

## **Chapter 1**

### **What is literature**

The subjects we study at school can be divided roughly into two groups- The sciences and the arts. The sciences include mathematics, geography, chemistry, physics and so on. Among the arts are drawing, painting, modeling, needle-work, drama, music and literature. The purpose of education is to fit us for life in the civilized community and the most two important things in civilized life are art and science.

Why then the arts and sciences important? With the sciences you would say that the answer is obvious: we have radium, penicillin, television and recorded sound, motor-cars and aircraft, air conditioning and central heating. But these achievements have never been primary intention of science; they are the things that emerge only when the scientist has done his main job. That main job is simply stated: to be curious, to keep on asking the question “why” and not to be satisfied till an answer has been found. The scientist is curious about the universe; he wants to know why water boils at one temperature and freezes at another, why cheese is different from chalk; why one person behaves differently from another. Not only “why” but also “what”: what is salt made of, what are stars? etc... It is man’s job to try to find out the truth about the world around us, to answer the big question “what is the world really like?”. Let’s think the word “truth” for a moment. It is a word used in many different ways – e.g. “you are not telling the truth”, “the truth about condition in Russia”, “beauty is truth”, “truth is beauty”. A scientist came along to announce that the truth was quite different from appearance. We say that truth is a value. A value is something that raises our lives above the purely animal level- the level of getting our food and drink, of producing children, of sleeping and dying. This world of getting a living and producing children, sleeping and dying is sometimes called the world of subsistence. Truth is one value. Another is beauty. The scientist’s concern is truth, the artist’s concern is beauty, You could define beauty as the quality you find in any object, which produces in your mind a special kind of excitement, an excitement somehow tied up with a sense of discovery. It need not to be something made by man; a sunset or a bunch of flowers or a tree may take you feel this excitement and utter the word “beautiful”. Let us try to understand a little more about this “artistic excitement”.

First of all, it is known as a static excitement. It does not make you want to do anything. If you call me a fool or various other bad names, I shall

get excited and possibly want to fight you. But the excitement of experiencing beauty leaves one content, as though one has just achieved something. This achievement is the achievement of discovery. The artist finds a means of setting down our emotion – joy, passion, sorrow and regret, - and helps us to separate those emotion from ourselves. Let me make this clear. Any strong emotion has to be relieved. When we are happy we shout or dance; when we feel sorrow we want to weep. But the emotion has to be expressed. Poets and musicians is especially expert at expressing emotions for us. A death in family, the loss of money and other calamities are soothed by music and poetry. We feel that we do not have to bare this sorrow on our own: our sorrow is part of a huge organization – the universe – and a necessary part of it. And when we discover that a thing is necessary we no longer complain about it.

Our concern is with literature. Music and literature have a great deal in common.: they both use the temporal material of sounds. Music uses meaningless sound as raw material; literature uses those meaning sound we call words. Now there are two ways of using words, one is artistic and another is non-artistic. This means that words themselves can be viewed in two different ways. There is a meaning that a word has in the dictionary (what's called the lexical meaning or the denotation) and the associations that the word has gained through constant use ( the connotations of the word). Take the word “mother” for instance. The dictionary definition is the “female parent of an animal”. That is denotation. But the word, which we first use in connection with our own mother, carry many associations- warmth, security, comfort, and love. Because of these associations, “mother” is used in connection with other things about which we are expected to feel strongly – our country, our school. Connotations appeal to the feelings, denotation to the brain. The writer of literature is much more concerned with the connotations, the way in which he can make his words move and excite you, the way in which he can suggest color or movement or character. The writer of literature differs from the scientist or lawyer in not restricting his words. The scientist has to make his word mean one thing and one thing only, so does the lawyer.

Literature may be defined as words working hard; literature is the exploitation of words. But literature has different branches an some branches do more exploiting of words than the others. Poetry relies most on the power of words, in their manifold suggestiveness, and in a sense you may say that

poetry is most literary of all branches of literature, because it makes the greatest use of the raw material of literature which is words.

Once upon a time, the only kind of literature that existed was poetry; prose then was used merely for jotting down laws and records and scientific theories. You should keep three main forms of literature in mind:

- The novel
- The drama
- The poem

## **Chapter 2**

### **What is English literature**

English literature is literature written in English. It is not merely the literature of England or of the British Isles. In other words, the term “English” in “English Literature” refers not to the nation but to language. Joseph Conrad was a Pole, Demetrios Kapetanakis was a Greek, Ernest Hemingway is an American, Lin Yutang is a Chinese, but English is the medium they have in common, so they all belong to English literature. Literature is an art which exploits English language. But it is not just an English art, it is international, and Chinese, Malays, Africans and Indians reading this book may well one day themselves contribute to English literature.

In this book we must confine ourselves to the literature produced in the British Isles and the term “English” refers as much to the race as to the language. Let us begin by considering very briefly both the race and the country. To the writers, geography seems to be more important than history, and it the English geography that perpetually reflected in its literature, far more than the patterns of events, which we call history of a nation. England is an island and the sea washes its literature as much as its shores. It is a cold, stormy sea, quite unlike the placid Mediterranean sea or the warm waters of the tropics. The landscape of England is varied- mountains and lakes and rivers- but the uniform effect is one of green gentleness- downs and farms and woods.

