, daughter of King Robert, he wrote the libertine tales which are gathered in the collection entitled *The Decameron* and which established his fame. He is one of the purest authors, as stylist, of all Italian literature, and may be regarded as the principle creator of prose in his own land.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY IN ITALY.—The fifteenth century, less great among the Italians than the fourteenth, yielded many wise men: Marsiglio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Aurispa, etc. But omission must not be made of poets such as Ange Politien, refined humanist, graceful lyrist; and the earliest of dramatic poets of any rank, such as Pulci and Bojardo. In prose note Pandolfini, master and delineator of domestic life, as was Xenophon in Greece, and Leonardo da Vinci, the great painter who left a treatise on his art; nor must it be forgotten that Savonarola was a remarkably fine orator.

CHAPTER IX

THE MIDDLE AGES: SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Epic Poems: *Romanceros*. Didactic Books, Romances of Chivalry

COMMENCEMENTS OF SPANISH LITERATURE.—Known Spanish literature does not go back beyond the twelfth century. Like that of the French it began with a *chanson de geste*, and if France has Roland, Spain has the *Cid*. The *Poem of the Cid*, or *The Song of the Cid*, dates from the commencement of the thirteenth century; in rude but expressive language it narrates the ripe years and old age of the famous captain.

ALPHONSO X; JOHN MANUEL.—At the close of this century, Alphonso X, King of Castile, surnamed the Sage or the Wise, versed in all the knowledge of his time, produced, no doubt with collaborators, the universal chronicle, history mingled with legends, of all peoples on the earth, and the *Seven Parts*, a philosophical, moral, and legal encyclopaedia. His

nephew, Don John Manuel, regent of Castile during the minority of Alphonso XI, a very pure and erudite writer, collated the code of the kingdom in his *Book of the Child*., and the code of chivalry in his *Book of the Knight and Squire*., with a series of apologues in the volume known under the title of *The Count Lucanor*..

THE ROMANCERO..—Of the same period and going back to the commencement

of the thirteenth century, if not earlier, is what is called the *Romancero*.. The *Romancero*.. is the collection of all the national romances, which are more or less short but are never long epic poems. All the romances relating to a hero form the *Romancero*.. of that personage, and all the *Romanceros*.. are called the Spanish *Romancero*.. It is in the *Romancero*.. of Rodriguez that we find the youth of Cid as known to us, or approximately, for it is purified and spiritualised by ageing and, for example, Chimanes curses Rodriguez but also asks for him in marriage: "Oh, king ... each day that shines, I see him that slew my father parading on horseback and loosing his falcon to my dovecot and with the blood of my doves has he stained my skirts and he has sent me word he will cut the hem of my robe.... He who slew my father, give him to me for equal; for he who did me so much harm I am convinced will do me some good." And the king said: "I have always heard said and now see that the feminine sex is most extraordinary. Until now hath she asked of me justice against him and now she doth ask him of me in marriage. I will do it with a good will. I shall send him a letter, etc...."

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY..—The fifteenth century in Spain, as everywhere

else, was destitute of great works. In poetry it was the era of lovesongs and of the influence of Italian literature, which only later was decidedly happy. In prose may be found many chronicles extremely valuable to the historian, and some moral works such as the *Dialogue of the Happy Life*.. of Lucena and, finally, the famous *Amadis des Gaules*., an ancient chivalric romance of unknown origin, brought to publicity in that century by Montalvo.

PORTUGUESE LITERATURE..—Portuguese literature, which is highly interesting though evolved in too restricted a circle, is, above all, epic and lyrical. The Portuguese lyrics almost exclusively dealt with love; the epic poets celebrated a certain number of salient achievements in national history. It is only in the sixteenth century that a genuine expansion of Portuguese literature can be noted.

CHAPTER X

THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES: FRANCE

First Portion of Sixteenth Century: Poets: Marot, Saint-Gelais; Prose Writers: Rabelais, Comines. Second Portion of Sixteenth Century: Poets: "The Pleiade"; Prose Writers: Amyot, Montaigne. First Portion of Seventeenth Century: Intellectual and Brilliant Poets: Malherbe, Corneille. Great Prose Writers: Balzac, Descartes. Second Portion of Seventeenth Century: Poets: Racine, Molière, Boileau, La Fontaine; Prose Writers: Bossuet, Pascal, La Bruyère, Fénelon, etc.

THE RENAISSANCE OF LETTERS.—The sixteenth century was for France the epoch of the Renaissance of letters. What is called the Renaissance of letters is the result, to each race, of the closest contact of the educated people with ancient literature, contact which sometimes strengthened the national vein, sometimes weakened it, according to the divergent temperaments of these races.

MAROT; SAINT-GELAIS.—The sixteenth century in France was ushered in by Marot and Saint-Gelais. Marot was a gracious, fluent, and satiric singer. He was infinitely witty without venom, or mannerism, or affectation; at times he attained to a somewhat serious philosophic poesy and also to eloquence. Saint-Gelais, because he was most emphatically court-poet of all those who have ever been court-poets, was placed by his contemporaries above Marot, and literary historians have left him for the most part in that position. The truth is that his work is worthless. It would be impossible, however, to rob him of the glory of having brought the sonnet from Italy, where he long abode in youth.

COMINES.—In this first half of the sixteenth century must be noted Comines, the historian of Louis XI, a political historian and a historical statesman, remarkably subtle in perceiving the characters and temperaments of prominent individuals, as well as a writer possessing exactitude and limpidity rare in his generation.

RABELAIS.—Francis Rabelais, in his two epic romances, *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*, was erudite, capable of a certain philosophic wisdom which has been greatly exaggerated, but above all was picturesque to one's heart's content, and possessed the art of telling a tale as well as any one in the wide world. He has been called "the buffoon Homer," and the nickname may be legitimately granted to him.

THE PLEIADE.—The second half of the sixteenth century was in all respects the more remarkable. In poetry there was the Pleiade: that is, the true and complete "Renaissance," although Marot had already

been a good workman at its dawn. The Pleiade consisted of Ronsard, Du Bellay, Pontus of Tyard, Remy Belleau, and others; that is, folk who wished to give to France in French the equivalent of what the classics had produced in nobility and beauty. They did not succeed, but they had the honour of having undertaken the task, and they also, all said and done, produced some fine things.

RONSARD; DU BELLAY.—If the truth must be written, Ronsard created an epic poem which it is impossible to read, and some rather overpowering odes after the Pindaric manner; but he wrote detached epic pieces which, though always a trifle artificial, possess real beauty, and some _odelettes_ which are enchanting in their grace and genuineness of feeling, as well as sonnets that are in all respects marvellous. Joachim du Bellay, on his part, wrote sonnets which must be numbered among the most beautiful in the French tongue—the rest often had agreeable inspirations.

DRAMATIC POETS.—Add to their group some dramatic poets who did not yet grasp what constituted a living tragedy and who, even when they imitated Euripides, belonged to the school of Seneca, but who knew how to write in verse, to make a discourse, and, occasionally, a gentle elegy. To mention only the chief, these were Jodelle, Robert Garnier, and Montchrestien.

PROSE WRITERS: AMYOT; CALVIN.—In prose, in this second half of the sixteenth century, there were translators like Amyot, who set forth Plutarch in a limpid French full of ease and geniality, as well as somewhat careless. Religious writings such as those of Calvin, in a hard style and "dreary," as Bossuet expressed it, exhibited vigour, power, and sobriety. Among political writers was the eloquent La Boëtie, the friend of Montaigne, who in his _Discourse on Voluntary Servitude_ vindicated the rights of the people against _One_, that is the monarch. Among authors of _Memoirs_ were Montluc and Brantôme, picturesque in divergent manners, but both inquisitive, well-informed, very alert and furnishing important contributions to history.

MORALISTS: DU VAIR.—Finally, there were moralists such as Du Vair, too long forgotten, and Montaigne. Du Vair was an eloquent orator who exhibited plenty of courage during the troubles of the League; he left some fine philosophical treatises: _The Moral Philosophy of the Stoics_, _On Constancy and Consolation in Public Calamities_, etc.

MONTAIGNE.—Montaigne, less grave and stoical, a far better writer, and one of the two or three greatest masters of prose France ever produced, possessed excellent sense sharpened with wit and enriched with a charming imagination. According to his humour—now stoic, next epicurean, then sceptic—always wise and refined and also always the sincere admirer of greatness of soul and of courage, he is the best of advisers and of companions through life, and of him more than of anyone else it ought to

be said: "To have found pleasure in him is to have profited by him." The sole reproach could be that he wrote a little too much of himself, that is, in entering into personal details that could well have been spared.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.—The first half of the seventeenth century in France was only the corollary of the sixteenth, though naturally with some distinctive personalities and with one, practically isolated, effort of reaction against that sixteenth century. At that period could be found writing men, like Agrippa d'Aubigné, who were absolutely in the spirit of the previous century; d'Aubigné, amiable, gracious, and also fairly often witty, which is too frequently forgotten, was ardent, passionate, a rough and violent fighter more particularly in his _tragedies_, which are baldly crude satires, illumined with astonishingly beautiful passages fairly frequent in recurrence, against the Catholics and their leaders. Others of very different temperament displayed yet more than the poets of the sixteenth century that liberty, that fantasy, that disorder which were characteristic of the times of Ronsard. So far as poets were concerned, that generation must be regarded as entering on a first romanticism. Theophilus de Vian, a fine but over-prodigious poet, without ballast, did not live long enough to grow wise and acquire self-mastery: Cyrano de Bergerac was a brilliant madman, sometimes sparkling with wit and imagination, but often dirty and ridiculous. Saint-Amant possessed plenty of imagination and capacity for exquisite poetical feeling, but he lacked taste and too often was puerile. Wiser than they, yet themselves verbose, long-winded, slow, and spun out, Desportes translated into French verse Italian poetry of the sixteenth century, often with very happy turns of expression, and Bertaut, melancholy and graceful, lacked brilliance even if he possessed poetic emotion.

REGNIER.—Regnier the satirist, pupil of Horace and Juvenal, also assumed the mental attitude of the sixteenth century owing to his viridity, his crudity, his lack of avoidance of obscenity, even though he was a true poet, vigorous, powerful, oratorical, and epigrammatical, as well as a witty and mordant caricaturist.

PRÉCIEUX AND BURLESQUES.—Then succeeded the _précieux_ and the _burlesques_, who resembled each other, the _précieux_ seeking wit and believing that all literary art consisted in saying it did not matter what in a dainty and unexpected fashion; the _burlesques_ also sought wit but on a lower plane, desiring to be "droll," buffoons, prone to cock-and-bull stories or crude pranks in thought, style, and parody. Voiture is the most brilliant representative of the _précieux_ and Scarron the most prominent of the _burlesques_.

MALHERBE.—In the midst of this unrestrained literature one man attempted to impose reason, accuracy of mind, taste, and conciseness. This was Malherbe, who was also a powerful lyric poet, a stylist with an ear for

melody. His influence was considerable, but forty years after his own time; for it was the poets of 1660 who were formed of him and proclaimed themselves his disciples. In his own day he had only Maynard and Racan as pupils, or rather as partisans, for their work but little resembled his.

THE THEATRE.—On the stage the first portion of the seventeenth century, certainly as far as 1636, was only the corollary of the sixteenth. Hardy, writing without method or rule, being in addition a very weak poet, presided in the theatre whilst Mairet, in imitation of the Italians and in imitation too of the bulk of the dramatists of the sixteenth century, essayed to establish formal tragedy, but without creating much effect because his talent was of an inferior description.

At last Corneille arose and, after feeling his way a little, created French tragedy; but as this was only in 1636, and as in the course of his long career he came into the second half of the century, he will be dealt with a little later.

PROSE: BALZAC; DESCARTES.—In prose, the first half of the seventeenth century was fruitful in important works. Cardinal de Perron, who began as an amiable elegant poetaster, became a great orator and formidable controversialist. Guez de Balzac, a little lacking in ideas yet an extremely good writer, though but little detached from preciosity, as Voltaire observed, imparted harmony to his phrases both in his letters and in his *„Socrates a Christian.“* Vaugelas arranged the code of the language founded on custom. Descartes, with whose philosophic ideas we have here nothing to do, in his broad, ample periods, well delivered and powerfully articulated, reproduced the Ciceronian phrase though without its rather weak grace, and in great measure formed the mould whence later was to flow the eloquence of Bossuet. The important works of Descartes are his *„Discourses on Method.,“* his *„Meditation.,“* and his *„Treatise on the Passions.“*

THE GOLDEN AGE: CORNEILLE.—The second half of the seventeenth century is in all respects the golden age of French literature. Great poets and great prose writers were then crowded in serried ranks. To begin with the dramatic poets, who furnished the most vivid glory of the epoch, there was Corneille, who, from 1636, with *„The Cid.,“* was in full splendour and who before 1650 had produced his most beautiful works, *„Cinna.,“* *„The Horaces.,“* *„Polyeucte.,“* continued for twenty-four years after 1650 to furnish the stage with dramas that often possessed many fine qualities, among which must be cited *„Don Sancho of Aragon.,“* *„Nicomedes.,“* *„Oedipus.,“* *„Sertorius.,“* *„Sophonisba.,“* *„Titus and Berenice.,“* *„Psyche (with Molière),“* *„Rodogune Heraclius.,“* *„Pulcheria.“* Corneille must be regarded as the real creator of *„all“* the French drama, because he wrote comedies, tragedies, operas, melodramas. It was therein, apart from his universal virtuosity, that he more particularly made his mark, and in his best work he was the delineator of the human will overcoming passions and, as it

were, intoxicated with this victory and his own power, so that he has become a great advocate of energy and a prominent apostle of duty.

RACINE.—Racine, altogether different, without being opposed to duty, loved to depict passions victorious over man and man the victim of his passions and of the over-powering misfortunes therefrom resulting, thus furnishing a moral lesson. He was a more penetrating psychologist than Corneille, although the latter knew the human heart well, and he showed himself infallibly wise in composition and dramatic disposition, as well as an absolutely incomparable master of verse. His tragedies, especially *Andromache*, *Britannicus*, *Berenice*, *Bajazet*, *Phèdre*, and *Athalie* will always enchant mankind.

MOLIÈRE.—Molière who was admirably gifted to seize the ridiculous with its causes and consequences, very quick and penetrating in insight, armed with somewhat narrow but solid common-sense calculated to please the middle classes of all time, possessed prodigious comic humour, and who never gave the spectator leisure to reflect or breathe—in short, a great writer although hasty and careless—created a whole *répertoire* of comedy (*The School of Women*, *Don Juan*, *Tartufe*, *The Misanthrope*, *Learned Ladies*) which left all known comedy far behind, which eliminated all rivalry in his own time, knew eclipse only in the middle of the eighteenth century, and for the last hundred and forty years has proved the delight of Europe. He remains the master of universal comedy.

BOILEAU.—Boileau was only a man of good sense, of ability, and of excellent taste, who wrote verse industriously. This was not enough to constitute a great poet but enough to make him what he was, a diverting and acute satirist, an agreeable moralist and critic in verse—which his master Horace had been so often—expert, dexterous, and possessing much authority. His *Poetic Art* for long was the tables of the law of Parnassus, and even now can be read not only with pleasure but even with profit.

LA FONTAINE.—La Fontaine was one of the greatest poets of any epoch. He had a profound sentiment for nature, a fine and penetrating knowledge of the character of men he depicted under the names of animals; he was free and fantastic as a philosopher but well instructed and sometimes profound; he had a gentle and smiling sensibility capable at times of melancholy and also now and again of a delicious elegiac; above all, he was endowed with incomparable artistic sense, which rendered him the safest and most dexterous manipulator of verse, of rhythms, and of musical sonorities, who appeared in France prior to Victor Hugo. It is much more difficult to state what he lacked than to enumerate the multiple and miraculous gifts with which he was endowed. His complete lack of morality or his ingenuous carelessness in this respect formed the only subject for regret.

SECONDARY ABILITY.—Near such great geniuses, it is only possible to

mention those of secondary talent; but no compunction need be felt at alluding to Segrais, a graceful manufacturer of eclogues, and Benserade, who rhymed delightfully for masquerades and was capable, on occasions, of being wittily but also tenderly elegiac.