Ruling sea and land is the English climate. In the tropics there are no seasons except the rainy and the dry, but in England: there are spring, summer, autumn, winter. And festivals are associated with these seasons. The longing for spring is a common theme with English poets, and

Christmas, the winter festival, is the very essence of Charles Dickens. There are four distinct seasons but the summer is never too hot and the winter never arctic. Snow and frozen ponds and bare trees are common images in English literature. It has been said that the English climate is responsible for the English character. The English are rather cold than hot-blooded, temperate rather than fiery, active because of the need to keep warm, philosophical under difficulties because – so an unkind person said- if you can stand the English climate you can stand anything. The English are also said to be conservative, disliking change, but also, the sea makes them a nation of sailors, adventurous and great travelers. The English have, for nearly a thousand years, been free of domination by foreign powers (an island is not easy to invade), and this has made them independent, jealous of their freedom, but also a little suspicious of foreigners. The English are, in fact, a curious mixture and their literature reflects the contradictions in their character. The English sometimes are said to be mad. “Englishmen never will be slaves”, said George Bernard Shaw, “they are free to do whatever the government and public opinion allow them to do”. The English love justice but hate laws, and it is the hatred of law which makes so much English literature so “mad”. A French writer obeys the Academy rules which govern the employment of the language, but a typically English writer like Shakespeare is always ready to make language do mad things, to invent new words or use metaphors which take a breath away with their daring, so much English literature is “formless”. Shakespeare breaks all the dramatic rules and Dickens’ s novels seem to lack rhyme or reason; not like a controlled and organized work of art, but like a river in full spate. The French and Italians have always liked the traditional verse-forms with a fixed number of syllables- but the English have always prefer to invent their own forms and to have as many syllables as they wished in a line of verse. English literature , in short, has a freedom, a willingness to experiment, a hatred of rules which has no parallel in any other literature.

So that is all, briefly, for the country and the people. We must now consider the English language itself. Talking about the “historical phrases” of a language we use the terms “ Old English” and “ Modern English”.

Old English has to be treated like any “real” foreign language. It has to be learnt- with grammar books and dictionaries. If we want first-hand knowledge of the first English literature, we have to get down to the learning of Old English first. But this is not our concern now. For the moment we have to know roughly what Old English is about, what kind of poetry is

written by our ancestors of English and what kind of prose, because all these things have had and still have a certain influence on the literature of Modern English. We are faced with a question: when does Modern English start. The answer is it starts as soon as we find an old poem and prose work we can understand without getting out a grammar book or a dictionary.

Between Old English and Modern English there is a “phase of transition” when what is virtually foreign language is becoming the language we use today. This phase is known as Middle English.

Some Middle English books we can read without much difficulty. But there is another aspect of language, which helps to explain why Modern English does not start precisely at a given moment in time. Time is one of the “dimensions” of language; another dimension is space.

“English” means all the different kinds of English spoken from the very moment the first speakers of the language settled in England up to present day. But it also means all the varying kinds of English spoken in different places called English dialects. The English dialect which is considered the most important is Standard English or Queen’s/ King’s English, historically speaking, a mixture of Old East Midland dialect and the old Kentish dialect. This is the dialect we speak now.

In the Middle English phase – the phase of transition- all the dialects of England seem to be as good as each other, and all of them had literature. Even in the Modern period, a number of writers have preferred to write in their own country dialects. Robert Burns wrote in the dialect used in Scotland; William Barnes – Dorset dialect, although they knew Standard English perfectly well. Today English literature contains works in many English dialects of America, West Indian Negro etc. English literature is, then, vast, extending long in time and wide in space.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **The first English Literature**

The first English men were foreigners. In other words, they came to England from abroad when England was already inhabited by a long settled race and blessed by a fairly advanced civilization. That long settled race was the British race, and the beginnings of its settlement can not be traced: they

belong to pre- history. That race still exist to be found mainly in Wales. But it is ironical that the people is now called the Welsh ( for the old English word for “ foreigner”), when they are much less foreigners than the English. The ancient Romans called them “Britannia” and their country “Britannia”. We can call them “Britons”.

These Britons were ruled for a few centuries by the Romans and Britannia or Britain was the province of the Roman Empire. The Romans brought their language and their architects and engineers as well as their garrisons and governors. But the Roman Empire eventually fell. The time of the fall of the Roman Empire is also the time of the migrations of people from the East of Europe, such people as the Goths and Vandals broke the power of Rome. Disturbed by the movement, certain peoples from the North West of Europe crossed the seas and settled in Britain, driving the British west claiming the country for themselves. These people included the Angles and the Saxons. Their language is sometimes called Anglo- Saxon but we give it the name Old English. By the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the new masters of England had become a Christian people. And all the records of the early literature of the Anglo-Saxons belong to Christian England, written by clerks in monasteries. This literature is oral, passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Its creator were unknown. This literature is the verse literature because it was given a written form long after its composition. There is prose, but it is not strictly literature – history, theology, letters, biography – and the names of the writers of much of this prose are known. Prose is the matter for the pen and it has to be composed on the paper. When a man composes on paper, he usually signs his name. A poem is recited, remembered, passed on and its origin is forgotten, because sound is the essence of verse and it is chiefly a matter of mouth and ear. The oldest poem in English literature is Beowulf. It was not composed in England but on the continent of Europe, the new settlers brought it over along with their wives, goods and chattels. It is a stirring, warlike, violent poem of over 3000 lines. Beowulf is essentially a warrior’s story. It tells of a hero who gives his name to the poem and his struggle of a four- monster- half devil, half man called Grendel. It shows great skill in its construction; its imagery and language are sophisticated.

Think of England about the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, as divided into three main kingdoms: Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex. Of these three, Northumbria was the centre of learning because of its rich monasteries. Up to the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, all the poetry of England was recorded in the

Northumbrian dialect. But in those days nothing was permanent and the 9<sup>th</sup> century sees the end of Northumbria. The Danes invaded England ( The Battle of Baldon tells of a bitter fight against the Danes) and sacked Northumbria. The monasteries were looted, the precious books were ripped to pieces for their rich ornaments, monks fled or were slaughtered. Now Wessex, the Kingdom of Alfred the Great, became England's cultural center.

When Alfred came to the throne of Wessex, he was not happy about the state of learning he found there. But there was no time for improving it; the Danes were savaging the country and Alfred's task was to organize armies and beat back the invader. In 878 Alfred defeated the Danes in a series of decisive battles and then made a treaty to confine their rule to the North. Now in the peaceful kingdom, he began to improve the state of education, founding colleges, importing teachers from Europe, translating Latin books into Wessex English... So now the dialect of English culture became a southern one.

Alfred is an important figure in the history of English literature. He was not an artist but he knew how to write good, clear prose. He translated much Latin into English. English had been mostly concerned with sheer description.

Our brief story ends at the close of the first thousand years of the Christian era. It ends with the impassioned prose of an Archbishop of York, Wolsan, crying out that the end of the world is coming. And indeed it was the end, not of the world but of Anglo Saxon England. In 1066 the Normans came over to make England theirs, to change the old way of life and also the language.

#### **Chapter 4:** **The coming of the Normans**

“ Norman” means “ North man”. In fact they were of the same blood as the Danes, but they had absorbed the culture of the late Roman Empire, had been long Christianized and spoke that offshoot of the Latin which we call Norman French. The Norman way of life looked south towards the Mediterranean, towards the sun, towards wine and laughter, while the Anglo-Saxon way of life looked towards the gray northern seas-grim, heavy, melancholy and humorless. The first piece of Norman writing in England is the catalogue of the king's property, for William, the conqueror, saw himself as the owner of the country. He owned the land and everything in it, but granted land to the nobles who had helped to achieve his conquest, and so set up that feudal system which was to transform English life. With the

coming of the Normans, their law, their castles, their knowledge of the art of war, the Anglo-Saxons sank to a position of abjectness which killed their culture and Normans remembered the literature they shared with France and it is the qualities of old French literature which are to appear in England later. To the Anglo-Saxons, French must have appeared a feminine language, softer and gayer than their own masculine tongue.

The Normans in England wrote a literature which was neither a true English literature, nor a true French literature. Living in England, the Normans were cut off from French literature, and the kind of French they used lost its purity, its flexibility. The Anglo-Saxons who tried to use the language of the conqueror were not very skillful. And so Latin tended to be employed as a kind of compromise. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries we find songs and histories in Latin, some of the latter threw a good deal of light on the changing mythology of England. Old Greek Warriors such as Ulysses, Aeneas etc... began to appear in the Latin writings of England after the Norman conquest. Myth was to arise among the English- that of Robin Hood and his merry men, the outlaws who would not accept Norman rule but lived free as the green leaves in the forest. Time passes, the Normans learn the language of the English and some of the English learn the language of the Normans. But English is to prevail English enriched itself with borrowings from Norman French. The coming of Norman French to England also opened the door to the borrowing of long Latin words.

There is plenty to say about the literature written in Middle English- the language of transition. Now we have to know about the writers who pave the way for the 1<sup>st</sup> great English poet.

There was a good deal of religious writing- works like the *Ormulum*, a translation read at Mass, made by the monk Orm in about 1200. There is the *Ancrene Riwe*- advice given by a priest to three religious ladies living not in a convent but in a little house near a church. This is rather charming and for a time in the literature of England, there is an awareness of woman as woman- a creature to be treated courteously and delicately, in gentle language. Of the non-religious works in Middle English, there are lyrics written with great delicacy and skill, signed by no name. There is love poetry, like the song *Allison*. There are patriotic songs, carols for Christmas and Easter, even political songs. Longer poems are *The Owl* and *The Nightingale*- the story of a dispute between the two birds. *Pearl*- a long lament in very in very ornamental language on the death of a child and a vision of the heaven to which she's gone. There is another remarkable work written in the Lancaster dialect called "Sir Gawyn and the Green Knight". It tells of the Knight Gawyn and his curious encounter with the Green



Knight of the title, a giant who, having had his head cut off by Gawyn, calmly picks it up, tucks it under his arm, and walks off. This is a poem written with humor and great power of description.

Finally we must mention William Langland (1332-1400); the last writer who used the Old English technique of head- rhyme for a long poem. The vision of Piers Plowman attacks the abuses of the Christian Church in England. The poem is allegorical. Another great poet was Geoffrey Chaucer, who looks forward to the future while Langland sums up the past.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Chaucer and after**

Geoffrey Chaucer lived in an eventful age. He was born in 1340 and died in 1400, about 40 years before a really important event in our literary history – the invention of printing. He was not a peasant, not a priest, not a aristocrat, but the son of a man engaged in trade; his father is a wine merchant. Promotion and foreign service as a young soldier, marriage into the family of the Great John of Gaunt, the opportunity to observe polite manners, to study the sciences and the arts, the literatures of France and Italy – all these made Chaucer one of the best equipped of the English poets. He was granted also intelligence, a strong sense of humour, a fine musical ear, and the ability to tell a story. Chaucer's achievements are many. He patriotically confined himself to using the East Midland dialect of English that was spoken in London. He found this language not rich in words, so he had to create the English language we know today and to establish its literary traditions. In his masterpiece the Canterbury Tales he gave literature something it had never seen before - observation of life, pictures of people who are real. Chaucer is a living poet: he speaks to us today with as clear a voice as was heard in his own age. It is this living quality that makes him great. Chaucer is also modern in that the language he uses is for the first time in the history of the English literature. He is also modern because a number of phrases from his works have become part of everyday speech, such as "Murder will out", "Gladly would he learn and gladly teach", and so on. We are justified in calling him the first poet to use Modern English. The Canterbury is a long work, but unfinished at his death. It is partly a new idea, partly an old one. Arabian nights, some of these stories, had been very popular for a long time on the continent. This masterpiece is a collection of stories, and very few of them are original. Chaucer's work sparkles with drama and life: temperaments clash, each person has his own way of speaking and his own philosophy. And later came Robert Henryson (1425-

1500) to sing in the dialect of the Scottish lowlands and William Dunbar (1465- 1520) to bring a richness of texture. The only considerable poet that England seems to have produced in the 15<sup>th</sup> century is John Skelton (1460-1529). Another modern British composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, set five of his poems to music and he is fond of a short line and simple words, for example:

Merry Margaret,  
As midsummer flower,  
Or  
Gentle as falcon  
Or hawk of the tower.