GREAT PROSE WRITERS.—The writers in prose of the second half of the seventeenth century are legion and but few fail to attain greatness. La Rochefoucauld, in his little volume of *Maxims*, enshrined thoughts that were often profound in a highly accurate and delicate setting. Cardinal de Retz narrated his tumultuous career in his *Memoirs*, which are strangely animated, vivid, and representative of what occurred. Arnauld and Nicole have explained their rigid Catholicism, which was Jansenism, in solid and luminous volumes; the latter, more especially, merits consideration and in his *Moral Essays* proved an excellent writer. Mezeray, conscientious, laborious, circumstantial as well as capable writer, should be reckoned as the earliest French historian. Bourdaloue, sound logician and good moralist, from his pulpit as a preacher uttered discourses that were admirable, though too dogmatically composed, and painted word-pictures that piously satirised the types and the eccentrics of his day. Malebranche, reconsidering what Descartes had thought and revitalising his conclusions, arranged in his *Research after Truth* a complete system of spiritualist and idealistic philosophy which he rendered clear, in spite of its depth, and extremely attractive owing to the merits of his powerful and facile imagination and of his rich, copious, and elastic style, that attained the happy mean between conversation and instruction. But five writers of the highest rank came into the perennial forefront, attracting and retaining general attention: Pascal, Bossuet, Mme. de Sévigné, La Bruyère, and Fénelon.

PASCAL.—Pascal, a scholar and also by scientific education mathematician, geometrician, physician, turned, not to letters which he scorned, but to the exposition of those religious ideas which at the age of thirty-three were precious to him. To defend his friends the Jansenists against their foes the Jesuits, he wrote *The Provincial Letters* (1656), which have often been regarded as the foremost monument of classic French prose; such is not our view, but they certainly form a masterpiece of argument, of dialectics, of irony, of humour, of eloquence, and are throughout couched in a magnificent style. Dying whilst still young, he left notes on various subjects, more particularly religion, philosophy, and morality, which have been collected under the title of *Thoughts* and are the product of a great Christian philosopher, of a profound moralist, of a marvellously concise orator, and also of a poet who lacked neither acute sensitiveness nor vast and imposing imagination.

BOSSUET.—Bossuet is universally admitted to be the king of French orators; all his life he preached with a serious, imposing, vast, copious, and sonorous eloquence, fed from recollections of Holy Writ and of the Fathers, being insistent, convincing, and persuasive. His few

funeral orations (on Henrietta of France, Henrietta of England, the Prince de Condé) are prose poems of glory, grief, and piety. He wrote against all those he regarded as enemies of true religion (*History of Variations*-, *Quarrels of Quietness*-), controversial works sparkling with irony and exalted eloquence. He traced in his *Universal History*- the great design in all its stages of God towards humanity and the world. He knew all the resources of the French language and of French style, and in his hands they were expanded. Despite his errors, which were those of his epoch, his date counts in the history of France as a great date, the date in which the religion to which he belonged reached its apogee and when the grand style of French prose was in its zenith.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.—Madame de Sévigné only wrote letters to her friends; but they were so witty, lively, picturesque, admirable in aptly recounting the anecdotes of her day and in depicting the scenes and those concerned in them, written in a style so brisk and seductive, uniting the promise of 1630 with the harvest of 1670, that her work still remains one of the greatest favourites with people of literary taste.

She was the friend of M. de la Rochefoucauld, of Cardinal de Retz, and of that amiable, refined, and gentle Mme. de la Fayette, whose novel, *The Princess of Cleves*-, is still read with interest and emotion.

LA BRUYÈRE.—La Bruyère translated and continued Theophrastus; he was a moralist, or rather a depicter of morals. He described the court, the town, and (very rarely) the village and the country. He was on the lookout for fools in order to be their scourge. He painted, or, better still, he engraved in an incisive way that was sharp, like aqua-fortis. Almost invariably bitter to an extreme, he sometimes had flashes of quite unexpected and very singular sensibility which make him beloved. Somewhat in imitation of La Rochefoucauld, but more particularly in conformity with his own nature, he developed a brief, concise, brusque style which became that of the moralist and even of the general author for the next fifty years, a style which was that of Montesquieu and Voltaire, and superseded the broad, sustained, balanced, harmonious, and measured style of the majority of the writers of the eighteenth century. In the field of ridicule, wherein he sowed copiously, more so even than Molière, the comic poets of the eighteenth century came to glean copiously, which did them less credit (for it is better to observe than to read) than it conferred on the wise and ingenious author of the *Characters*-.

FÉNELON.—Fénelon, extremely individual and original, having on every subject ideas of his own which were sometimes daring, often practical, always generous and noble, was a preacher like Bossuet; also like Bossuet, he was a dexterous, skilled, and formidable controversialist, whilst, for the instruction of the Duke of Burgundy, which had been confided to him, he became a fabulist, an author of dialogues, in some

degree a romancer or epic poet in prose in his famous *Telemachus*., overadmired, then overdepreciated, and which, despite weaknesses, remains replete with strength and dazzling brilliance. Nowadays there is a marked return to this prince of the Church and of literature, whose brain was complex and even complicated, but whose heart was quite pure and his reasoning on a high level.

CHAPTER XI

THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES: ENGLAND

Dramatists: Marlowe, Shakespeare. Prose Writers: Sidney, Francis Bacon, etc. Epic Poet: Milton. Comic Poets.

ELIZABETHAN AGE: SPENSER.—In England the Elizabethan Age is the period extending from the commencement of the reign of Elizabeth to the end of her successor, James I; that is, from 1558 to 1625. This was the golden age of English literature: the epoch in which, awakened or excited by the Renaissance, her genius gave forth all its development in fruits that were marvellous.

First, there was Spenser, alike impregnated with the Italian Renaissance and gifted with the slightly fantastic imagination of his own countrymen, who wrote eclogues, in his *Shepherd's Calender*., in imitation of Theocritus and Virgil as well as of the Italians of the sixteenth century, and who gave charming descriptions in his *Faerie Queene*..

Next came Sidney, the sonnetist, at once passionate and precious, and then that highest glory of this glorious period, the dramatic poets.

THE STAGE: MARLOWE.—As in France, the English stage in the Middle Ages had been devoted to the performance of mysteries (under the name of *miracles*.), later of moralities. As in France, tragedy, strictly speaking, was constituted in the sixteenth century. Towards its close appeared Marlowe, a very great genius, still rugged but with extraordinary power, more especially lyrical. His great works are *Doctor Faustus* and *Edward II*..

SHAKESPEARE.—Then (at the same time as the rest, for they are of about the same age, though Marlowe appeared the earlier) came William Shakespeare, who is perhaps the greatest known dramatic poet. His immense output, which includes plays carelessly put together and, one may venture to say, negligibly, also contains many masterpieces: *Othello*., *Romeo and Juliet*., *Macbeth*., *Hamlet*., *The Taming of the Shrew*., *The Merry*

Wives of Windsor., *As You Like It.*, and *The Tempest.* The *types* and personages of Shakespeare, which have remained celebrated and are still daily cited in human intercourse, include Othello, that tragic figure of jealousy; Romeo and Juliet, the young lovers separated by the feuds of their families but united in death; Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, the ambitious criminals; Hamlet, the young man with a great mind and a great heart but with a feeble will which collapses under too heavy a task and comes to the verge of insanity; Cordelia, the English Antigone, the devoted daughter of the proscribed King Lear; Falstaff, glutton, coward, diverting and gay, a kind of Anglo-Saxon Panurge. A whole dramatic literature has come from Shakespeare. To France he was introduced by Voltaire and then scorned by him because he had succeeded only too well in popularising him; subsequently he was exalted, praised to hyperbole, and imitated beyond discretion by the romantics. In addition to his dramatic works, Shakespeare left *Sonnets.*, some of which are obscure, but the majority are perfect.

BEN JONSON.—Ben Jonson, classical, exact, pretty faithful imitator of the writers of antiquity, interested in unusual characters and customs, gifted with a ready and lively imagination in both comedy and tragedy like Shakespeare, succeeded especially in comedy (*Every Man in his Humour.*, *The Silent Woman.*, etc.). Beaumont and Fletcher, who wrote in collaboration, are full of elevation, of delicacy and grace expressed in a style which is regarded by their fellow-countrymen as exceptionally beautiful.

PROSE WRITERS: LYLY; SIDNEY; BACON; BURTON.—In prose this amazing period was equally productive. Lyly, who corresponds approximately to the French Voiture, created *euphemism*: that is, witty preciosity. Sidney, in his *Arcadia* furnished a curious example of the chivalric romance. Further in his *Defence of Poesie.*, he founded literary criticism. Francis Bacon, historian, moralist, philosopher, perhaps collaborator with Shakespeare, has a place equally allocated to him in a history of literature as in a history of philosophical ideas. Robert Burton, moralist or rather *Meditator.*, who gave himself the pseudonym of Democritus Junior because he was consumed with sadness, left a great work, but one in which there are many quotations, called *The Anatomy of Melancholy.* There is much analogy between him and the French *Sénancour*. Sterne, without acknowledgment, profusely pilfered from him. He is thoroughly English. He did not create melancholy but he greatly contributed to it and made a specialty of it. Despite his pranks and whimsicality, he possessed high literary merit.

POETRY: WALLER.—The English seventeenth century, strictly speaking, virtually commencing about 1625, was inferior to the sixteenth, that has just been considered, which is easily explained by the civil wars distracting England at this period. In poetry, on the one hand, may be noticed the softened and pleasing Epicureans, of which the most prominent representative was Waller, a witty man of the world, who dwelt long in

France, and was a friend of Saint-Évremond (who himself spent a portion of his life in England). Waller made a very fine eulogy of his cousin Cromwell, later another of Charles II, and was told by the latter, "This is not so good as that on Cromwell," whereupon he replied, "Sire, you know that poets always succeed better in fiction than in fact." Here was a man of much wit.

HERBERT; HABINGTON.—Also must be remarked the austere and mystical such as George Herbert, with his *Temple*., a collection of religious and melancholy poems, and like Habington, sad and gloomy even as far as the thirst for dissolution, analogous to the modern Schopenhauer: "My God, if it be Thy supreme decree, if Thou wilt that this moment be the last wherein I breathe this air, my heart obeys, happy to retire far from the false favours of the great, from betrayals where the just are preyed upon...."

DRAMATIC POETS.—Let the estimable dramatic poets be alluded to. Davenant, perhaps a son of Shakespeare; Otway, the illustrious author of *Venice Preserved* and of many adaptations from the French (*Titus* and *Berenice*., the *Tricks of Scapin*., etc.); Dryden, declamatory, emphatic, but admirably gifted with dramatic genius, author of *The Virgin Queen*., *All for Love* (Cleopatra), *Don Sebastian*., was always hesitating between the influence of Shakespeare and that of the French, over-inclined, too, to licentious scenes but pathetic and eloquent.

MILTON.—Quite apart arose Milton, the imperishable author of *Paradise Lost*., the type and model of the religious epic permeated, in fact, with profound and ardent religious feeling, but also possessing very remarkable grandeur and philosophical breadth. Milton became a second Bible to the people to whom the Bible was the inevitable and essential daily study. To *Paradise Lost*., Milton added the inferior *Paradise Regained* and the poem of *Samson*.. Apart from his great religious poems, Milton wrote Latin poems (especially in his youth) which are extremely agreeable, and also works in prose, generally in relation to polemical politics, which came from a vigorous and exalted mind. Milton, from the aspect of his prodigious productiveness and his varied life, divided between literature and the intellectual battles of his times, is comparable to Voltaire, reservation being made for his high moral character, wherein no comparison can be entertained with the French satirist. He did himself full justice. Having become blind, he wrote:

"Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer

Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide."

NOTABLE PROSE WRITERS.—In prose must be noted, on the austere side, George Fox, founder of the sect of Quakers, impassioned and powerful popular orator, author of the *Book of Martyrs*; John Bunyan, an obstinate ascetic, author of *Grace Abounding*, a kind of edifying autobiography, and of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which became one of the volumes of edification and of spiritual edification to the emigrant founders of the United States of America; on the side of the Libertines, Wycherley, who, thoroughly perceiving the moral lowness, fairly well concealed, which lies at the source of Molière, carried this Gallic vein to an extreme in shameless imitations of *The School for Women* and *The Misanthrope* (*The Country Wife* and *The Plain Dealer*); delightful Congreve, a far more amusing companion—witty, spiritual, sardonic, writing excellently, knowing how to create a type and charming his contemporaries whilst not failing to write for posterity in his *Old Bachelor*, *Love for Love*, and *Way of the World*.

NEWTON; LOCKE.—It must not be forgotten that at this epoch Newton and Locke, the one belonging more to the history of science and the other to the history of philosophy, both wrote in a manner entirely commensurate with their genius.

CHAPTER XII

THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES: GERMANY

Luther, Zwingli, Albert Dürer, Leibnitz, Gottsched

NO RENAISSANCE.—The great originality of Germany from the literary point of view—perhaps, too, from others—is that she had no renaissance, no contact, at all events close, with classic antiquity. Her temperament was no doubt hostile; the Reformation, that is, the impassioned adoption of a primitive unadulterated Christianity conservative and directly opposed to antiquity whether pagan or philosophical, added to the repugnance. However that may be, the fact remains: Germany enjoyed no renaissance.

LUTHER.—Also in the sixteenth century in Germany, as in France in the

fourteenth century, there was only popular poetry, and all the prose is German, all reformist, all moralising, and has little or practically no echo of antiquity. Luther, by his translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue, by his „prefaces“ to each book of the Bible, in his polemical writings („The Papacy and its Members“, „The Papacy Elevated at Rome by the Devil“, etc.), by his „Sermons and Letters“, gave to Teutonic thought a direction which long endured, and to Teutonic prose a solidity, purity, sobriety, and vigour which exercised an immense influence on human minds.

THE REFORMERS.—Following Luther, Zwingli, Hutten, Eberling, Melanchthon (but in Latin), Erasmus (most frequently in Latin but sometimes in French) spread the new doctrine or doctrines in relation thereto.

ERASMUS; ALBERT DÜRER; GOTTSCHED.—An exception must be made about Erasmus in what has just been observed. With a very unfettered mind, often as much in opposition to the side of Luther as to the side of Rome, and also prone to attack the pure humanists who styled themselves Ciceronians, Erasmus was a humanist, an impassioned student of ancient letters, so that he has one foot in the Renaissance and one in reform, and withal possessed a very original brain, and was, from every aspect, „ultra-modern.“

Albert Dürer must also be cited: mathematician, architect, painter, yet belonging to our subject by his „four books on the human proportion“ wherein he shows, in chastened and precise style, that he himself is nothing less than the earliest founder of Teutonic æstheticism.

The seventeenth century—extending it, as is reasonable enough, up to the region of 1730—is almost exclusively the era of French influence and a little, if desired, of Italian influence. The critic Gottsched („Poetic Art, Grammar, Eloquence“) maintained the excellence of French literature and the necessity of drawing inspiration from it with an energy of conviction which drew on him the hatred of the succeeding generation.

LEIBNITZ.—German poetry of his period, possessing neither originality nor power, could only interest the erudite and the searchers. The domain of prose is more enthralling. Leibnitz, who wrote in Latin and French, and even in German, is pre-eminently the great thinker he is reputed to be; but though he never possessed nor even pretended to possess originality in style, he is nevertheless highly esteemed for the purity, limpidity, and facility of his language.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES: ITALY

Poets: Ariosto, Tasso, Guarini, Folengo, Marini, etc. Prose Writers: Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Davila.

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.—Italy, after Dante and Petrarch, possessed literary strength and much literary glory in the sixteenth century. She produced an admirable pleiad of poets and prose writers of high merit. These were Ariosto, Tasso, Berni, Sannazaro, Machiavelli, Bandello, Guicciardini. Below them were a hundred distinguished writers, among which must be cited Aretino, Folengo, Bembo, Baldi, Tansillo, Dolce, Benvenuto Cellini, Hannibal Caro, and Guarini.

ARIOSTO.—Ariosto wrote *Orlando Furioso*, which is not the epic in parody, as has been too often observed, but the gay and joyous epopee of Orlando and his companions. The principal characters are Orlando, Charlemagne, Renaud, Agramant, Ferragus, Angelica, Bradamante, Marphisa. The tone is extremely varied and the author is in turns joyous, satirical, pathetic, melancholy, and even tragical. Ariosto is the superlative poet of fantastic imagination combined with a foundation of good sense, reason, and benevolence. Goethe has said of him very aptly: "From a cloud of gold wisdom sometimes thunders sublime sentences, whilst to a harmonious lute, folly seems to riot in savage digressions yet all the while maintains a perfect measure." Ariosto was well read in the classics, but fundamentally his master was Homer.