We must mention briefly, too, a species of poetry – the Ballad. A ballad usually tells a simple story, sometimes about war, sometimes about love, sometimes about the world of the supernatural. One of these ballads is The Nut-brown Maid which is a long dialogue between a man and a woman, highly dramatic and moving. The man announces that he has killed an enemy and must now disappear to the forest:

Wherefore adduce, mine own heart true,  
None other reed I can;  
For I must to the green-wood go,  
Alone, a banished man.

He says she must not follow him, however great her love. He tells her of the hardships of the forest, but she is unmoved. She loves him so much that she can bear any hardship in his company. He tells her he has another love in the forest, but she still can not be bent from her purpose, for she will gladly serve this other woman to be near her love. And now the man reveals that he has only been testing her love; he is no banished man, he is a lord of Westmoreland and he is glad to call her his lady.

William Caxton (1421-1491) set up his printing-press in 1476. Thanks to Chaucer, the East Midland dialect of London had become firmly fixed as the medium for poetry, but no great writer had provided a standard for prose. English prose was chaotic, the language was changing rapidly, so that, within the lifetime of one man, nothing seemed fixed, everything seemed flowing. Caxton wrote as he spoke, often giving alternatives for certain words that he thought might not be generally understood. Caxton was a businessman who aimed to make money out of printing. Though Caxton printed Chaucer's poetry and the works of Gower and Lydgate, he was most

interested in producing books of prose. But one important prose- writer did emerge- sir Thomas Malory. All his stories are set out in a prose- style which, although simple, is dignified and clear.

## **Chapter 6**

### **The English Bible**

The English Bible is the book whose influence on English writing, speech, and thought it has been, and still is, immense. The Bible is not primarily literature. It is the sacred book of Christianity – but recently there has been a growing tendency to appreciate the Bible for its artistic qualities, to view it not only as the “word of God” but also as the work of great writers. The Bible is a composite book, consisting of two main sections – the Old Testament and the New. The Old Testament is a collection of poems, plays, proverbs, prophecy, philosophy, history, theology – a massive anthology of the writings of the ancient Jewish people. The New Testament contains the biographies of Jesus Christ and the story of the spreading of Christianity by its first propagandists.

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity in Western Europe has been divided into two main bodies: the international Catholic Church and the national Protestant Churches. The protestants seek the Word of God in the Bible. And so the history of early Protestantism is also the history of making the Bible accessible to everyone by translating into different tongues so that even the humbles or the least learned can read it.

In 1640, King James I of England appointed 47 learned men to produced an English version of the Bible which should be more or less official and final. In 1611 the work was done and that translation was printed. This is the version everybody calls “English Bible” or just familiar to every Protestant Christian in England. There is no writer who has not been influenced by it – even writers like Bernard Shaw and H.G Wells. Through the Old Testament, English literature makes its first contact with the East.

## **Chapter 7**

### **The beginnings of drama**

A survey of literature is like a railway journey. We travel through time, stopping at great city stations, rushing through the tiny village stations, noticing little more than the names of the latter. Chaucer was our first important station. Soon we must be ready to stop at the huge junction called Shakespeare. Shakespeare is England's and the world's – greatest dramatist. Before talking about his achievements and the achievements of his fellow-dramatists, we must find out what drama is and how it began. Drama is the most natural of the arts, being based on one of the most fundamental of the human and animal faculties – the faculty of imitation. It is through imitation that animals learn to fight, climb and hunt; it is through imitation that human children learn to talk and to perform a great number of complicated human functions. This imitative faculty or mimetic faculty, makes us all factors almost from the cradle. Children play at being doctors, cowboys, spacemen, kings and queens. Kitten plays at being tigers; puppies play at being dogs. This is acting, but it is not yet drama. It is believed that the 1<sup>st</sup> drama was not play, but a serious activity performed by grown-up men, expressing man's highest instinct- the religious instinct. Many people believe that the first drama was based on four things: the mimetic faculty, sympathetic magic, a belief in Gods, and a fear of starvation. The Mass of Catholic Church celebrates the sacrifice of Christ; it is religious ritual, but it is also drama. Religion and drama were closely mixed throughout the early history of the art in Europe. The great Greek tragic dramatists – Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides – wrote religious dramas which concerned with the moral relation between Gods and men and usually had an instructive moral purpose. The story was rarely original; it was usually taken from a myth already well known to the audience. King Oedipus is an example to show that a tragedy deals with the fall of a man from power, a fall brought about by some unsuspected flaw in his character or by some specific sin. But there is one big difference between the Greek conception of tragedy and the Shakespearean. The Shakespearean hero has the power of choice; he has free will. Macbeth is ambitious but weak, Othello is jealous; Hamlet can not make up his mind, but all these three might have themselves could prevent them from choosing the right way. But with the heroes of Greek tragedy, there is no free will. The Gods control a man's destiny, and one can not fight the Gods.\

We now must go back to the Middle Ages, when English drama is yet crude and amateur and, like a primitive drama, still in the service of religion. One of the greatest works of Chaucer's is Troilus and Criseyde, a love-story

taken from the annals of the Trojan war, a war which has provided European writers with innumerable myths.

## **Chapter 8:** **The beginnings of English drama**

In 1935 a play by T.S. Eliot was produced in Canterbury Cathedral. It was followed by a rash of religious plays, written for performance in churches and cathedrals up and down England. The English drama had returned to its place of origin- the Christian church.

It is certain that it was the Normans themselves who introduced Sacred drama to England. This drama became popular. Plays about the Gospel characters and the miracles of the saints became more elaborate, demanded more “stage managing”, and so they turned into complete presentations divorced from the ritual of the church. Gradually, they moved out of the church building into the churchyard and then into the town itself.

Before the Elizabethan drama comes into being, there is a tradition of secular subjects for plays and of professional actors to act them. The secular subjects are slow in coming, but they make their way into drama through a new kind of religious or semi-religious play- the Morality. The Morality was not a guild play and it did not take as its subject a story from the Bible. Instead, it tried to teach a moral lesson through allegory as in *Piers Plowman*, by presenting abstract ideas as though they were real people. A fine example of the Morality tradition is *Everyman*. This is a translation from the Dutch *Elckerlijck*, and it tells in simple, dignified language of the appearance of Death to Everyman. Everyman calls on certain friends to accompany him-Beauty, Five-wits, Strength, Discretion, but they will not go. Only Knowledge and Good- Deeds are ready to travel in his company to the grave. Everyman learns that the pleasures, friends, and faculties of this world avail a man nothing when Death comes; only spiritual strength can sustain him at his last hour. Besides, there are other plays: *Mind, Will and Understanding*; *Mankind*; *The Castle of Perseverance* with characters like Wisdom, Mischief, Pleasure, Indignation, Revenge, Discord, etc. The playwrights wish to instruct us. We can learn something from the play “*The Castle of Perseverance*”. This play was performed by a group of players who traveled from town to town or village to village, setting up their scenes as a modern circus sets up its tent and cages and performing for money. In the last days of the 15<sup>th</sup> century we found it difficult to distinguish between the Morality and the Interlude. The main difference seems to lie not in the theme but in place and occasion of performance. An Interlude was a short play performed in the middle of something else (e.g. a feast). Perhaps the most

enjoyable of all the Interlude dramatists is John Heywado (1497-1580), whose plays have no instructive purpose. In the Four P's: a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Potheary and a Peddler do nothing more than talk, but their purpose is only to see who can tell the biggest lie. This and other plays are sheer entertainment and their humor is gentle and in excellent taste.

The raw materials for Elizabethan drama are being gathered together. The noble houses have their groups of Interlude players, wearing the livery of their masters- these are to become the Elizabethan companies, with names like the Lord Admiral's Men, the King's Men and so on. The wandering players of Moralities, playing in inn-yards, are soon to take over these inn-yards as permanent theatres. Learned men are writing dramas.

## **Chapter 9:**

### **Early Elizabethan drama**

The story of Elizabethan drama begins not in the theatre, but in the Inns of Court of London; it begins with tragedies written by gentlemen who practise the law. There was a man called Seneca, whose real name was Lucius Annacus and who was born 4 B.C. He was a Roman statesman, philosopher and dramatist. He had a considerable influence on the Elizabethan dramatists in various ways. There were three main ways of being influenced by him. The first way was to read certain French plays which acknowledge his influence but watered down his language; the second way was to read those Italian plays which called themselves "Senecan" but were full horrors enacted on the stage. The third way was the most popular with the Elizabethan dramatists including W. Shakespeare.

At this time, early comedy owes something to the Roman Comic playwrights, as all Elizabethan tragedy owes something to Seneca. One of these comic playwrights was William Stevenson. His famous comedy was Gammes Gurton's Needle- a tale of an old village woman who loses her needle and, after upsetting the whole village about it, eventually finds it stuck into the trousers of her farm-servant. This is pure English country comedy but it owes something to the Roman comedians in its plot-construction.

A more sophisticated kind of comedy was developed in the Royal Court itself, in the entertainments given by the Children of St. Paul's and other choir schools before the Queen.

The famous tragedians now belong to the group known as the University Wits. The University Wits were men with learning and no money, so they could not find a career in the church. Then they had to seek secular

employment. Writing plays for the new popular theatres was the only form of this secular employment that they could find. The University Wits produce something better than the old popular Morality plays. The wandering groups of players usually set up their stages in the inn-yards, took good collections of money after their performances. They did not move on to fresh inns and fresh audiences but they let fresh audiences come to them. Hence a type of the Elizabethan theatre began- a building with four sides looking into a large yard and with the stage at one end of the yard.

The popular drama of the day was divided into great companies of players- The Lord Chamberlain's and the Lord Admiral's. Both these groups were large. All the members of these theatrical companies were versatile- they could play tragedy and comedy; they could dance, sing, leap and so on.

Elizabethan England produced a great drama and it had great actors to interpret it. The greatest ornament of the public theatre until William Shakespeare was Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), born only a few weeks before Shakespeare, but destined not to have a working life nearly as long as his. Marlowe was stabbed to death in circumstances which we shall never fully know. Marlowe's reputation as a dramatist rests on five plays- Tamburlain, Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta, Edward II, and Dido, Queen of Carthage. These are his five masterpieces. Marlowe is a great poet and dramatist. If he hadn't been killed untimely, he might have become greater even than W. Shakespeare.

## **Chapter 10:** **William Shakespeare(1564-1616)**

William Shakespeare is the subject of innumerable books, written in all the languages of the world. The world has found him the greatest playwright of all the time. He was born in Stratford, made an unwise marriage there, migrated to London, amassed a fortune, came back a wealthy citizen and died of a fever. It is quite certain that Shakespeare's main aim in life was to become a gentleman and not an artist, that the plays were a means to an end. Shakespeare wanted property-land and houses and that meant acquiring money. It was hemming and Condell two friends of his, to bring out, after his death, the first collected edition of plays; Shakespeare seemed to have little interest in leaving his work to the unknown future. Shakespeare wanted to batter or woo or enchant the ear of his audience with language. In early plays- Romeo and Juliet or Richard II- Shakespeare's verbal genius is a lyric one, a musical one. Long speeches weave lovely poetic images, play with words and sounds. In later plays, such as Anthony and Cleopatra and King

Lear language becomes compressed, sometimes harsh and it is often hard to understand. Shakespeare wrote with great speed and facility, rarely crossing out anything. He often can not wait for the right word to come and so he invents a word of his own.

Shakespeare's literary fame began with two long poems- Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece. From 1592 to 1601, the happiest time of his life, plays flowed rapidly from his pen. Romeo and Juliet was one of those- a youthful work. To this period belong all the most successful romantic comedies, such as The Merchant of Venice, Much Adoo about Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night; and we also have the English Histories- King John, Richard III etc...