TASSO.—Torquato Tasso, whose life was characterised by a thousand trials and who was long the victim of a mental malady, wrote a poem on the crusade of Godfrey de Bouillon. The poem is full of the supernatural; the chief characters are Renaud, Tancred, the enchantress Armida, Clorinda. The inspiration of Tasso is specially mystic and lyrical; his facility for description is delicious. The repute of *Jerusalem Delivered* in the seventeenth century was immense, and all the literatures of Europe have innumerable references to the personages and episodes of the poem. In Italy there were fervid partisans of the superiority of Tasso over Ariosto or of Ariosto over Tasso, and many duels on the subject, the most bellicose being, as always happens, between those who had read neither.

BERNI.—Berni, like Ariosto, was half burlesque in the diverting portions of his works. He wrote satires which were often virulent, paradoxes such as the eulogy of the plague and of famine, and an *Amorous Orlando* which is quite agreeable. The Bernesque type, that is, the humoristic, was created by him and bears his name.

SANNAZARO.—Sannazaro wrote both in Latin and Italian. His chief claim

to fame lies in his *„Arcadia“*, an idyllic poem of bucolic sentiment, destined to evoke thousands of imitations. He also produced eclogues and sonnets in Italian which give sufficient grounds for regarding him as one of the chief masters of that language.

MACHIAVELLI.—Great thinker, great politician, great moral philosopher, Machiavelli possessed one of the most powerful minds ever known. He wrote *„The Prince“*, *„Discourses upon Livius“*, an *„Art of War“*, diplomatic letters and reports, for he was at one time secretary to the Florentine Republic, a *„History of Florence“*, a comedy (*„The Mandrake“*), romances and tales. *„The Prince“* is a treatise of the art of acquiring and preserving power by all possible means and more particularly by intelligent and discreet crime. Machiavelli emphasised the separation, at times relative, at times absolute, which exists between politics and morals. His *„Discourses upon Livius“* are full of sense, penetration, and profundity; his light works show a singular dexterity of thought united to a fundamental grossness which it would be impossible to misunderstand or excuse.

BANDELLO.—Bandello is the author of novels in the vein of those of Boccaccio or of Brantôme. His voluntary or spontaneous originality consists in mixing licentious tales with sentences and maxims which are most austere and moral. He also wrote elegiac odes that were highly esteemed. His very pure style is considered in Italy to be strictly classical.

GUICCIARDINI.—Guicciardini wrote with infinite patience, severe conscientiousness, and imperturbable frigidity in a style that was pure, though somewhat prolix, that *„History of Florence“*, virtually a history of Italy, which from its first appearance was hailed as a classic and has remained one. His history is altogether that of a statesman; he passed his life among prominent public affairs, being Governor of Modena, Parma, and Bologna, a diplomatist involved in the most important negotiations; this historian is himself a historical personage.

FOLENGO.—Folengo wrote a macaronic poem: that is to say, one in which Latin and Italian were mixed, called *„Coccacius“* (which must be remembered because when translated into French it became the earliest model for Rabelais), as well as *„Orlandini“* (childhood of Orlando), which is amusing. Other serious works did not merit serious consideration.

ARETINO.—Aretino was a satirist and a poet so fundamentally licentious that he has remained the type of infamous author. He wrote comedies (*„The Courtesan“*, *„The Marshal“*, *„The Philosopher“*, *„The Hypocrite“*), intimate letters that are extremely interesting for the study of the customs of his day, religious and edifying books, replete with talent if not with sincerity, as well as an innumerable mass of satires, pamphlets, statements, diatribes which caused all the princes of his day to tremble, and through making them tremble also brought gold into the coffers of

Aretino; he had raised blackmail to the height of a literary department.

BEMBO; BALDI.—Cardinal Bembo, a devout Ciceronian to the verge of fanaticism, wrote more especially in Latin, but left Italian poems of much elegance and charm; he ranks among the most brilliant representatives of the Italian Renaissance.

Baldi, a very widely versed scholar, sought relaxation from his erudition in writing *eclogues*, *moral poems*, and a very curious didactic poem on *navigation*.

TANSILLO; DOLCE.—Tansillo, a very fertile poet, composed a rather licentious poem entitled *The Vintager*, and a religious poem called *The Tears of St. Peter* (which the younger Malherbe thought so beautiful that he partially translated it), *The Rustic Prophet* and *The Nurse*, wherein he showed himself the pupil of Tasso, comedies, a bucolic drama, etc.

Dolce, not less prolific, produced five epic poems of which the best is *The Childhood of Orlando*, many comedies, for the most part imitations of Plautus, tragedies after Euripides and Seneca, and then one which seems to have been original and was the celebrated *Mariamna*, so often imitated in French. He was also an indefatigable translator of Horace, Cicero, Philostrates, etc.

BENVENUTO CELLINI.—The great sculptor and chaser, Benvenuto Cellini, belongs to literary history because of his *Treatise on Goldsmithing and Sculpture* and his admirable *Memoirs*, which are certainly in part fictitious, but are a literary work of the foremost rank.

HANNIBAL CARO; GUARINI.—Hannibal Caro, by his *poems*, his *letters*, his literary criticism, his comedy, *The Beggars*, and his metrical translation of the *Aeneid*, acquired high rank in the judgment both of Italy and Europe.

Guarini, the friend of Tasso, whom he helped in the labour of revising and correcting *Jerusalem Delivered*, was unquestionably his pupil. Tasso having written a bucolic poem, *Aminta*, Guarini wrote a bucolic poem, *The Faithful Shepherd*, which has been one of the greatest literary successes ever known. It was a kind of irregular drama mingled with songs and dances, highly varied, poetic, pathetic sometimes in a rather insipid way. All the *pastorals*, whether French or Italian, and later the opera itself, can be traced to Guarini, or at least the taste for the eclogue may be derived from the dramas Guarini originated. This was a man whose influence has been considerable not only on literature, but also on manners, customs, and morals.

DECADENCE OF LITERATURE.—In the seventeenth century Italian literature indisputably was in decadence. In verse more especially, but also in

prose, it was the period of ability without depth and even without foundation, of elegant and affected verbiage or burlesque lacking alike in power, thought, and passion. Marini loomed large with his *Adonis*, an ingenious mythological epic, sometimes brilliant but also lame, sometimes full of points, but also with trifles. Great as was his reputation in Italy, it was perhaps surpassed in France, where he was welcomed and flattered by Marie de' Medici and hyperbolically praised by Voiture, Balzac, Scudéry, etc.

SALVATOR ROSA; TASSONI; MAFFEI.—The great painter Salvator Rosa devoted himself hardly less to literature; he left lyrical poems and particularly satires which are far from lacking spirit, though often destitute of taste. Satiric, too, was the paradoxical Tassoni, who scoffed at Petrarch, and who in his *Thoughts*, long prior to J.J. Rousseau, was the first, perhaps (but who knows?), to maintain that literature is highly prejudicial to society and humanity, and who achieved fame by his *Rape of the Bucket*: that is, by a burlesque poem on the quarrel between the Bolognese and the inhabitants of Modena about a bucket.

Maffei (intruding somewhat on the eighteenth century), good scholar and respected historian, produced in 1714 his *Merope*, which was an excellent tragedy, as Voltaire well knew and also testified.

HISTORIANS AND CRITICS.—In prose there are none to point out in the eighteenth century in Italy except historians and critics. Among the historians must be noted Davila, who spent his youth in France near Catherine de' Medici, served in the French armies, and on his return to Padua devoted his old age to history. He wrote a *History of the Civil Wars in France* which was highly esteemed, and which Fénelon recollected when writing his *Letter on the Pursuits of the French Academy*. The foregoing are what must be mentioned as notable manifestations of literary activity in Italy during the seventeenth century, but let it not be forgotten that the scientific activity of the period was magnificent, and that it was the century of Galileo, of Torricelli; of the *four* Cassini, as well as of so many others who were praised, as they deserved to be, in the *Eulogies of the Learned* of Fontenelle.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES: SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Poets: Quevedo, Gongora, Lope de Vega, Ercilla, Calderon, Rojas, etc.
Prose Writers: Montemayor, Cervantes, etc. Portugal: De Camoens, etc. The Stage.

POETRY: QUEVERO; GONGORA.—The sixteenth century and the first half at least of the seventeenth century were the golden age of both Spanish and Portuguese literature. In poetry Quevedo is the first to be noticed, and he is also notable in prose. Born at Madrid, but compelled by the consequences of his youthful follies to take refuge in Sicily, then back in Spain and either at the height of his fortune near the Duke of Olivares or else pursued, imprisoned, and tortured by that minister, he possessed facility and force which were alike extraordinary. His poems, which are most satirical, revealed a glow and a freshness that were very remarkable.

Gongora, like Lyly in England and Marini in Italy, enjoyed the fame of founding a bad school. It was *„Gongorism:“* that is, the art of writing not to make oneself read, which could only suit lawyers, orators, critics, and scientists, but the art of writing to cause one's idea only to be discovered after many efforts, or even so as to prevent its being discovered at all. *„Gongorism“* belongs to every epoch, and in each epoch is the means of scaring away the crowd, of obtaining a small band of enthusiastic admirers, and of being able to scorn the suffrage of the multitude. Gongora, both in Spain and in France, found devoted admirers and imitators.

LOPE DE VEGA.—Lope de Vega was one of the greatest of the world's poets, although he was intelligible. Prodigiously fertile, which is not necessarily a sign of mediocrity, he published some romances in prose (*„Dorothea Arcadia.“*), some novels, epic or historic poems (*„Circe“*, *„Shepherds of Bethlehem.“*, *„Jerusalem Conquered.“*, *„The Beauty of Angelica.“*, *„The Pilgrim in his Land.“*, *„The White Rose.“*, *„The Tragic Crown.“*, of which Mary Stuart is the heroine, *„The Laurel of Apollo.“*, etc.), burlesque and satirical poems, and dramatic poems the number of which exceed eighteen hundred. In this mass of production may be discerned comedies of manners, comedies of intrigue, pastorals, historical comedies (with characters whose names are known in history), classical and religious tragedies, mythological, philosophical, and hagiological comedies. Despite these distinctions, which are useful as a guide in this throng, all the dramatic work of Lope de Vega is that of imagination which seems to owe little to practical observation and is valuable through happy invention, dexterous composition, and the charming fertility and variety of ideas in the details. The dramatic work of Lope de Vega (as yet incompletely published and which probably never will be published in its entirety) was a vast mine wherein quarried not only all the dramatic authors but all the romancists and novelists of Europe. This prodigious producer, who wrote millions of verses, is the Homer of Spain and more fertile than Homer, whilst also a Homer as to whose existence there is no doubt.

ERCILLA.—Alonso de Ercilla created a peculiar species, that of memorialist epic poems. He was a man concerned in important events, who

took daily notes and subsequently, or even concurrently, put them into verse. Thus Ercilla made his *„Araucana.:* that is, the poem of the expedition against the Araucanians in Chili, or rather he thus wrote the first (and best) of the three parts; later, desirous of rising to epic heights, he had resort to the contrivances and conventional traditional ornaments of this type of work and became dull, without entirely losing all his skill. "This poem is more savage than the nations which form its theme," said Voltaire in a pretty phrase which was somewhat hyperbolic. The *„Araucana_* is agreeably savage in its first part without being ferocious and fastidiously civilised in the sequels without being contemptible.

MENDOZA.—Hurtado de Mendoza must be regarded—that proud, gloomy, bellicose and haughty minister of Charles V—because he was the earliest of the picaresque romancists. The picaresque method consisted in delineating the habits of outcasts, bohemians, spongers, swindlers, and vagrants. It lasted for about three quarters of a century. To this class belonged *„Guzmar of Alfargue.,* by Mateo Aleman; *„Marco of Obregon.,* by Espinel; *„The Devil on Two Sticks.,* by Guevara; and somewhat, in France, the *„Gil Bias_* of Le Sage. Now the prototype of all these was *„The Lazarillo of Tormes.,* by Hurtado de Mendoza.

GUEVARA.—A moment's heed must be paid to the amiable Antonio de Guevara, an insinuating moralist whose *„Familiar Letters_* and *„Dial of Princes.,* though rather affectedly grave, contain interesting passages which commend the author to readers. He is more particularly interesting to Frenchmen because it was from him La Fontaine borrowed his *„Countrymen of the Danube.,* attributing it to Marcus Aurelius (which led to much confusion), because the principal personage in *„The Dial of Princes_* is one Marcus Aurelius, who is discreetly intended for Charles V. In spite of what Taine wrote, though his criticisms in detail were accurate, La Fontaine followed pretty closely the fine and highly original wording of Guevara.

THE ROMANCE.—The Spanish romance was at its zenith in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It had a legion of authors, but here the principal only can be mentioned. Montemayor, who lived at the close of the sixteenth century and led an adventurous existence, wrote the *„Diana in Love.,* which became celebrated in every country under the title of " *„Diana_* of Montemayor." It is a mythological, bucolic, and magical romance, entirely lacking in order, being wholly fantastical, sometimes cruelly dull, sometimes graceful, affecting, seductive, and pathetic, always ridiculously romantic. Its vogue was considerable in Spain, France, and Italy. The *„Astrea_* of Honoré d'Urfé proceeds in part from it, but is more sensible and more restrained.

QUEVEDO.—Here Quevedo is again found, now as prose writer and in this no

worse than as poet. He was prolific in romances or satirical fantasies, in social reveries wherein contemporary society is not spared and Juvenal is often suggested. Finally, he put forth all his powers, which were considerable, in his great romance, *Don Pablo of Segovia*, which, twenty years ago, would have been called naturalist. Quevedo obviously was an observer, possessed psychological penetration or, at least, the wisdom of the moralist; but above all, his imagination was curiously original, he invented, on an apparently true foundation, adventures which were almost probable and were diverting, burlesque, or possessed a bitter flavour. His was one of the most original brains in Spain, which has abounded in mental originalities.

CERVANTES.—Montesquieu has said of the Spaniards: "They have only one good book, the one which mocks at all the others." Nothing could be more witty nor more unjust; but it is true that the greatest Spanish book is that in which the author does mock at many other Spanish books. Cervantes wrote his *Don Quixote* to ridicule the romances of chivalry which in his land were a craze among the townsfolk and smaller aristocratic landowners, but he wrote in no spirit of animosity and even reserved for his comic hero, that is, for his victim, a discreet sympathy which he made his reader share. A hero of chivalry himself, warrior with indomitable courage, thrice wounded at the battle of Lepanto, where he lost an arm, seven years in captivity in Algiers, on his return to Spain he became involved in adventures which again consigned him to prison before he at length attained success, if not fortune, with *Don Quixote*. *Don Quixote* is a realistic romance traversed by a frenzied idealist: here are the manners of the populace, of innkeepers, muleteers, galley-slaves, monks, petty traders, peasants, and amid them passes a man who views the entire world as a romance and who believes he finds romance at every turn of his road. This perpetual contrast is, first, effective and supremely artistic in itself, then is of a reality superior to that of any realism, since it is the complete life of humanity which is thus painted and penetrated to its very foundations and shown in all its aspects. There are two portions to this romance, and they are constantly near each other and, as it were, interlaced; namely, the episodes and the conversations. The episodes, comic incidents, humorous or sentimental adventures are of infinite variety and display incredible imagination; the conversations between Don Quixote and his faithful Sancho represent the two tendencies of the human mind to recognise on the one side, the goodness, generosity, devotion, the spirit of sacrifice, and the illusions; on the other side, common sense, the sense of reality, the sense of the just mean and, as it were, the proverbial reason, without malice or bitterness. This masterpiece is perhaps the one for which would have had to be invented the epithet of *inexhaustible*.

Apart from his immortal romance, Cervantes wrote novels, romances, sonnets, and also tried the drama, at which he did not succeed. The whole world, literally, was infatuated with *Don Quixote*, and, despite all changes of taste, it has never ceased to excite the admiration of all who read.

THE DRAMA: FERDINAND DE ROJAS.—The drama, even apart from Lope de Vega, of whom we have written, was most brilliant in Spain during these two centuries. The Spanish stage was very characteristic, very original among all drama in that, more than the ancient drama, more than in the plays of Shakespeare himself, it was essentially lyrical, or, to express the fact more clearly, it was based on a continual mixture of the lyric and the dramatic; also it nearly always laid stress on the sentiment and the susceptibility of honour, "the point of honour," as it was called, and upon its laws, which were severe, tyrannical, and even cruel. These two principal characteristics gave it a distinct aspect differing from all the other European theatres. Without going back to the confused origins and without expressing much interest in the Spanish drama until the religious dramas of the *autos sacramentales* (which continued their career until the seventeenth century), it is necessary, first, to note, at the close of the fifteenth century, the celebrated *Celestine* of Ferdinand de Rojas, a spirited work, unmeasured, enormous, unequal, at times profoundly licentious, at times attaining a great height of moral exaltation, and also at times farcical and at others deeply pathetic. *Celestine* was translated several times in various languages, and especially in Italy and France was as much appreciated as in Spain.

CALDERON.—In the seventeenth century (after Lope de Vega) came Calderon. Almost as prolific as Lope, author of at least two hundred plays, some authorities say a thousand, Calderon was first prodigiously inventive, then he was dogmatic, moralising, almost a preacher. Whether in his religious plays, in his love dramas, in his cap and sword tragedies, even in his comedies and highly complicated intrigues, the great sentiments of the Spanish soul—honour, faith, the inviolability of the oath, loyalty, fidelity, the spirit of great adventures—broaden, animate and elevate the whole work. With Calderon the titles are always indicative of the subject. His most celebrated plays are: *In this Life All Is Truth and Falsehood*, *Life is a Dream*, *The Devotion to the Cross*, *The Lady before All*, *The Mayor of Zamalea*, *Love after Death*, *The Physician of his Own Honour*.

ALARCON.—Alarcon comes nearer to us owing to his regular and almost classic compositions. Nevertheless he was a man of imagination and humour with an adequate dramatic force. His tragedies must be mentioned: *What Is Worth Much Costs Much*, *Cruelty through Honour*, *The Master of Stars*; his comedies, *The Examination of Husbands*, and that charming *The Truth Suspected*, from which Corneille derived *The Liar*.

TIRSO DE MOLINA.—Tirso de Molina was another prodigy of dramatic literature, and his fellow-countrymen assert that he wrote three hundred dramas, of which sixty-five are in existence. All Spanish dramatists were unequal, he more especially; he passed from grossness to sublimity with surprising facility and ease. He particularly delighted in ingeniously complicated intrigue, in surprises, and in unexpected

theatrical touches. Yet *The Condemned in Doubt* is a sort of moral epopee, adapted to the stage, possessing real beauty and not without depth. His most celebrated drama, in so far as it has aroused direct or indirect imitations, and owing to the type he was the first to suggest, was *The Jester of Seville*: that is, *Don Juan*. All European literatures, utilising *Don Juan*, became tributaries to Tirso de Molina.

FRANCIS DE ROJAS; CASTRO; DIAMANTE.—Francis de Rojas, who must not be confused with Ferdinand de Rojas, author of *Celestine*, though possessing less spirit than his predecessors, is nevertheless a distinguished dramatic poet. The French of the seventeenth century freely pilfered from him. Thomas Corneille borrowed a goodly portion of his *Bertrand de Cigarral*, Scarron a large part of his *Jodelet*, Le Sage an episode in *Gil Blas*. If only for their connection with the French drama, William de Castro and Diamante must be noticed. William de Castro wrote a play, *The Exploits of the Cid in Youth*, which Corneille knew and which he imitated in his celebrated tragedy, adding incomparable beauty. Diamante in his turn imitated Corneille very closely in *The Son who Avenges his Father*. Voltaire, mistaken in dates, believed Corneille had imitated Diamante.

PORTUGUESE WRITERS.—In Portugal the sixteenth century was the golden age. Poets, dramatists, historians, and moralists were extremely numerous; several possessed genius and many displayed great talent. Among lyrical poets were Bernardin Ribeiro, Christoval Falcam, Diogo Bernardes, Andrade Caminha, Alvarez do Oriente, Rodriguez Lobo. Ribeiro wrote eclogues half in narrative or dialogue, half lyrical. He also produced a romance intersected with tales (*Le Sage* in his *Gil Blas* thus wrote, as is known, and in this only imitated the Spaniards), entitled *The Innocent Girl*, which often evinces great refinement.

Christoval Falcam was also bucolic, but his eclogues often ran to nine hundred verses. He also wrote *Voltas*, which are lyric poems suitable for setting to music. Diogo Bernardes also wrote eclogues and letters collected under the title of the *Lyma*. The *Lyma* is a river. To Bernardes the *Lyma* was what the *Lignon* was to D'Urfé in his *Astrea*.

Caminha, a court poet decidedly analogous to the French Saint-Gelais, possessed dexterity and happy phraseology. Eclogues, elegiacs, epitaphs, and epistles were the ordinary occupations of his muse.

Alvarez do Oriente has left a great romanesque work, a medley of prose and verse entitled *Portugal Transformed* (*Lusitania transformanda*), which is extremely picturesque apart from its idylls and lyrical poems.

Lobo was highly prolific. He was author of pastoral romances, medleys of verse and prose (*The Strange Shepherd*, *The Spring*, *Disenchantment*), a great epic poem (*The Court at the Village*), in prose conversations on moral and literary questions which have remained classic in Portugal,

as well as romances and eclogues.

EPIC POETS.—The most notable epic poets were Corte-Real, Manzinho, Pereira de Castro, Francisco de Saa e Menezès, Doña de la Lacerda, and, finally, the great Camoens. Corte-Real, a writer of the highest talent, was author of an epic which we would style a romance in verse, although founded on fact, upon *The Shipwreck of Sepulveda* and her husband Lianor. The varied and picturesque narrative is often pathetic. It would be more so, to us at least, were it not for the incessant intervention of pagan deities.

Francisco de Saa e Menezès sang of the great Albuquerque and of *Malaca Conquered*. He mingled amorous and romantic tales with narratives and descriptions of battles. He possessed the sense of local colour and brilliant imagination; he has been accused of undue negligence with regard to correction.

Doña de la Lacerda, professor of Latin literature to the children of Philip III, although born at Porto, wrote nearly always in Spanish. The *Spain Delivered* (from the Moors), an epic poem, is her chief work; she also composed comedies and various poems in Spanish. On rare occasions she wrote in Portuguese prose.

CAMOËNS.—The glory of these sound poets is effaced by that of Camoëns. Exiled in early youth for a reason analogous to the one which occasioned the banishment of Ovid, a soldier who lost an eye at Ceuta, wandering in India, shipwrecked and, according to tradition, only saving his poem which he held in one hand whilst swimming with the other, he returned to Portugal after sixteen years of exile, assisting at the struggles, decline, and subjection of his country, dying (1579) at the moment when for a time Portugal ceased to have a political existence. He wrote *The Lusiad* (that is the Portuguese), which was the history of Vasco da Gama and of his expedition to India. The description of Africa, the Cape of Tempests (the Cape of Good Hope), with the giant Adamastor opposing the passage, and the description of India were the foundation of the narrative. Episodes narrated by individuals, as in Virgil and as in the Spanish romance, formed an internal supplement, and thus was narrated almost all the history of Portugal, and so it came to pass that the love of Inez de Castro and of Don Pedro formed part of the story of Vasco da Gama. Camoëns was a powerful narrator, a magnificent orator in verse, and, above all, a very great painter. He evinced curious taste, even as compared with his contemporaries, such as the continual commingling of mythological divinities with Christian truths: for instance, a prayer addressed by Vasco to Jesus Christ was granted by Venus. It may also be observed that the poem lacked unity and was only a succession of poems. But, as Voltaire said, "The art of relating details, by the pleasure it affords, can make up for all the rest; and that proves the work to be full of great beauties, since for two hundred years it has formed the delight of a clever race who must be well aware of its faults."

DRAMATISTS.—The principal Portuguese dramatists were Saa de Miranda, Antonio Ferreira, Gil Vicente. Saa de Miranda was a philosophical poet or, to express it more correctly, a poet with ideas; he broke with the eternal idylls, eclogues, bucolics, and pastorals of his predecessors without declining to furnish excellent examples, but more often aiming elsewhere and higher. He also reformed the versification, introducing metres employed in other languages, but hitherto unused in his tongue. He wrote odes, epistles after the manner of Horace, sonnets, lyric poems in Latin, and epic compositions. In all this portion of his work he may be compared to Ronsard. Finally, he wrote two comedies in prose—*The Strangers* and *The Villalpandios* (the *Villalpandios* are Spanish soldiers, who have a recognised position in comedy). His mind was one of the most elevated and best stored with classic literature that Portugal ever produced.

FERREIRA.—Ferreira, who wrote lyric poems, elegiac poems, and especially epistles, by which he gained for himself the name of the Portuguese Horace, was more particularly a dramatist. He created *Farcas*, which must not be regarded as farces, but as dramatic poems in which the profane and religious are interwoven; he wrote *The Bristo*, a popular comedy; *The Jealous One*, which was perhaps the earliest comedy of character ever produced in Europe, and finally, a tragedy, *Inez de Castro*, the national tragedy, a tragedy so orthodox and regular in form that the author felt bound to introduce a chorus in the classic manner; it is charged with pathos and handled with much art.

GIL VICENTE.—Gil Vicente, a prolific poet who wrote forty-two dramatic pieces, two thirds in Spanish and the rest in Portuguese, touched every branch of theatrical literature; he produced religious plays (*autos*), tragedies, romantic dramas, comedies, and farces. His chief works are *The Sibyl Cassandra*, *The Widow*, *Amadis de Gaule*, *The Temple of Apollo*, *The Boat of Hell*. His comedies possess a vivacity that is Italian rather than Portuguese. Tradition has it that Erasmus learnt Portuguese for the sole purpose of reading the comedies of Gil Vicente.

CHAPTER XV

THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES: FRANCE

Of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Fontenelle, Bayle. Of the Eighteenth: Poets: La Motte, Jean Baptiste Rousseau, Voltaire, etc. Prose Writers: Montesquieu, Voltaire, Buffon, Jean Jacques Rousseau, etc. Of the Nineteenth Century: Poets: Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Musset, Vigny, etc.; Prose Writers: Chateaubriand, Michelet, George Sand, Mérimée, Renan, etc.

FONTENELLE.—The eighteenth century, which was announced, and announced with great precision, by La Bruyère, was inaugurated by his enemy Fontenelle. Fontenelle, nephew of Corneille, began with despicable trifles, eclogues, operas, stilted tragedies, letters of a dandy, so he might be justly regarded as an inferior Voiture. Very soon, because he possessed the passion of the eighteenth century for science and free-thought, he showed himself to be a serious man, and because he had wit he showed himself an amusing serious man, which is rare. His *Dialogues of the Dead* were very humorous and, at the same time, in many passages profound; he wrote his *Discourses on the Plurality of (Habitable) Worlds*; then because he was perpetual secretary of the Academy of Sciences, came his charming and often astonishing *Eulogies of Sages*, which ought to be regarded as the best existent history of science in the seventeenth century and in the eighteenth up to 1740.

BAYLE.—Bayle, a Frenchman who lived in Holland on account of religion, a journalist and lexicographer, in his *News of the Republic of Letters* and in his immense *Dictionary*, gave proof of broad erudition about all earthly questions, especially philosophical and religious, guiding his readers to absolute scepticism. Fontenelle and Bayle are the two heralds who opened the procession of the eighteenth century. Successively must now be examined first the poets and then the prose writers of the first half of that era.

LA MOTTE.—La Motte, as celebrated in his own time as he is forgotten in ours, was lyricist, fabulist, dramatic orator, epical even after a certain fashion. He wrote odes that were deadly cold, fables that were often quite witty but affected and laboured, comedies sufficiently mediocre, of which *The Magnificent Lover* was the most remarkable, and a tragedy, *Inez de Castro*, which was excellent and enjoyed one of the greatest successes of the French stage. Finally, becoming the partisan of the modernists against the classicists, he abridged the *Iliad* of Homer into a dozen books as frigid as his own lyric poems. He had paradoxical ideas in literature, and, being a poet, or believing himself one, he considered that verse enervated thought and that sentiments should only be written in prose. It was against these tendencies that Voltaire so vigorously reacted.

J.B. ROUSSEAU; POMPIGNAN.—Beside La Motte, being more gifted as a poet, Jean Baptiste Rousseau was conspicuous. He wrote lyrical poems which were cold as lyrics but were well composed and, sometimes at least, attained a certain degree of eloquence. From Malherbe to Lamartine, lyrical poetry was almost completely neglected by French poets, or at least very badly treated. Jean Baptiste Rousseau had the advantage of being nearly solitary and for approximately century was regarded as the greatest national lyrical poet.

Le Franc de Pompignan has endured much ridicule, not the least being for

a certain naive vanity perceptible directly he passed from the south to the north of France; but he had some knowledge; he was acquainted with Hebrew, then a sufficiently rare accomplishment, and he was an assiduous student of classic literature. His tragedy, *„Dido“*, succeeded; his *„Sacred Songs“* enjoyed popularity, no matter what Voltaire might say, and deserved their success; in his odes, which were too often cold, he rarely succeeded—only once triumphantly, in his ode on the death of Jean Baptiste Rousseau.

THE *„HENRIADE“*.—So far as poets, strictly speaking, were concerned, the foregoing are all that have to be indicated in the first half of the eighteenth century, except the ingenious and frigid *„Henriade“* of Voltaire.

DRAMATIC POETS.—To counterbalance, the dramatic poets are numerous and not without merit. Let us recall *„Inez de Castro“* by De la Motte. Campistron, the feeble pupil of Racine (and, moreover, there could be no pupil of Racine, so original was the latter, so closely was his genius associated with his mind), perpetrated numerous tragedies and operas which enjoyed the success obtained by all imitative works: that is, a success which arouses no discussion, and which today appears to be the climax of tediousness.

CRÉBILLON.—Crébillon followed, vigorous, energetic, violently shaking the nerves, master of horror and of terrors, not lacking some analogy with Shakespeare, but without delicacy or depth, never even giving a thought to being psychological or a moralist, writing badly and to a certain extent meriting the epithet of "the barbarian" bestowed on him by Voltaire.

The latter was infatuated with the drama, having the feeling for beautiful themes and for new and original topics, adapting them to the stage with sufficient aptitude, delighting, in addition, in pomp, mimicry, and decorativeness, and causing tragedy to lean towards opera, which in his day was no bad thing; but weak in execution, never creating characters because he could not escape from himself, as moderate in psychology and morality as Crébillon himself and replacing analysis of passion by these and philosophical commonplaces. He left tragic dramas which until about 1815 enjoyed success, but which then fell into a disregard from which there is no probability they will ever emerge.

COMIC POETS.—The comic poets of this period were highly agreeable. The most notable were Destouches, Regnard, La Chaussée. Destouches was the very type of the comic writers of the eighteenth century already alluded to, who took a portrait by La Bruyère and turned it into a comedy, and that is what was called a comedy of character. Thus he wrote *„The Braggart“*, *„The Irresolute“*, *„The Ungrateful“*, *„The Backbiter“*, *„The Spendthrift“*, etc. Sometimes he took pains to be a trifle more original, as in *„The False Agnes“*, *„The Married Philosopher“*; sometimes he borrowed

a subject from a foreign literature and adapted it fairly dexterously for the Gallic stage, as in *„The Impertinent Inquisitive.‘‘*, taken from *„Don Quixote.‘‘* and *„The Night Drum.‘‘*, borrowed from an English author. His versification was dexterous and correct without possessing other merit.

REGNARD.—Regnard, on the contrary, was an original genius, though frequently imitative of Molière. He possessed the comic spirit, gaiety, animation, the sense of drollery, and a prodigious capacity for humorous verse of great flexibility and incredible ease, highly superior in point of form to that of Boileau and even of Molière, for he suggests a Scarron perfected by Molière himself and by the Italian poets. Still alive and probably imperishable are such works as *„The Gamester.‘‘*, *„The Universal Legatee.‘‘*, *„The Unexpected Return.‘‘*

THE DRAMA: LA CHAUSSÉE.—La Chaussée possessed a vein of the popular novel, the serial, as we should say, and at the same time a taste for the stage. The result was he created a new species, which in itself is no small achievement. He created *„the drama.‘‘*: that is, the stage-play wherein common people, and no longer kings and princes, affect us by their misfortunes. This has been called by all possible names; when it is a comedy it is described as a tearful comedy; when a tragedy, as a dramatic tragedy. This is the drama we have known in France for a hundred and fifty years; such as it already existed in the sixteenth century under the title of the morality play, such as Corneille, who foresaw everything, anticipated and predicted in his preface to *„Don Sancho.‘‘*: "I would rather say, sir, that tragedy should excite pity and fear, and that in its essentials, since there is necessity for definition. Now if it be true that this latter feeling is only excited in us when we see those like ourselves suffer, and that their misfortunes put us in fear of similar calamities, is it not also true that we can be more strongly moved by disasters arriving to people of our own rank, having resemblance to ourselves, than by the picture of the overthrow from their thrones of the greatest monarchs, who can have no relation to us except in so far as we are susceptible to the passions that overwhelmed them, which is not always the case?" This domestic tragedy La Chaussée wrote in verse, which is not against French rules, and which has been done by dramatists a hundred and twenty years later; but it is probably an error, being even more unlikely that citizens would express themselves in metre than that kings and heroes should give utterance with a certain solemnity which entails rhythm. Thus he wrote *„The Fashionable Prejudice.‘‘*, *„The School of Friends.‘‘*, *„Melanide.‘‘*, very pathetic, *„The School of Mothers.‘‘*, etc. It must be stated that he wrote his plays in verse somewhat systematically; he had made his first appearance in literature by a defence of versification against the doctrines of La Motte.