From 1601-1608, a curiously pessimistic period, Shakespeare gives us the great tragedies and the bitter comedies- Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear and Timon of Athens. But from 1608, Shakespeare seems to have regained his sense of humour, though it is now more philosophical than before. Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale and the Tempest are romantic plays, but love is no fierce passion. It is gentle, somehow melancholy, and there is a constant theme of forgiveness running through these last plays. He leaves the stage and the London and the concerns of youth behind, and goes to live on his savings and investments in Stratford. Unlike Marlowe, he dies in his bedroom at home and the wife he married at 18 closes up his eyes.

## **Chapter 11**

### **Other Elizabethan Dramatists**

Shakespeare's greatest contemporary was Ben Johnson (1574- 1637). Johnson's aims were different from those of his friend's. While Shakespeare sees human beings as strange mixtures, walking masses of conflict and contradictions, unpredictable and always surprising, Johnson sees them as very simple and almost mechanical combinations of four elements – hot, cold, moist, and dry. Johnson is a very great playwright. His tragedies have little appeal but his comedies are very admirable. Volpone and the Alchemist both have the same theme – the rogue and his assistant who get fat and rich on the credulity of the stupid. In Volpone, the old fox who gives his name to the title pretends to be very rich and very ill: lying on his pretended death bed, he informs everyone of his visitors that he, and he only, shall inherit Volpone's wealth. The Alchemist deals with two rogues who pretend to have discovered the magic formula for turning base metal to gold.



Roman was outside Johnson's scope, but he has a wonderful lyrical gift that owes a lot to Marlowe, and his love scenes have a sensuousness of language which always seem to be under control.

Johnson is a great dramatist of "realism". But he can be fanciful as well as realistic and he is the greatest purely lyric poet of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Johnson's gift, like Shakespeare's, is primarily a verbal one, but it is coupled with sharp observation, a keen sense of satire and a strong concern with form.

The other dramatists are Francis Beaumont (1584- 1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625). Their *Knight of the Burning Pestle* is as compelling a view of middle-class London as the *Alchemist*. These two playwrights worked together for several years, achieving a common style.

The greatest tragicomic dramatist after Shakespeare was undoubtedly John Webster (1580-1638). His two great tragedies are *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. Like Johnson and Shakespeare, he has a strong verbal gift. He is a remarkable poet, able to convey a situation or a state of mind in the fewest possible words. *The White Devil* concerns the Duke of Brachiano and his love for Victoria Corombona, wife of Camillo. Victoria's brother arranges for Camillo to be killed. He, then, also kills his brother after a violent quarrel. The Duke kills his wife Isabella and then he is poisoned by Isabella's brother. Finally, Isabella and her brother are murdered. *The Duchess of Malfi* is another tale of many murders. Its climax comes when the Duchess undergoes fatal torture from her brother and is then strangled with her two children.

John Ford (1586-1639) has something of the same sharpness of vision and the same sort of taste for horrors. His tragedy "*'Tis Pity She's a Whore*" deals with incest.

Another dramatist is Cyril Tourney (1575-1626). He has two important plays- *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *The Atheist's Tragedy*.

To Thomas Heywood, we owe the remarkable play *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. It is the story of an unfaithful wife whose husband, discovering the infidelity, does not seek revenge in the normal passionate way of husbands, but he kills her with kindness. He sends her to live in a comfortable country house, but she is not allowed to see either her husband or her children again. And so she dies, slowly, having ample solitude and leisure to feel remorse and grow fatally ill of it. In the end, her husband comes to her death-bed and forgives her. It is a touching play.

## **Chapter 12:**

### **Tudor poetry and prose**

The Great glory of the Tudor period is the Drama but the other forms of literature were flourishing as well. Let's survey briefly what happened in the field of poetry and prose during the time of the great dramatists.

In the field of prose, Translation seems to come first. A prose literature can only grow by taking nourishment, and this nourishment can only be obtained from foreign sources. Thus, translation from Greek, Latin, French and Italian make up much of the first Tudor prose, an example is English Bible.

Among the contemporary writers was Sir Thomas More (1480-1535), one of the precursors of the Renaissance, the New Learning- a man of bold imagination and vision. His most imaginative work is written in Latin – Utopia, which is Greek for “nowhere”. This is a book which depicts a imaginary island where everything is nearly perfected. This is an ideal world which man can build on reason, charity and proper social organization. More's point is contained in his title: his perfect island does not exist and never can; it is nowhere. Sir Thomas was a pioneer in the field of historical writing; and his Life and Reign of Edward V is a model of clear, objective documentation.

An important Elizabethan translation from the French was the rendering of the Essais written by Montaigne. The Essay is a prose-form. Actually Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) was an inventor of an essay- a loose composition in which he could informally chat of subjects that interested him.

The first English essayist was Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626). The Essays have kept his name alive more than any of his achievements. These are brief observations on the variety of subjects- death, revenge, reading, gardens, education and so on. These essays are simple, strong, admirably clear and concise.

Robert Burton (1577-1640) wrote the Anatomy of Melancholy. This work is a treatise on that mental ailment which is called now depression, the disease that Hamlet suffers from. The Anatomy of Melancholy is a huge work- over half a million words- a full of fascinating stories and quotations from old stories.

The really great religious book of that age is the Laws Ecclesiastical Polity by Richard Hooker (1554-1600). This is an attempt to show how the Church of England could be so organized that Catholic-Protestant struggle would be resolved once for all.

Spoken English is the key to understanding the peculiar virtues of Elizabethan prose. The Elizabethans addressed themselves to the ear rather than the eye, and this explains the sensation of warmth and intimacy we get from most Elizabethan writings. A hundred years later, prose became more scientific and lost intimate qualities. The prose stories of the Elizabethan age are interesting. In them we can see the beginning of the Novel. The first English novel are more like long short stories. Novels' writers of the time are Thomas Deloney; Sir Philip Sidney and so on.

Thomas Deloney (1543-1600) gives us a homely story in *Jack of Newbury*, which is about life in the weaving trade, and the *Gentle Craft* which is the robust and vivid tale of shoemakers.

Sir Philip Sydney (1554-1586) – soldier, poet, scholar – wrote *Arcadia*, which is a long fantastic tale of aristocrats shipwrecked on an ideal island, an island full of the highest principles and the most beautiful ladies.