PIRON.—According to the old system, but in original verse, Piron, after having met with scant success in tragedy, wrote the delicious *„Metromania.‘‘* which, with *„The Turcaret.‘‘* of Le Sage, *„The Bad Man.‘‘* of Gresset, the masterpieces of Marivaux and the two great comedies

of Beaumarchais rank among the seven or eight superior comedies produced in the eighteenth century.

GREAT PROSE WRITERS: MONTESQUIEU.—In prose, writers, and even great writers, were abundant at this period. Immediately after Fontenelle and Bayle appeared Montesquieu, sharp, malicious, satirical, already profound, in *‘The Persian Letters,’* a great political philosopher and master of jurisprudence in *‘The Spirit of Laws,’* a great philosophical historian in *‘The Grandeur and Decadence of the Romans.’* The influence of Montesquieu on Voltaire, no matter what the latter may have said; on Rousseau, however silent the latter may have been about it; on Mably, on Raynal, on the encyclopaedists, on a large portion of the men in the French Revolution, on the greatest minds of the nineteenth century, has been profound and difficult to measure. As writer he was concise, collected, and striking, seeking the motive and often finding it, seeking the formula and invariably finding it—Tacitus mingled with Sallust.

LE SAGE; SAINT-SIMON.—In considering Le Sage and Saint-Simon, it is not, perhaps, the one who is instinctively thought of as a novelist who really was the greater romancer. They each wrote at the same time as Montesquieu. Saint-Simon narrated the age of Louis XIV as an eyewitness, both with spirit and with a feeling for the picturesque that were alike inimitable, expressed in a highly characteristic fashion, which was often incorrect, always incredibly vigorous, energetic, and masterful. Le Sage, in the best of all French styles, that of the purest seventeenth century, narrated Spanish stories in which he mingled many observations made in Paris, and set the model for the realistic novel in his admirable *‘Gil Blas.’* As a dramatist he will be dealt with later.

MARIVAUX; PRÉVOST.—Marivaux also essayed the realistic novel in his very curious *‘Marianne,’* full of types drawn from contemporary life and drawn with an art which was less condensed but as exact as that of La Bruyère, and in his *‘Perverted Peasant’* with an art which was more gross, but still highly interesting.

The Abbé Prévost, much inferior, much overpraised, generally insipid in his novels of adventure, once found a good theme, *‘Manon Lescaut,’* and, though writing as badly as was his wont, evoked tears which, it may be said, still flow.

HISTORY: DRAMA.—In history Voltaire furnished a model of vivid, rapid, truly epic narration in his *‘History of Charles XII,’* and an example, at least, of exact documentation and of contemporaneous history studied with zeal and passion in his *‘Philosophical Letters on England.’* On the stage, in prose there were the pretty, witty, and biting light comedies of Dancourt, De Brueys and Palaprat, and Dufresny, then the delicious drama, at once fantastic and perceptive, romantic and psychological, of

Marivaux, who, in *The Legacy*., *The False Confidences*., *The Test*., *The Game of Love and of Shame*., showed himself no less than the true heir of Racine and the only one France has ever had.

VOLTAIRE.—In the second portion of the eighteenth century, Voltaire reigned. He multiplied historical studies (*Century of Louis XIV.*), philosophies (*Philosophical Dictionary*.), dramas (*Zaïre*., *Mérope*., *Alzire* [before 1750], *Rome Saved*., *The Chinese Orphan*., *Tancred*., *Guèbres*., *Scythia*., *Irene*.), comedies (*Nanine*., *The Prude*.), romances(*Tales and Novels*.), judicial exquisitions (the Calas, Labarre, and Sirven cases), and articles, pamphlets, and fugitive papers on all conceivable subjects.

THE PHILOSOPHERS.—But the second generation of philosophers was now reached. There was Diderot, philosophical romancer (*The Nun*., *James the Fatalist*.), art critic(*Salons*.), polygraphist (collaboration in the *Encyclopaedia*); there was Jean Jacques Rousseau, philosophic novelist in *The New Héloïse*., publicist in his discourse against *Literature and the Arts and Origin of Inequality*., schoolmaster in his *Emilius*., severe moralist in his *Letters to M. d'Alembert on the Spectacles*., half-romancer, charming, impassioned, and passion-inspiring in the autobiography which he called his *Confessions*; there was Duclos, interesting though rather tame in his *Considerations on the Manners of this Century*.; there was Grimm, an acute and subtle critic of the highest intelligence in his *Correspondence*.; then Condillac, precise, systematic, restrained, but infinitely clear in the best of diction in his *Treatise on the Sensations*.; finally Turgot, the philosophical economist, in his *Treatise on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth*..

BUFFON; MARMONTEL; DELILLE.—Philosophy, meditation on great problems, filled almost all the literary horizon, while scientific literature embraced a score of illustrious representatives, of which the most impressive was Buffon, with his *Natural History*.. Nevertheless, in absolute literature there were also names to cite: Marmontel gave his *Moral Tales*., his *Belisarius*., his *Incas*., and his *Elements of Literature*..

Delille, with his translation in verse of the *Georgics* of Virgil, commenced a noble poetic career which he pursued until the nineteenth century; Gilbert wrote some mordant satires which recalled Boileau, and some farewells to life which are among the best lyrics; Saint Lambert sang of *The Seasons* with felicity, and Roucher treated the same theme with more vivid sensibility.

THE STAGE.—On the stage, a little before 1750. Gresset gave his *Wicked Man*., which was witty and in such felicitous metre that it carried the tradition of great comedy in verse; Diderot, theorist and creator of the drama in prose, followed La Chaussée, and produced *The*

Father of a Family., _The Natural Son., and _Is He Good, Is He Bad.? being the portrait of himself. Innumerable dramas by the fertile Mercier and a score of others followed, including Beaumarchais, himself a devotee of the drama, but only able to succeed in comedy, wherein he gave his two charming works, _The Barber of Seville_ and _The Marriage of Figaro_.

ANDRÉ CHÉNIER.—Almost on the verge of the Revolution, quite unexpectedly there emerged a really great poet, André Chénier, marvellously gifted in every way. As the poet of love he recalled Catullus and Tibullus; in political lyricism he suggested d'Aubigny, though with more fervour; as elegiac poet he possessed a grace that was truly Grecian; as the poet of nature he employed the large manner of Lucretius; in polemical prose he was remarkably eloquent. Struck down whilst quite young amid the turmoil of the Revolution, he bequeathed immortal fragments. No doubt he would have been the greatest French poet between Racine and Lamartine.

BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE.—In prose, his contemporary, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, primarily was a man of genius, since he wrote that immortal idyllic romance, _Paul and Virginia_.; subsequently he became a gracious and amiable pupil of Jean Jacques Rousseau, being smitten with the sentiment of nature in his _Harmonies of Nature_.; finally he attained a great importance in literary history as the creator of exotic literature through the descriptions he wrote of many lands: Asia, African isles traversed and studied by him, Russia, and Germany.

THE REVOLUTIONARY ORATORS.—During the revolutionary period may be pointed out the great orators of the Assembly: Mirabeau, Barnave, Danton, Vergniaud, Robespierre; the ill-starred authors of national songs: Marie Joseph Chénier; the author of the _Marseillaise_., Rouget de Lisle, who only succeeded on the day that he wrote it. And so we reach the nineteenth century.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.—At the commencement of a century which was so brilliant from the literary aspect, James Delille was despotic: his earlier efforts have already been attended to. A skilled versifier, but without fire or many ideas, he made cultured translations from Virgil and Milton, wrote perennially descriptive poems, such as _The Man in the Fields_., _The Gardens_., etc., and a witty satirical poem on _Conversation_., which, in our opinion, was the best thing he wrote.

GREAT POETS: LAMARTINE.—Great poets were to come. Aroused, without doubt, by the poetic genius of the prose writer Chateaubriand, the first generation of the romantics was formed by Lamartine, Victor Hugo, and Alfred de Vigny. Romanticism was the preponderance of imagination and sensibility over reason and observation. Lamartine rebathed poetry in its

ancient and eternal sources: love, religion, and the sentiment of nature. In his *„Meditations„*, his *„Harmonies„*, and his *„Contemplations„*, he reawoke feelings long slumbering, and profoundly moved the hearts of men. In *„Jocelyn„* he widened his scope, and, emerging from himself, narrated, as he imagined it, the story of the soul of a priest during the Revolution, and subsequently in the obscurity of a rural parish; in *„The Fall of an Angel„* he reverted to the life of primaeval man as he conceived it to be when humanity was still barbarous. Apart from his poetic works, he wrote *„The History of the Girondins„*, which is a romanesque history of almost the whole of the Revolution, some novels, some autobiographic episodes, and a few discourses on literature.

VICTOR HUGO.—Victor Hugo, though less sensitive than Lamartine but more imaginative, began with lyrical poems which were somewhat reminiscent of the classical manner, then went on to pictures of the East, thence to meditations on what happened to himself, and on all subjects (*„Autumn Leaves„*, *„Lights and Shades„*); next, in full possession of his genius, he dwelt on great philosophical meditations in his *„Contemplations„*, and in *„The Legend of the Centuries„* gave that epic fragment which is a picture of history. His was one of the most powerful imaginations that the world has ever seen, as well as a *„creator of style„*, who made a style for himself all in vision and colour, and also in melody and orchestration. Although in prose he lacked one part of his resources, he utilised the rest magnificently, and *„Notre Dame„* and *„The Miserable„* are works which excite admiration, at least in parts. Later, he will be dealt with as a dramatist.

ALFRED DE VIGNY.—Alfred de Vigny was the most philosophical of these three great poets, though inferior to the other two in creative imaginativeness. He meditated deeply on the existence of evil on earth, on the misfortunes of man, and the sadness of life, and his most despairing songs, which were also his most beautiful, left a profound echo in the hearts of his contemporaries. Some of his poems, such as *„The Bottle in the Sea„*, *„The Shepherd’s House„*, *„The Fury of Samson„*, are among the finest works of French literature.

MUSSET; THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.—The second generation of romanticism, which appeared about 1830, possessed Alfred de Musset and Théophile Gautier as chief representatives. They bore little mutual resemblance, be it said, the former only knowing how to sing about himself, his pleasures, his illusions, his angers, and, above all, his sorrows, always with sincerity and in accents that invariably charmed and sometimes lacerated; the latter, supremely artist, always seeking the fair exterior and delighting in reproducing it as though he were a painter, a sculptor, or a musician, and excellent and dexterous in these ”transpositions of art,” whether they were in verse or prose.

THE PROSE WRITERS: CHATEAUBRIAND.—The French prose writers

of this first

half of the nineteenth century were emphatically poets, as had also already been Jean Jacques Rousseau and even Buffon. Imagination, sensibility, and the sentiment for nature were the mistresses of their faculties. Chateaubriand was the promoter of all the literary movement of the nineteenth century, alike in prose and poetry. He was a literary theorist, an epic poet in prose, traveller, polemist, orator. His great literary theory was in *„The Genius of Christianity“*, and consisted in supporting that all true poetic beauties lay in Christianity. His epic poems in prose are *„The Natchez“*, a picture of the customs of American Indians, *„The Martyrs“*, a panorama of the struggle of paganism at its close and of Christianity at its beginning; his travels were *„The Voyage in America“* and *„The Itinerary from Paris to Jerusalem“*. Member of the parliamentary assemblies, ambassador and minister, he wrote and spoke in the most brilliant and impassioned manner on the subjects that he took up. Finally, falling back on himself, as he had never ceased to do more or less all through his career, he left, in his marvellous *„Memoirs from Beyond the Tomb“*, a posthumous work which is, perhaps, his masterpiece. His infinitely supple and variegated style formed a continuous artistic miracle, so harmonious and musical was it more musical even than that of Jean Jacques Rousseau.

MME. DE STAËL.—At the same time, though she died long before him, Mme.

de Staël, by her curious and interesting, though never affecting, novels, *„Delphine“* and *„Corinne“*, by her dissertations on various serious subjects, by her work on Germany, which initiated the French into the habits and literature of neighbours they were ill acquainted with, also directed the minds of men into new paths, and she was prodigal of ideas which she had almost always borrowed, but which she thoroughly understood, profoundly reconsidered, and to which she imparted an appearance of originality even in the eyes of those who had given them to her.

THE HISTORIANS.—Even the historians of this first half of the century were poets: Augustin Thierry, who reconstituted scientifically but imaginatively *„The Merovingian Era“*; Michelet, pupil of Vico, who saw in history the development of an immense poem and cast over his account of the Middle Ages the fire and feverishness of his ardent imagination and tremulous sensitiveness. Guizot and Thiers can be left apart, for they were statesmen by education and, although capable of passion, sought the one to rationally generalise and ”discipline history,” as was said, the other solely to capture facts accurately and to set them out clearly in orderly fashion.

THE PHILOSOPHERS.—The philosophers were not sheltered from this contagion, and if Cousin and his eclectic school loved to attach themselves to the seventeenth century both in mind and style, Lamennais, first in his *„Essay on Indifference“*, then in his *„Study of a Philosophy“* and in his *„Words of a Believer“*, impassioned, impetuous, and

febrile, underwent the influence of romanticism, but also gave to the romantics the greater portion of the ideas they put in verse.

THE NOVEL.—As for the novel, it was only natural that it should be deeply affected by the spirit of the new school. George Sand wrote lyrical novels, if the phrase may be used—and, as I think, it is here the accurate expression—entitled *Indiana*., *Valentine*., *Mauprat*., and especially *Lelia*.. She was to impart wisdom later on.

It even happened that a mind born to see reality in an admirably accurate manner, saw it so only by reason of the times, or at least partly due to the times, associated it with a magnifying but deforming imagination converting it into a literary megalomania; and this was the case of Honoré de Balzac.

NON-ROMANTIC LITERATURE.—Nevertheless, as was only natural, throughout the whole of the romantic epoch there was an entire literature which did not submit to its influence, and simply carried on the tradition of the eighteenth century. In poetry there was the witty, malicious, and very often highly exalted Béranger, whose songs are almost always excellent songs and sometimes are odes; and there was also the able and dexterous but frigid Casimir Delavigne. In prose there was Benjamin Constant, supremely oratorical and a very luminous orator, also a religious philosopher in his work *On Religions*., and a novelist in his admirable *Adolphe*., which was semi-autobiographical.

Classical also were Joseph de Maistre, in his political considerations (*Evenings in St. Petersburg*.), and, in fiction, Mérimée, accurate, precise, trenchant, and cultured; finally in criticism, Sainte-Beuve, who began, it is true, by being the theorist and literary counsellor of romanticism, but who was soon freed from the spell, almost from 1830, and became author of *Port Royal*.. Though possessing a wide and receptive mind because he was personified intelligence, he was decisively classical in his preferences, sentiments, ideas, and even in his style.

Stendhal, pure product of the eighteenth century, and even exaggerating the spirit of that century in the dryness of his soul and of his style, a pure materialist writing with precision and with natural yet intentional nakedness, possessed valuable gifts of observation, and in his famous novel, *Red and Black*., in the first part of the *Chartreuse of Parma*., and in his *Memoirs of a Tourist*., knew how to draw characters with exactness, sobriety, and power, and to set them in reliefs that were remarkably rare.

THE STAGE.—The drama was very brilliant during this first half of the nineteenth century. The struggle was lively for thirty or thirty-five years between the classicists and the romanticists; the classics defending their citadel, the French stage, much more by their polemics in the newspapers than by the unimportant works which they brought to the

Comédie française, the romantics here producing nearly all the plays of Hugo (*Hernani*, *Marion de Lorme*, *Ruy Blas*, *The Burghers*, etc.), and the works of Vigny (*Othello*, *Marshal d'Ancre*), as well as the dramas of Dumas (*Henry III and his Court*, etc.). Between the two schools, both of which were on the stage nearer to the modern than to the antique, the dexterous Casimir Delavigne, with almost invariable success, gave *Marino Faliero*, *Louis XI*, *The Children of Edward*, *Don Juan of Austria*, and *Princess Aurelia*, which was pretty, but without impassioned interest.