Elizabethan prose was healthy, and even the near-illiterate seemed able to write it well, because the Elizabethan age is full of brilliant books about all subjects under the sun recipes, cures for the plague, the London underworld, how to cheat at cards, what flowers to grows etc.

And no what about poets? Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) is the first writer of verse to “sum up” aspiration and dreams of the Elizabethan age. His major work is *The Faerie Queen*, which is monumental poem far many too long for many modern readers. It tells of the human virtues- love, faith, friendship, and so on. Spenser is with both- the people of England and the Court of England: he know the tradition and the superstitions of the common folk, he can use their earthy speech, but he is also filled with sophistication of the aristocratic. He is in love with words, especially their melodious arrangement.

John Donne (1573-1631) is another great poem at the time. Donne is very different from Spenser as Spenser is gentle, Donne is fiery; Spenser is smooth, Donne is rough. Donne has two sides of his character. He started off as the soldier, lover, drinker, writer of passionate amorous verses. He ended as Doctor John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, great preacher of sermons. As the passionate lover, he was always analytic, thoughtful, trying to dissect and explain his passion almost scientifically. As the divine, he approached God with the passion he had formerly shown to women. He is impatient of conventions and invents many new verse- forms of his own. In his images, the stranger the comparison the better he likes it. He is always startling, always curiously modern. When we read him, we do not feel that it is the work of a long dead man, but he seems to be a product of the Atomic Age.

## Chapter 13

### The age of Milton: end of a period

After the death of Shakespeare, great changes took place in English life and thought. Great political parties of England emerged out of the struggle. The Puritans followed John Calvin, who taught that free will did not exist and that men were predestined from the beginning of time to go to either heaven or hell. Under Calvinism there is no real division into Church and State: Church and State become one. Traditional Christianity condemned the lending of money on interest. And so we can see the bond between the new men of trade and the religion they practiced, and the bond between their religion and their politics. The reign of Charles I is a struggle for power on the part of the English Parliament. War comes and the Parliamentary side wins. The Puritans executed the king, declared a republic and imposed on England a way of life such as it had never known before. The Old Testament became the book of Law, pleasure is regarded as sinful; moral crimes were savagely punished. Certainly this did not last long and 1660 saw the restoration of the Monarchy and an attempt to return to the old way. Hence 1660 a new era starts- an era in which the old land-owning class sinks and the new middle class rises, an era in which the English character seems to have become subtly changed. Of the Puritans, John Milton is the greatest- both in verse and prose. We are right to call this age his age. The 17<sup>th</sup> century was a century of charming rather than great work. W\Sweetness and grace predominate surprisingly in a period of such bloody struggle. There were two main influences on the poetry of the time and those were the influences of John Donne and Ben Johnson. They are good influences. Donne encouraged imagination and a certain intellectual vitality. Johnson induced a sense of form and careful craftsmanship. Robert Herrick (1591-1633) follows Ben Johnson closely. He is a lover of pleasure, a singer of the beauty of women and flowers, a praiser of wine. His poems *Hesperides*- are full of human life, which he compares to a flower. Woman is the main subjects of these poets – woman unkind, woman kind, woman despised, woman witty and so on. *The Religio Medici* is the most interesting work of Sir Thomas Browne (1605-82), who is the Norwich physician and has fantastic humour and great interest in religion.

John Milton (1608-74) is the first great literary personality of England. He came from a London family with a certain amount of money. He never had to earn his own living. He had leisure and was able to study, equip himself with more learning than any previous great poets. His father was a composer of music and he himself was blessed with musical ear. Later he was blind and his greatest work is written after this calamity struck him. One

of his great works is *On the morning of Christ's Nativity*, in which he is not content merely to praise the new-born heavenly-child, but must describe his victory over the false gods. From most of his works, we can see that he was destined to be the man alone, finding no pleasure in the gay world about him. Some see Milton as the egocentric, the proud self-centered man around whom the universe revolts: what he wants, God also must want. If his marriage is a failure, the marriage law must be altered. If he despises woman then woman must be despicable. According to him, he is never wrong. It is fitting epilogue to the career of this great poet. Even in his last days, Milton is still experimental with verse and language, producing new tones and rhythms (even new words like "eye-witness"). In the new cynical, bright and corrupt England of Charles II, some of his works stand as a monument to an age whose literary glories, whose moral aspirations, whose genuinely heroic spirit can never be approached in the centuries to come. Milton is the last of the old.

## **Chapter 14**

### **The age of Dryden**

From the political point of view, 1660 does not really start a new era. Charles II came to the throne from exile; James II – his brother, went from the throne to exile. The years from 1660 to 1688 show us a cynical period. The "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 drove away a king who was trying to play the all-powerful monarch. After that date a compromise begins. It brings about a limited monarchy and a parliamentary system which works slowly towards true democracy. It means also the gradual rise of the middle-class, who are soon to dictate religious forms, moral standards and artistic taste. 1660 brings in an unheroic and cynical age, distrustful of deep convictions, whether in life or in literature.

The main characteristic of the literature of this age may be summed up in the phrase "From the head, not the heart". The literature of the past had been passionate, concerned with the relationship between God and man, man and woman, man and man. But in this Restoration period, feeling and imagination were mistrusted. The literature of the Restoration is neither moved nor moving. In this period, people believed that it was best to live a calm civilized life governed by reason. Such as life best lived in the town, and the town is the true centre of culture. The themes of the new literature are town themes such as politics, the doings of polite society, the intellectual topics of men who talk in clubs and coffee-houses. The human brain has

taken over and is in complete control: good manners replace passion, wit replaces eloquence etc.