A veritable dramatic genius, although destitute of style, of elevation of thought and of ideas, but a prodigious constructor of well-made plays, was Eugène Scribe, who, by his dramas and comedies, as well as the libretti of operas, was the chief purveyor to the French stage between 1830 and 1860.

ROMANTICISM AND REALISM.—So far as pure literature was concerned, the second half of the nineteenth century was divided between enfeebled but persistent romanticism and realism. Théophile Gautier, in 1853, gave his *Enamels and Cameos*, his best poetic work, and later (1862) his *Captain Fracasse*. Hugo wrote his *Miserables*, the second and third *Legends of the Centuries*, *Songs of the Streets and the Woods*, etc.

A third romantic generation, of which Théodore de Banville was the most brilliant representative, and which proceeded far more from Gautier than from Hugo or De Musset, pushed verbal and rhythmic virtuosity to the limit and perhaps beyond. Then great or highly distinguished poets appeared.

FAMOUS POETS.—Leconte de Lisle, philosophical poet, attracted by Indian literature, by pessimism, by the taste for nothingness, and the thirst for death, forcing admiration by his sculptural form and majestic rhythm; Sully-Prudhomme, another philosopher, especially psychological, manipulating the lyrical elegy with much art and, above all, infusing into it a grave, sad, and profound sensibility which would have awakened the affection and earned the respect of Catullus, Tibullus, and Lucretius; Francis Coppée, the poet of the joys and sorrows of the lowly, a dexterous versifier too, and possessed of a sincerity so candid as to make the reader forget that there is art in it; Baudelaire, inquisitive about rare and at times artificial sensations, possessing a laborious style, but sometimes managing to produce a deep impression either morbid or lugubrious, considered by an entire school which is still extant as one of the greatest poets within the whole range of French literature; Verlaine, extremely unequal, often detestable and contemptible, but suddenly charming and touching or revealing a religious feeling that suggests a clerk of the Middle Ages; Catulle Mendès, purely romantic, wholly virtuoso, but an astonishingly dexterous versifier. To these poets some highly curious literary dandies set themselves in opposition, being desirous of renovating the poetic art by ascribing more value to the

sound of words than to their meaning, striving to make a music of poesy and, in a general way—which is their chief characteristic—being difficult to understand. They gave themselves the name of symbolists, and accepted that of decadents; they regarded Stephen Mallarmé either as their chief or as a friend who did them honour. This school has been dignified by no masterpieces and will probably ere long be forgotten.

REALISTIC LITERATURE.—Confronting all this literature, which had a romantic origin even when it affected scorn of the men of 1830, was developed an entire realistic literature composed almost exclusively of writers in prose, but of prose imbued with poetry written by some who had read the romantics and who would not have achieved what they did had romanticism not already existed, a fact which they themselves have not denied, and which is now almost universally accepted. Flaubert, whose masterpiece, *Madame Bovary*, is dated 1857, was very precisely divided between the two schools; he possessed the taste for breadth of eloquence, for the adventurous, and for Oriental colouring, and also the taste for the common, vulgar, well visualised, thoroughly assimilated truth, tersely portrayed in all its significance. But as he has succeeded better, at least in the eyes of his contemporaries, as a realist than as a man with imagination, he passes into history as the founder of realism always conditionally upon considering Balzac as possessing much of the vigorous realism which provided the impulse and furnished models.

NATURALISM.—From the realism of Flaubert was born the naturalism of Zola, which is the same thing more grossly expressed. Also by his energetic, violent, and tenacious talent, as well as by a weighty though powerful imagination, he exercised over his contemporaries a kind of fascination which it would be puerile to regard as an infatuation for which there was no cause.

More refined and even extremely delicate, though himself also fond of the small characteristic fact; possessed, too, with a graceful and gracious sensibility, Alphonse Daudet often charmed and always interested us in his novels, which are the pictorial anecdotes of the Parisian world at the close of the second Empire and the opening of the third Republic.

The brothers De Goncourt also enjoyed notable success, being themselves absorbed in the exceptional deed and the exceptional character whilst possessing a laboured style which is sometimes seductive because of its unlooked-for effects.

THE POSITIVISTS.—Two great men filled with their renown an epoch already so brilliant; namely, Renan and Taine, both equally historians and philosophers. Renan composed *The History of the Children of Israel* and *The Origins of Christianity*, as well as various works of general philosophy, of which the most celebrated is entitled *Philosophical Dialogues*. Taine wrote the history of *The Origins of Contemporary France*: that is, the history of the French Revolution, and sundry

philosophical works of which the principal are *On Intelligence* and *The French Philosophers of the Eighteenth Century*. Both were "positivists," that is to say, elevating Auguste Comte, who has his place in the history of philosophy, but not here, because he was not a good writer; both were positivists, but Renan possessed a lively and profound sense of the grandeur and the moral beauty of Christianity, Taine being imbued with more philosophic strictness. Renan, with infinite flexibility of intelligence, applied himself to understand thoroughly and always (with some excess) to bring home to us the great figures of the Bible, the Gospels, and the early Christians, as well as their foes down to the time of Marcus Aurelius. Further, he affirmed science to possess *unique* value in his *Future of Science*; elsewhere, under the similitude of "dreams," he indulged in conceptions, hypotheses, and metaphysical imaginations which were voluntarily rash and infinitely seductive. As always happens, he possessed the style of his mind, supple, sinuous, undulating, astonishingly plastic, insatiable, and charming, evoking the comment, "That is admirably done and it is impossible to know with what it is done."

TAINÉ.—Taine, more rigid, accumulating documents and methodically arranging them in a method that refuses to be concealed, advances in a rectilinear order, step by step, and with a measured gait, to a solid truth which he did not wish to be either evasive or complex. Highly pessimistic and a little affecting to be so, just as Renan was optimistic and much affected being so, he believed in the evil origin of man and of the necessity for him to be drastically curbed if he is to remain inoffensive. He has written a history of the Revolution wherein he has refused admiration and respect for the crimes then committed, which is why posterity now begins to be very severe upon him. His learned style is wholly artificial, coloured without his being a colourist, composed of metaphors prolonged with difficulty, yet remaining singularly imposing and powerful. He was a curious philosopher, an upright, severe, and rather systematic historian, solid and laboriously original as a writer.

BRUNETIÈRE.—Brunetière, of the great French thinkers before our contemporaneous epoch, was critic, literary historian, philosopher, theologian, and orator. As critic, he defended classic tradition against bold innovations, and, especially, moral literature against licentious or gross literature; as a literary historian he renovated literary history by the introduction of the curious, audacious, and fruitful theory of evolution, and his *Manual of the History of French Literature* was a masterpiece; as philosopher he imparted clearness and precision into the system of Auguste Comte, whose disciple he was; as theologian, exceeding Comte and utilising him, he added weight to Catholicism in France by finding new and decisive "reasons for belief"; as orator he raised his marvellously eloquent tones in France, Switzerland, and America, making more than a hundred "fighting speeches." Since the death of Renan and Taine, he has been the sole director of French thought, which he continues to guide by his books and by the diffusion of his thought among

the most vigorous, serious, and meditative minds of the day.

THE CONTEMPORANEOUS DRAMA.—The drama, since 1850, has been almost exclusively written in prose. Emil Augier, however, composed some comedies and dramas in verse and in verse particularly suited to the stage; but the major portion of his work is in prose, whilst Alexander Dumas and Sardou have written exclusively in prose. Augier and Dumas came from Balzac, and remained profoundly realistic, which was particularly suitable to authors of comedy. They studied the manners of the second Empire and depicted them wittily; they studied the social questions which agitated educated minds at this time and drew useful inspiration. Augier leant towards good middle-class common-sense, which did not prevent him from having plenty of wit. Dumas was more addicted to paradox and possessed as much ability as his rival. Victorien Sardou, as dexterous a dramatic constructor as Scribe, and who sometimes rose above this, dragged his easy tolerance from the grand historic drama to the comedy of manners, to light comedy and to insignificant comedy with prodigious facility and inexhaustible fertility.

The most admired living authors, whom we shall be content only to name because they are living, are poets: Edmond Rostand, author of *Loiterings*; Edmond Haraucourt, author of *The Naked Soul* and *The Hope of the World*; Jean Aicard, author of *Miette el Noré*; Jean Richepin, author of *Césarine*, *Caresses*, *Blasphemies*, etc.; in fiction, Paul Bourget, Marcel Prévost, René Bazin, Bordeaux, Boylesve, Henri de Régnier; in history, Ernest Lavisse, Aulard, Seignobos, D'Haussonville; in philosophy, Boutroux, Bergson, Théodule Ribot, Fouillée, Izoulet; in the drama, Paul Hervieu, Lavedan, Bataille, Brieux, Porto-Riche, Bernstein, Wolff, Tristan Bernard, Edmond Rostand, author of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and of *The Aiglon*; as orators, Alexander Ribot, De Mun Poincaré, Jaurès, etc.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES: ENGLAND

Poets of the Eighteenth Century: Pope, Young, MacPherson, etc.: Prose Writers of the Eighteenth Century: Daniel Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Swift, Sterne, David Hume. Poets of the Nineteenth Century: Byron, Shelley, the Lake Poets: Prose Writers of the Nineteenth Century: Walter Scott, Macaulay, Dickens, Carlyle.

THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE: POETS.—As in France, the eighteenth century (the age of Queen Anne) was in England richer in prose than in poetry. As

poets, however, must be indicated Thomson, descriptive and dramatic, whose profound feeling for nature was not without influence over French writers of the same century; Pope, descriptive writer, translator, moralist, elegiast, very intelligent and highly polished, whose *Essay on Criticism* and *Essay on Man* were remarkably utilised by Voltaire; Edward Young, whose *Night Thoughts* enjoyed the same prodigious success in France as in England, and who contributed in no small measure to darken and render gloomy both literatures; MacPherson, who invented *Ossian*, that is, pretended poems of the Middle Ages, a magnificent genius, be it said, who exercised considerable influence over the romanticism of both lands; Chatterton, who trod the same road, but with less success, yet was valued almost equally by the French romantic poets, and to them he has owed at least the consolidation of his immortality; Cowper, elegiac and fantastic, with a highly humorous vein; Crabbe, a very close observer of popular customs and an ingenious novelist in verse, quite analogous to the Dutch painters; Burns, a peasant-poet, sensitive and impassioned, yet at the same time a careful artist moved by local customs, the manifestations of which he saw displayed before his eyes.

PROSE WRITERS.—The masters of prose (some being also true poets) were innumerable. Daniel Defoe, journalist, satirist, pamphleteer, was the author of the immortal *Robinson Crusoe*; Addison, justly adored by Voltaire, author of a sound tragedy, *Cato*, is supremely a scholar, the acute, sensible, and extremely thoughtful editor of *The Spectator*; Richardson, the idol of Diderot and of Jean Jacques Rousseau, enjoyed a European success with his sentimental and virtuous novels, *Pamela*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*. As a critic and as a personality, Dr. Johnson has no parallel in any age or land. His *Dictionary* is famous despite its faults, and *Rasselas*, which he wrote to pay for his mother's funeral, can still be read.

Fielding, who began by being only the parodist of Richardson, in *Joseph Andrews*, ended by becoming an astounding realistic novelist, the worthy predecessor of Thackeray and Dickens in his extraordinary *Tom Jones*. The amiable Goldsmith, more akin to Richardson, wrote that idyllic novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the charm of which was still felt throughout Europe only fifty years ago. Laurence Sterne, the most accurate representative of English *humour*, capable of emotion more especially ironical, jester, mystifier, has both amused and disquieted several generations with his *Sentimental Journey* and his fantastical, disconcerting and enchanting *Tristram Shandy*. Swift, horribly bitter, a corrosive and cruel satirist, sadly scoffed at all the society of his time in *Gulliver's Travels*, in *Drapier's Letters*, in his *Proposal to Prevent the Children of the Poor Being a Burden*, in a mass of other small works wherein the most infuriated wrath is sustained under the form of calm and glacial irony.

HISTORY.—History was expressed in England in the eighteenth century by David Hume, who chronicled the progress of the English race from the

Middle Ages until the eighteenth century; by Robertson, who similarly handled the Scotch and who narrated the reign of Charles V; and by Gibbon, so habitually familiar with the French society of his time, who followed the Romans from the first Cæsars to Marcus Aurelius, then more closely from Marcus Aurelius to the epoch of Constantine, and finally the Byzantine Empire up to the period of the Renaissance. The imposing erudition, the rather pompous but highly distinguished style of the author, without counting his animosity to Christianity, caused him to enjoy a great success, especially in France. The work of Gibbon is regarded as the finest example of history written by an Englishman.

THE STAGE.—The stage in England in the eighteenth century sank far below its importance in the seventeenth century; yet who does not know *She Stoops to Conquer* of Goldsmith, and that sparkling and lively comedy, *The School for Scandal*, by Sheridan? Note, as an incomparable journalist, the famous and mysterious Junius, who, from 1769 to 1772, waged such terrible war on the minister Grafton.

THE LAKE POETS.—In the nineteenth century appeared those poets so familiar to the French romanticists, or else the latter pretended they were, who were termed the lake poets, because they were lovers of the countryside; these were Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. Southey was an epic and elegiac poet, whilst he was also descriptive; Coleridge, philosopher, metaphysician, a little nebulous and disordered, had very fine outbursts and some lamentable falls. Wordsworth was a most distinguished lyricist. Lord Byron did not acquire honour by so roughly handling Southey and Wordsworth.

THE ROMANTIC EPOCH.—The two greatest English poets of the romantic period were Lord Byron and Shelley; the former the admirable poet of disenchantment and of despair, gifted with a noble epic genius, creating and vitalising characters which, it must be confessed, differed very little from one another, but an exalted figure with a grand manner and, except Shakespeare, the only English poet who exercised genuine influence over French literature; the latter an idealistic poet of the most suave delicacy, aërial and heavenly, despite a private life of the utmost disorder and even guilt, he is one of the most perfect poets that ever lived; a great tragedian, too, in his *Cenci*, quite unknown in France until the middle of the nineteenth century, but since then the object of a sort of adoration among the larger number of Gallic poets and lovers of poetry.

Keats was as romantic as Shelley and Byron, both in spite of and because of his desperate efforts to assimilate the Grecian spirit. He dreamt of its heroes and its ancient myths, but there is in him little that is Grecian except the choice of subjects, and it is not in his grand poem, *Endymion*, nor even in that fine fragment, *Hyperion*, that can be found the real melancholy, sensitive, and modern poet, but in his last short poems, *The Skylark*, *On a Greek Vase*, *Autumn*, which, by the

exquisite perfection of their form and the harmonious richness of the style, take rank among the most beautiful songs of English lyricism.

Nearer to us came Tennyson, possessing varied inspiration, epic, lyrical, elegiac poet, always exalted and pure, approaching the classical, and himself already a classic.

Swinburne, almost exclusively lyrical, a dexterous and enchanting versifier, inspired by the ancient Greeks, generally evinced a highly original poetic temperament, and Dante Rossetti, imbued with mediaeval inspiration, possessed a powerful and slightly giddy imagination. Far less known on the Continent, where critics may feel surprise at her necessary inclusion here, is his sister, Christina Rossetti. Her qualities as a poet are a touching and individual grace, much delicate spontaneity, a pure and often profound emotion, and an instinct as a stylist which is almost infallible. The Brownings form a celebrated couple, and about them Carlyle, on hearing of their marriage, observed that he hoped they would understand each other. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, translator of Aeschylus of Theocritus, gave proof in her original poetry of a vigour, of a vividness, and of a vigorous exuberance of similes that often recalled the Elizabethans, but marred her work by declamatory rhetoric and by a tormented and often obscure style. Robert Browning was yet more difficult, owing to his overpowering taste for subtlety and the bizarre—nay, even the grotesque. Almost ignored, or at least unappreciated by his contemporaries, he has since taken an exalted place in English admiration, which he owes to the depth, originality, and extreme richness of his ideas, all the more, perhaps, because they lend themselves to a number of differing interpretations.

THE NOVELISTS.—In prose the century began with the historical novelist, Sir Walter Scott, full of lore and knowledge, reconstructor and astonishing _reviver_ of past times, more especially the Middle Ages, imbuing all his characters with life, and even in some measure vitalising the objects he evoked. None more than he, not even Byron, has enjoyed such continuous appreciation with both French romantic poets and also the French reading public. The English novel, recreated by this great master, was worthily continued by Dickens, both sentimentalist and humourist, a jesting, though genial, delineator of the English middle class, and an accurate and sympathetic portrayer of the poor; by Thackeray, supreme railler and satirist, terrible to egoists, hypocrites, and snobs; by the prolific and entertaining Bulwer-Lytton, by the grave, philosophical, and sensible George Eliot, by Charlotte Brontë, author of the affecting _Jane Eyre_, etc., and her sister Emily, whose _Wuthering Heights_ has been almost extravagantly admired.

Four other great prose writers presenting startling divergences from one another cannot be omitted. Belonging to the first half of the nineteenth century, Charles Lamb earned wide popularity by his _Tales from Shakespeare_ and _Poetry for Children_, written in collaboration with his sister Mary; but he was specially remarkable for his famed _Essays of

Elia., wherein he affords evidence of possessing an almost paradoxical mixture of delicate sensibility and humour, as well as of accurate and also fantastic observation. Newman, at first an English clergyman but subsequently a cardinal, after conversion to the Catholic Church, appears to me hardly eligible in a history of literature in which Lamennais has no place. As a literary man, his famous sermons at Oxford and the Tracts exercised much influence, and provoked such impassioned and prodigious revival of old doctrines and of an antiquated spirit in religion; then the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua.*, *Callista.*, and the *History of Arianism.*, revealed him as a master of eloquence.

Ruskin, as art critic, in his bold volumes illumined with remarkable beauty of styles, *Modern Painters.*, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture.*, and *The Stones of Venice.*, formulated the creed and the school of pre-Raphaelitism. At the time of the religious revival at Oxford, he preached a servile imitation of antiquity by the path of the Renaissance, appealing to national and mediæval inspiration, not without *naïveté* and archaism, none the less evident because he was sincere and mordant. George Meredith, who died only in 1910, was a prolific and often involved novelist (the Browning of prose), with a passion for metaphors and a too freely expressed eclectic scorn for the multitude. Withal, he had a profound knowledge of life and of the human soul; impregnated with humour, he was creator of unforgettable types of character, and no pre-occupation of his epoch was foreign to his mind, whilst his vigorous realism always obstinately refused to turn from contemporaneous themes, or to gratify the needs and aspirations which it was possible to satisfy. His epitaph might well be that he understood the women of his time, a rare phenomenon.

HISTORY.—History could show two writers of absolute superiority—Macaulay (*History of England since James II.*), an omnivorous reader and very brilliant writer, and Carlyle, the English Michelet, feverish, passionate, incongruous, and disconcerting, who dealt with history as might a very powerful lyrical poet.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES: GERMANY

Poets of the Eighteenth Century: Klopstock, Lessing, Wieland; Prose Writers of the Eighteenth Century: Herder, Kant. Poets of the Nineteenth Century: Goethe, Schiller, Körner.

THE AGE OF FREDERICK THE GREAT.—In the literature of Germany the eighteenth century, sometimes designated under the title of the age of

Frederick the Great, forms a Renaissance or, if preferred, an awakening after a fairly prolonged slumber. This awakening was assisted by a quarrel, sufficiently unimportant in itself, but which proved fertile, between Gottsched, the German Boileau, and Bodmer, the energetic vindicator of the rights of the imagination. In the train of Bodmer came Haller, like him a Swiss; then suddenly Klopstock appeared. *„The Messiah“* of Klopstock is an epic poem; it is the history of Jesus Christ from Cana to the Resurrection, with a crowd of episodes dexterously attached to the action. The profound religious sentiment, the grandeur of the setting, the beauty of the scenes, the purity and nobility of the sermon, the Biblical colour so skilfully spread over the whole composition, cause this vast poem, which was perhaps unduly praised on its first appearance, to be one of the finest products of the human mind, even when all reservations are made. German literature revived. As for Gottsched, he was vanquished.

THE POETS.—Then came Lavater, Bürger, Lessing, Wieland. Lavater, a Swiss like Haller, is remembered for his scientific labours, but was also a meritorious poet, and his naive and moving *„Swiss Hymns“* have remained national songs; Bürger was a great poet, lyrical, impassioned, personal, original, vibrating; Wieland, the Voltaire of Germany, although he began by being the friend of Klopstock, witty, facile, light, and graceful, whose *„Oberon“* and *„Agathon“* preserve the gift of growing old felicitously, is one of the most delightful minds that Germany produced. Napoleon did him the honour of desiring to converse with him as with Goethe.

LESSING.—Lessing, personally, was a great author, and owing to the influence he exercised over his fellow-countrymen, he holds one of the noblest positions in the history of German literature. He was a critic, and in his *„Dramaturgie of Hamburg“* and elsewhere, with all his strength, and often unjustly, he combated French literature to arrest the ascendancy which, according to his indolent opinion, it exercised over the Germans; and in his *„Laocoön“*, with admirable lucidity, he made a kind of classification of the arts. As author, properly speaking, he wrote *„Fables“* which to our taste are dry and cold; he made several dramatic efforts none of which were masterpieces, the best being *„Minna von Barnhelm“* and *„Emilia Galotti“*, and a philosophical poem in dialogue (for it could hardly be termed drama), *„Nathan the Sage“*, which possessed great moral and literary beauties.

HERDER.—Herder was the Vico of Germany. Here was the historical philosopher, or rather the thoughtful philosopher on history. He did everything: literary criticism, works of erudition, translations, even personal poems, but his great work was *„Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind“*. This was the theory of progress in all its breadth and majesty, supported by arguments that are at least spacious and imposing. From Michelet to Quinet, on to Renan, every French author who has at all regarded the unity of the destinies of the human race has

drawn inspiration from him. His broad, measured, and highly coloured style is on the level of the subject and conforms to it. Even in an exclusively literary history Kant must not be forgotten, because when he set himself to compose a moral dissertation, as, for example, the one upon lying, he took high rank as a writer.

THE GLORIOUS EPOCH.—Thus is reached the end of the eighteenth close on the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this intermediary epoch shone the most glorious hour of Teutonic literature. Simultaneously Iffland, Kotzebue, Körner, Schiller, and Goethe were to the fore. This formed a great constellation. Iffland, actor, manager, and author, friend and protector of Schiller, wrote numerous dramas, the principal of which were *„The Criminal through Ambition., „The Pupil., „The Hunters., „The Lawyers., „The Friends of the House.* He was realistic without being gloomy. He resembled the French Sédaine. Kotzebue, who was the friend of Catherine of Russia, subsequently disgraced by her, possessed a highly irritable and quarrelsome disposition, and was finally killed in 1819 as a reactionary by a Liberal student, did not fall far short of genius. He wrote a number of dramas and comedies. Those still read with pleasure are *„Misanthropy and Repentance., „Hugo Grotius., „The Calumniator., and „The Small German Town.,* which has remained a classic.

KÖRNER.—Körner, the "Tyrtæus of Germany," was simultaneously a brave soldier and a great lyrical poet who was killed on the battlefield of Gadebusch, wrote lyrical poems, dramas, comedies, farces, and, above all, *„The Lyre and Sword.,* war-songs imbued with splendid spirit.

SCHILLER.—Schiller is a vast genius, historian, lyrical poet, dramatic poet, critic, and in all these different fields he showed himself to be profoundly original. He wrote *„The Thirty Years' War.;* odes, ballads, dithyrambic poems, such as *„The Clock.,* so universally celebrated; dissertations of philosophic criticism, such as *„The God of Greece.* and *„The Artists.;* finally, a whole repertory of drama (the only point on which it is possible to show that he surpasses Goethe), in which may be remarked his first audacious and anarchical work, *„The Brigands.,* then the *„Conjuration of Fiesco., „Intrigue and Love., „Don Carlos., „Wallenstein* (a trilogy composed of *„The Camp of Wallenstein., „The Piccolomini., „The Death of Wallenstein.), „Mary Stuart., „The Betrothed of Messina., „The Maid of Orleans., „William Tell.* By his example primarily, and by his instruction subsequently (*„Twelve Letters on Don Carlos., „Letters on Aesthetic Education., „The Sublime.,* etc.), he exercised over literature and over German thought an influence at least equal, and I believe superior, to that of Goethe. He was united to Goethe by the ties of a profound and undeviating friendship. He died whilst still young, in 1805, twenty-seven years before his illustrious friend.

GOETHE.—Goethe, whom posterity can only put in the same rank as Homer, is even more universal genius, and has approached yet closer to absolute beauty. Of Franco-German education, he subsequently studied at Strasburg,

commencing, whilst still almost a student, with the imperishable *Werther*, to which it may be said that a whole literature is devoted and, parenthetically, a literature diametrically opposed to what Goethe subsequently became. Then a journey through Italy, which revealed Goethe to himself, made him a man who never ceased to desire to combine classic beauty and Teutonic ways of thinking, and who was often magnificently successful. To put it in another way, Goethe in his own land is a Renaissance in himself, and the Renaissance which Germany had not known in either the sixteenth or seventeenth century came as the gift of Goethe. Immediately after his return from Italy he wrote *Tasso* (of classic inspiration), *Wilhelm Meister* (of Teutonic inspiration), *Iphigenia* (classical), *Egmont* (Teutonic), etc. Then came *Hermann and Dorothea*, which was absolutely classic in the simplicity of its plan and purity of lyric verse, but essentially modern in its picture of German customs; *The Roman Elegies*, *The Elective Affinities*, *Poetry and Truth* (autobiography mingled with romance), *The Western Eastern Divan*, lyrical poems, and finally, the two parts of *Faust*. In the first part of *Faust*, Goethe was, and desired to be, entirely German; in the second, through many reveries more or less relative to the theme, he more particularly desires to depict the union of the German spirit with that of classical genius, which formed his own life, and led to *intelligent action*, which also was a portion of his existence. And for beauty, drama, pathos, ease, phantasy, and fertility in varied invention, nothing has ever surpassed if anything has even equalled the two parts of *Faust* regarded as a single poem.

Apart from his literary labours, Goethe occupied himself with the administration of the little duchy of Weimar, and in scientific research, notably on plants, animals, and the lines in which he displayed marked originality. He died in 1832, having been born in 1749. His literary career extends over, approximately, sixty years, equal to that of Victor Hugo, and almost equal to that of Voltaire.

THE CONTEMPORANEOUS PERIOD.—After the death of Goethe, Germany could not maintain the same height. Once more was she glorified in poetry by Henry Heine, an extremely original witty traveller, in his *Pictures of Travel*, elegiac and deeply lyrical, affecting and delightful at the same time in *The Intermezzo*; by the Austrian school, Zedlitz, Grün, and the melancholy and deep-thinking Lenau; in prose, above all, by the philosophers, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Hartmann, and lastly Nietzsche—at once philosopher, moralist (after his own manner), and poet, with an astonishing imagination; by the historians Niebuhr (before 1830), Treitschke, Mommsen, etc. Germany seems to have drooped, so far as literature is concerned, despite some happy exceptions (especially in the drama: Hauptmann, Sudermann), since her military triumphs of 1870 and the consequent industrial activity.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES: ITALY

Poets: Metastasio, Goldoni, Alfieri, Monti, Leopardi. Prose Writers: Silvio Pellico, Fogazzaro, etc.

LITERARY AWAKENING.—After a long decadence, Italy, less overwhelmed politically than previously, reawoke about 1750. Once more poets came forward: Metastasio, author of tragedies and operas; Goldoni, a very witty and gay comic poet; Alfieri who revived Italian tragedy, which had been languishing and silent since Maffei, and who, like Voltaire in France, and with greater success, established a philosophical and political tribunal; Foscolo, sufficiently feeble in tragedy but very touching and eloquent in *‘The Tombs,’* inspired by Young’s *‘Night Thoughts,’* and *‘The Letters of Jacob Ortis,’* an interesting novelist and eloquently impassioned patriot; Monti, versatile and master of all recantations according to his own interests, but a very pure writer and not without brilliance in his highly diversified poems.

EMINENT PROSE WRITERS.—Italy could show eminent prose writers, such as those jurisperit philanthropists Filangieri and Beccaria; critics and literary historians like Tiraboschi.

NINETEENTH CENTURY.—In the nineteenth century may first be found among poets that great poet, the unhappy Leopardi, the bard of suffering, of sorrow, and of despair; Carducci, a brilliant orator, imbued with vigorous passions; Manzoni, lyricist, dramatist, vibrating with patriotic enthusiasm, affecting in his novel *‘The Betrothal,’* which became popular in every country in Europe. In prose, Silvio Pellico equally moved Europe to tears by his book *‘My Prisons,’* wherein he narrated the experiences of his nine years of captivity at the hands of Austria, and found his agreeable tragedy of *‘Francesca da Rimini,’* welcomed with flattering appreciation. Philosophy was specially represented by Gioberti, author of *‘The Treatise on the Supernatural,’* and journalism by Giordani, eloquent, at times with grace and ease, and at others with harshness and violence.

THE MODERNS.—As these words were written came the news of the death of the illustrious novelist Fogazzaro. Gabriel d’Annunzio, poet and ultra-romantic novelist, and Mathilde Serao, an original novelist, pursue their illustrious careers.

CHAPTER XIX

THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES: SPAIN

The Drama still Brilliant: Moratin. Historians and Philosophers, Novelists, Orators.

THE DRAMA. Since the middle of the seventeenth century, approximately, Spain has exercised less literary influence than in the preceding centuries. Nevertheless Spanish literature was not extinct; it was in the drama more especially that it was manifest. Candamo, Cañizares, and Zamora all illumined the stage. Candamo devoted himself to the historical drama; his masterpiece in this type was *‘The Slave in Golden Chains.’*; Cañizares, powerful satirist, displayed the comic spirit in his comedies of character; Zamora manipulated the comedy of intrigue with remarkable dexterity. Then came Vincente de la Huerta, skilful in combining the type of French tragedy with something of the ancient dramatic national genius; then Leandro Moratin (called Moratin the Younger to distinguish him from his father Nicholas), very imitative, no doubt, of Molière, but in himself highly gifted, and of whose works can still be read with pleasure *‘The Old Man and the Young Girl,’ ‘The New Comedy on the Coffee,’ ‘The Female Hypocrite,’* etc. He also wrote lyrical poems and sonnets. He lived long in France, where he became impregnated with Gallic classical literature.

PROSE.—Stronger and more brilliant at that period than the poetry, the prose was represented by Father Florez, author of *‘Ecclesiastical Spain.’*; by the Marquis de San Phillip, author of the *‘War of Succession in Spain.’*; by Antonio de Solis, author of *‘The Conquest of Mexico.’* In fiction there was the interesting Father Isla, a Jesuit, who gave a clever imitation of the *‘Don Quixote.’* of Cervantes in his *‘History of the Preacher Friar Gerund.’* He was well read and patriotic. He was convinced that Le Sage had taken all his *‘Gil Blas.’* from various Spanish authors, and he published a translation of his novel under the title: *‘The Adventures of Gil Blas of Santiago, stolen from Spain and adopted in France by M. Le Sage, restored to their country and native tongue by a jealous Spaniard who will not endure being laughed at.’* Another Jesuit (and it may be noticed that Spanish Jesuits of the seventeenth century often displayed a very liberal and modern mind), Father Feijoo, wrote a kind of philosophical dictionary entitled *‘Universal Dramatic Criticism,’* a review of human opinions which was satirical, humorous, and often extremely able. The historian Antonio de Solis, who was also a reasonably capable dramatist, produced a *‘History of the Conquest of South America Known under the name of New Spain,’* in a chartered style that was very elegant and even too elegant. Jovellanos wrote much in various styles. Among others he wrote one fine tragedy, *‘Pelagia.’*; a comedy presenting clever contrasts, entitled *‘The Honorable Criminal.’*; a mass of studies on the past of Spain, economic treatises, satires, and pamphlets. Engaged in

all the historical and political vicissitudes of his country, he expired miserably in 1811, after having been alternately in exile and at the head of affairs.

ROMANTICISM.—In the nineteenth century Spanish romanticism was brought back in dignified poetic style by Angel Saavedra, José Zorilla, Ventura de la Vega, Ramon Campoamor, Espronceda. The latter especially counts among the great literary Spaniards, for he was poet and novelist, who wrote *‘The Student of Salamanca’* (Don Juan), *‘The Devil World’* (a kind of Faust), lyrical poems, and an historical novel, *‘Sancho Saldano’*.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.—In drama, *‘Quintana’* also produced a *‘Pelagia’*; the Duke of Rivas a *‘Don Alvaro’*, which enjoyed an immediate success; Zorilla a *‘Don Juan’* entirely novel in conception; Martinez de la Rose tragedies, some in the classic vein, others with modern intrigue and comedies; Gutierrez, by his *‘Foundling’*, attracted the attention of librettists of French operas; Breton de los Herreros wrote sparkling comedies, the multiplicity of which suggest Scribe. In prose, Fernan Caballero was a fertile novelist and an attentive and accurate painter of manner. Trueba (who was also an elegant poet) was an affecting idyllic novelist. Emilio Castelar, the Lamartine of Spain as he was called by Edmond About, was a splendid orator, thrown by the chances of political life for one hour at the head of national affairs, who raised himself to the highest rank in the admiration of his contemporaries by his novels: for instance, *‘The Sister of Charity’* and his works on philosophical history and the history of art, *‘Civilisation in the First Centuries of Christianity’*, *‘The Life of Byron’*, *‘Souvenirs of Italy’*, etc. In our day, there have been numerous distinguished authors (and for us, at least, out of the crowd stands forth the dramatist José Echegaray), who carry on the glorious tradition of Spanish literature.

CHAPTER XX

RUSSIAN LITERATURE

Middle Ages. Some Epic Narratives. Renaissance in the Seventeenth Century. Literature Imitative of the West in the Eighteenth Century. Original Literature in the Nineteenth Century.

THE MIDDLE AGES.—Russia possessed a literature even in the Middle Ages.

In the eleventh century the metropolitan Hilarion wrote a discourse on the Old and the New Testament. In the twelfth century, the *‘Chronicle’* that is said to be by *‘Nestor’* is the first historical monument of Russia. At the same period Vladimir Monomaque, Prince of Kief, who

devoted his life to fighting with all his neighbours, left his son an autobiographic „instruction“, which is very interesting for the light it throws on the events and, especially, on the customs of his day. At the same time the hegumen (abbot) Daniel left an account of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In the thirteenth century (probably) another Daniel, Daniel the prisoner, wrote from his distant place of exile to his prince a supplicatory letter, which is astonishing because in it is found a remarkable and wholly unexpected degree of literary talent. In the thirteenth or fourteenth century two epic pieces, „The Lay of the Battle of Igor“ and „The Zadonstchina“, of which it is uncertain which imitated the other, alike present vigorous and vivid accounts of battles. In the fifteenth or sixteenth century there is a didactic work, „The Domostroi“, which is a moral treatise, a handbook of domestic economy, a manual of gardening, and a cookery book, etc. The Tzar Ivan the Terrible (sixteenth century) was a dexterous diplomatist and a precise, nervous, and ironical writer. He left highly curious letters.

RENAISSANCE.—Kutochikine (seventeenth century), who was minister in his own land, then disgraced and exiled in Sweden, wrote an extremely interesting book on the habits of his contemporaries. The „Renaissance,“ if it may be so termed, that is, the contact between the Russian spirit and Western genius, occurred in the eighteenth century. Prince Kantemir, Russian ambassador in London, who knew Montesquieu, Maupertuis, the Abbé Guasco, etc., wrote satires in the manner of Horace and of Boileau. Trediakowski took on himself to compose a very tedious „Telemachidus,“ but he knew how to unravel the laws of Russian metre and to write odes which at least were indicative of the right direction.

LOMONOSOV.—Lomonosov is regarded as the real father of Russian literature, as the Peter the Great of literature—a great man withal, engineer, chemist, professor, grammarian. Regarding him solely as a literary man, he made felicitous essays in tragedy, lyrical poetry, epic poetry, polished the Russian versification, established its grammar, and imparted a powerful impulse in a multitude of directions.

CREATION OF THE DRAMA.—Soumarokoff founded the Russian drama. He was manager of the first theatre opened in St. Petersburg (1756). In the French vein he wrote tragedies, comedies, fables, satires, and epigrams. He corresponded with Voltaire. The latter wrote to him in 1769: „Sir, your letter and your works are a great proof that genius and taste pertain to all lands. Those who said that poetry and music belonged only to temperate climates were deeply in error. If climate were so potent, Greece would still produce Platos and Anacreons, just as she produces the same fruits and flowers; Italy would have Horaces, Virgils, Ariostos, and Tassos.... The sovereigns who love the arts change the climates; they cause roses to bud in the midst of snows. That is what your incomparable monarch has done. I could believe that the letters with which she has honoured me came from Versailles and yours from one of my colleagues in

the Academy.... Over me you possess one prodigious advantage: I do not know a word of your language and you are completely master of mine.... Yes, I regard Racine as the best of our tragic poets.... He is the only one who has treated love tragically; for before him Corneille had only expressed that passion well in *The Cid*, and *The Cid* is not his. Love is ridiculous or insipid in nearly all his other works. I think as you do about Quinault; he is a great man in his own way. He would not have written the *Art of Poetry*, but Boileau would not have written *Armida*. I entirely agree with what you write about Molière and of the tearful comedy which, to the national disgrace, has succeeded to the only real comic type brought to perfection by the inimitable Molière. Since Regnard, who was endowed with a truly comic genius and who alone came near Molière, we have only had monstrosities.... That, sir, is the profession of faith you have asked of me." This letter is quoted, despite its errors, because it forms, as it were, a preface to Russian literature, and also a patent of nobility granted to this literature.

CATHERINE II.—The Empress wrote in Russian advice as to the education of her grandson, very piquant comedies, and review articles. Von Vizin, a comic author, was the first to look around and to depict the custom of his country, which means that he was the earliest humorous national writer. The classic works of Von Vizin were *The Brigadier* and *The Minor*. Whilst pictures of contemporaneous manners, they were also pleadings in favour of a reformed Russia against the Russia that existed before Peter the Great, which still in part subsisted, as was only natural. He made a journey to France and it will be seen from his correspondence that he brought back a highly flattering impression.

RADISTCHEF.—Radistchef was the first Russian political writer. Under the pretext of a *Voyage from Petersburg to Moscow*, he attacked serfdom, absolute government, even religion, for which he was condemned to death and exiled to Siberia. He was pardoned later on by Paul I, but soon after committed suicide. He was verbose, but often really eloquent.

ORATORS AND POETS.—The preacher Platon, whose real name was Levcchine, was an orator full of sincerity, unction, and sometimes of real power. He was religious tutor to the hereditary Grand Duke, son of Catherine II. Another preacher, and his successor at the siege of Moscow, Vinogradsky, was likewise a really great orator. It was he who, after the French retreat from Russia, delivered the funeral oration on the soldiers killed at Borodino. Ozerov was a classical tragedy writer after the manner of Voltaire, and somewhat hampered thereby. Batiouchkov, although he lived right into the middle of the nineteenth century, is already a classic. He venerated and imitated the writers of antiquity; he was a devout admirer of Tibullus, and wrote elegies which are quite exquisite. Krylov was a fabulist: a dexterous delineator of animals and a delicate humourist. Frenchmen and Italians have been alike fascinated by him, and his works have often been translated; until the middle of the nineteenth century he

enjoyed European popularity.

THE GOLDEN AGE: PUSHKIN.—The true Russian nineteenth century and its golden age must be dated from Pushkin. He wrote from his earliest youth. He was an epic poet, novelist, and historian. His principal poems were *„Ruslan and Liudmila“*, *„Eugene Onegin“*, *„Poltava“*; his most remarkable historical essay was *„The Revolt of Pugachev“*. He possessed a fertile and vigorous imagination, which he developed by continual and enthusiastic study of Byron. He did not live long enough either for his own fame or for the welfare of Russian literature, being killed in a duel at the age of thirty-eight. Mérimée translated much by Pushkin. The French lyric stage has mounted one of his most delicate inspirations, *„La Rousalka“* (the water nymph). He was quite conscious of his own genius and, freely imitating the *„Exegi monumentum“* of Horace, as will be seen, he wrote: "I have raised to myself a monument which no human hand has constructed.... I shall not entirely perish ... the sound of my name shall permeate through vast Russia.... For long I shall be dear to my race because my lyre has uttered good sentiments, because, in a brutal age, I have vaunted liberty and preached love for the down-trodden. Oh, my Muse, heed the commands of God, fear not offence, claim no crown; receive with equal indifference eulogy and calumny, but never dispute with fools."

LERMONTOV.—Lermontov was not inferior to his friend Pushkin, whom he closely resembled. Like him he drew inspiration from the romantic poets of the West. He loved the East, and his short, glorious suggestions came to him from the Caucasus. Among his finest poetic works may be cited *„The Novice Ismael Bey“*, *„The Demon“*, *„The Song of the Tzar Ivan“*. He wrote a novel, perhaps autobiographical, entitled *„A Hero of Our Own Time“*, the hero of which is painted in highly Byronic colours.

GOGOL.—Russian taste was already veering to the epic novel or epopee in prose, of which Gogol was the most illustrious representative until Tolstoy. He was highly gifted. In him the feeling for Nature was acutely active, and recalling his descriptions of the plains of the Crimea, its rivers and steppes, he must be regarded as the Rousseau and Chateaubriand of Russia. Further, he was a close student of village habits, and a painter in astonishing hues. He eminently possessed the sense of epic grandeur, and added a sarcastic vein of delightful irony. His *„Taras Bulba“*, *„King of the Dwarfs“*, *„History of a Fool“*, and *„Dead Souls“*, have the force of arresting realism, his *„Revisor“* (inspector of finances) is a caustic comedy which has been a classic not only in Russia but in France, where it was introduced in translation by Mérimée.

TURGENEV.—Turgenev, less epical than Gogol, was also studious of local habits and dexterous in describing them. He began with exquisite *„Huntsman's Tales“* impregnated with truth and precision, as well as intimate and picturesque details; then he extended his scope and wrote novels, but never at great length, and therefore suited to the exigencies or habits of Western Europe (such as *„Smoke“*). He had selected Paris as

his abode, and he mixed with the greatest thinkers of the day: Taine, Flaubert, Edmond About. In the eyes of his fellow-countrymen he became ultimately too Western and too Parisian. His was a delicate, sensitive soul, prone to melancholy and perpetually dreaming. He had a cult of form in which he went so far as to make it a sort of scruple and superstition.

TOLSTOY.—Tolstoy, so recently dead, was a great epic poet in prose, a very powerful and affecting novelist, and in some measure an apostle. He began with *Boyhood Adolescence and Youth*, in itself very curious and particularly valuable because of the idea it conveys of the life of the lords of the Russian soil, and for its explanation of the formation of the soul and genius of Tolstoy; then came *The Cossacks*, full of magnificent descriptions of the Caucasus and of interesting scenes of military and rural life; subsequently that masterpiece of Tolstoy's, *War and Peace*, narratives dealing with the war of Napoleon with Russia and of the subsequent period of peaceful and healthy rural life. It is impossible to adequately admire the power of narration and descriptive force, the fertility of incidents, characterisations, and dramatic moments, the art or rather the gift of portraiture, and finally, the grandeur and moral elevation, in fact, all the qualities, not one of which he appeared to lack, of which Tolstoy gave proof and which he displayed in this immense history of the Russian soul at the commencement of the nineteenth century; for it is thus that it is meet to qualify this noble creation. The only analogy is with *Les Misérables* of Victor Hugo, and it must be admitted that despite its incomparable merits, the French work is the more unequal. *Anna Karenina* is only a novel in the vein of French novels, but very profound and remarkable for its analysis of character and also impassioned and affecting, besides having considerable moral range. *The Kreutzer Sonata* is a romance rather than a novel, but cruelly beautiful because it exposes with singular clairvoyance the misery of a soul impotent for happiness. *Resurrection* shows that mournful and impassioned pity felt by Tolstoy for the humble and the "fallen," to use the phrase of Pushkin; it realises a lofty dramatic beauty. Tolstoy, in a thousand pamphlets or brief works, preached to his own people and to mankind the strict morality of Christ, charity, renunciation, peace at all price, without taking into account the necessities of social life; and he denounced, as had Jean Jacques Rousseau, the culpability of art and literature, being resigned to recognising his own works as condemnable. His was the soul of an exalted poet and a lofty poetical mind; from a poet must not be demanded practical common sense or that feeling for reality which is demanded, often unavailingly, from a statesman.

DOSTOEVSKY.—Dostoevsky, with a tragic genius as great as that of Tolstoy, may be said to have been more restricted because he exclusively delineated the unhappy, the miserable, and those defeated in life. He knew them personally because, after being arrested in 1849 at the age of fifty for the crime of belonging to a secret society, he spent years in the convict prisons of Siberia. Those miseries he describes in the most exact terms and with heart-rending eloquence in *Buried Alive: Ten Years*

in Siberia., and in the remarkable novel entitled *Crime and Punishment*.. He has lent invaluable aid in the propagation of two sentiments which have created some stir in the West and which, assuredly, we desire to foster: namely, "the religion of human suffering" and the cult of "expiation."

CHAPTER XXI

POLISH LITERATURE

At an Early Date Western Influence sufficiently Potent. Sixteenth Century Brilliant; Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries highly Cultured; Nineteenth Century Notably Original.

WESTERN INFLUENCE—Widely different from Russian literature, much more

Western, based more on Greek and Latin culture, Polish literature holds high rank in the histories of European literature. Christians from the tenth century, the Poles knew from this epoch religious songs written by monks, in the vulgar tongue. To this is due the possession of the *Bogarodzica*., a religious and bellicose song dedicated to the Virgin mother of God, which is even now comprehensible, so little has the Polish language changed. All through the Middle Ages, literary historians can only find chronicles written sometimes in Latin, sometimes in the native language. Under the influence of the universities, and also of the parliamentary rule, the language acquired alike more consistency and more authority in the fifteenth century, whilst the sixteenth was the golden literary epoch of the Poles. There were poets, and even great poets, as well as orators and historians. Such was Kochanowski, very much a Western, who lived some time in Italy, also seven years in France, and was a friend of Ronsard. His writings were epical, lyrical, tragical, satirical, and especially elegiacal. He is a classic in Poland.

Grochowski left a volume of diversified poems, hymns on various texts of Thomas à Kempis, *The Nights* of Thorn, etc. Martin Bielski, who was an historian too, but in Latin, left two political satires on the condition of Poland, and his son Joachim wrote a history of his native land in Polish.

SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.—Though somewhat less brilliant

than the preceding, the period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is not unfavourable to Poland. Then may be enumerated the satirical Opalinski, the lyrical Kochanowski, the dramatist Bogulawski, manager of the theatre at Warsaw, who not only translated plays from the French, English, and Spanish, but himself wrote several comedies, of which *The Lover, Author, and Servant* has remained the most celebrated. Rzewuski

was a dramatic author with such national plays as *Wladislas at Varna* and *Zolkewishi*, and comedies as *The Vexations* and *The Capricious*, and he also was historian, orator, literary critic, and theorist.

Potocki was a literary and theoretical critic and founder of a sort of Polish academy (society for the perfection of the tongue and of style). Prince Czartoryski showed himself an excellent moralist in his *Letters to Doswiadryski*. Niemcewicz extended his great literary talent into a mass of diversified efforts. He wrote odes held in esteem, tragedies, comedies, fables, and tales, historical novels, and he translated the poems of Pope and the *Athalie* of Racine.

LITERARY RENAISSANCE.—Losing her national independence, Poland experienced a veritable literary renaissance, which offered but slender compensation. She applied herself to explore her origins, to regain the ancient spirit, and to live nationally in her literature. Hence her great works of patriotic erudition. Czacki with his *Laws of Poland and of Lithuania*, Kollontay with his *Essay on the Heredity of the Throne of Poland*, and his *Letters of an Anonymous to Stanislas Malachowski*, etc., Bentkowski with his *History of Polish Literature* and his *Introduction to General Literature*, etc. Thence came the revival of imaginative literature, Felinski, on the one hand translator of Crébillon, Delille and Alfieri on the other, he was the personally distinguished author of the drama *Barbe Radzivill*; Bernatowicz, author of highly remarkable historical novels, among which *Poïata* gives a picture of the triumph of Christianity in Lithuania in the fourteenth century; Karpinski, dramatist, author of *Judith*, a tragedy; *Alcestis*, an opera; *Cens*, a comedy, etc.; Mickiewicz, scholar, poet, and novelist, who, exiled from his own land, was professor of literature at Lausanne, then in Paris, at the College of France, extremely popular in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, the friend of Goethe, Lamennais, Cousin, Michelet, and of all the French youth. He was the author of fine poems, of a great historical novel, *Conrade Vattenrod*, of *The People and the Polish Pilgrims*, of a *Lesson on the Slav States*.

MODERN EPOCH.—At the time of writing, Poland continues to be a literary nation well worthy of attention. She presents an example to the races which incur the risk of perishing as nations because of their political incapacity; by preserving their tongue and by sanctifying it with a worthy literature they guard their country and, like the Greeks and Italians, hope to reconquer it some day through the sudden turns of fortune shown in history.

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