John Dryden is the first great name of the new. Dryden (1631- 1700) is the only one writer of the age who, brilliant in all forms, encloses and sums up its quality. Dryden recorded the whole history in his work “ Absalom and Achitophel”. Satire was one of the most typical products of the Restoration period. The function of satire is supposed to be the ridicule of human manners as a corrective to them. Being an intellectual age, the Restoration period was most interested in theory – especially in literary theory. Dryden also comes first in this field. Dryden’s philosophy is clearly stated, particularly in the Essay On Satire and the Essay Of Dramatic Poesy. He proclaims himself a “classicist”. The purpose of literature is to give a picture of truth, to imitate nature in the manner of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The ancients are the best models, and it is safe for the beginner to imitate them. Literature must primarily satisfy the reason. Dryden’s theory of literature is a “civilised” one. Dryden’s prose is logical; he is never carried away by the sound of words and a metaphor or simile. The Restoration period marks the beginning of the scientific age. With the return of Charles II from France in 1660, science became fashionable. An interest in science usually goes with an interest in philosophy. The difference between science and philosophy was pointed out by Issac Newton (1642-1727), a great scientist in the world. He says: “Scientists consist of particular observation and particular conclusions (such as the law of gravity), philosophy is speculation of the most general kind, the big enquiry which comes after the small scientific conclusion”. Thomas Hobbes (1588- 1678) is the greatest of the Restoration speculators. His best work is Leviathan, published in 1651. He is the materialist, believing that sensations and ideas are the result of matter in motion.

The Renaissance- the awakening of interest in Man-manifested itself in the Elizabethan age. The late 17<sup>th</sup> century is interested in the details of historical personalities, and writers become interested in themselves. John Evelyn (1620- 1706) and Samuel Pepys (1632-1704) wrote for themselves alone, keeping accounts of their daily transactions, recording history. Pepys provides us with a door leading straight into the Restoration. All his personalities emerge its political problems and customs are tackled. Pepys’ Diary is not literature , but it makes the same sort of impact as literature – revelation of a personality of the thought processes and tastes of an age, all with an astonishing sharpness.

## **Chapter 15**

### **Poetry in the Age of Reason**

The 18<sup>th</sup> century is sometimes called England's Augustan Age. 18<sup>th</sup> century England had all these things: trade flourished; an empire was growing, and there were no more trouble between King and Parliament. The middle-class was firmly established. It was not an age of conflict, but of balance. In art, the spirit of the period was "classical". Social conventions are more important than individual convictions, reason is more important than emotion, form is more important than content. Despite the calm surface of order that ruled the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the opposite of the "classical" was slowly being prepared to burst out at the time of the French Revolution. This opposite we call "romantic", and we associate it with the individual rebelling against society. The Romantic is much concerned with himself, highly emotional, and generally impatient of the restrictions, which a stable society demands. Nowadays, one expression that is sometimes heard in criticism of 18<sup>th</sup> century literature is "dissociation of sensibility". That is a hard expression, but it can be explained as follows: the healthy human soul exhibits a perfect balance between intellect, emotion and body. There is a time for reason, a time for deep feeling, a time for yielding to the demands of senses. In Shakespeare which faculty rules : brain, heart or senses? The answer is "all the three"; and the same for Jon Donne. But now, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, reason and emotion no longer work together. Emotion is kept down, made into inferior. The greatest poet of the period is Alexander Pope (1688-1744). In many ways, he sums up the 18<sup>th</sup> century: son of a prosperous merchant. He lacks neither money nor leisure. The aristocrat refinement of his work has a middle-class basis. But, though the voice of the age, he is in many ways outside it. A catholic, he could not go either to a public school or a university (Protestant England was strict about it); elegant and strong in his work, , he was weak, dwarfish, and ugly in himself. He is essentially the singer of order in the universe and of order in society. Pope began to write verse very early. His Ode to solitude and his Pastorals belong to his early teens and the "Essay on Criticism" was produced at twenty. Pope is Dryden's heir. He preaches correctness in literary composition, the filing and polishing of phrases and lines until perfection is reached. He makes wise remarks e.g. "A little learning is a dangerous thing"... Pope is only English writer of whom the word "perfection" can be used. His Essay on Man (produced when he was 51) must seem too simple for us to take seriously as philosophy but it is superb. To many lovers of Pope's work, the most delightful poem is the Rape of the Lock, a story of the theft of a curl from the hair of a young lady of fashion. As a translator, Pope interpreted Homer

for the Age of Reason. Pope became wealthy as well as famous with the translation of the Iliad. His Iliad tells us little about Homer, but plenty about the age of Reason.

Thomas Gray (1716-1771) is best-known for his elegy in a Country Churchyard. This poem is too well known and too well loved because it appeals to that mood of self-pity, which is always ready to rise in all of us. Gray, moving towards Romanticism, attempts in other poems a greater freedom of form. He has the same classical concern with perfection of form as Pope.

William Collins (1721-1750) is much more of a Romantic than Gray. His Ode to Evening is very successful. It attempts to convey the impressions of certain natural scenes as observed the poet.

Meanwhile, in Scotland, a young peasant was creating a Romantic Revolution on his own. This was Robert Burns (1759-1796), the first real poetic rebel of the century. He revolted against the restraints of conventional morality. He drank too much, loved not wisely but too well, died too young. He sings about the things he likes, including drinking and women – without shame. He has a strong sense of humour and a sympathy with the down-trodden, whether man or beast.

Finally there was William Blake (1757 -1827), one of the greatest of the English poets. Blake is known to most people as the author of the “Songs of Innocence” and “Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright”. His achievement is massive and his aim – immense. He wished to use the twin arts of poetry and drawing to build up a huge mythology of his own. His great poems – Milton, Jerusalem –are epics and hard to understand. But his powers and gods are solid and huge and sometimes frightening. Blake’s philosophy has a simple enough basis: he rejects reason and law and conventional religion. He says mankind can be fulfilled only through the senses and the imagination. His “Marriage of Heaven and Hell” turns the existing 18<sup>th</sup> century world upside-town. God, who stands for reason and repression, is set against Satan, who stands for energy and freedom. In Hell (the world of energy and creation) we learn the truth: “The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom”, “Prisons are built with stones of law”, etc. Blake wants every human being to cultivate the imagination to such an extent that it will be capable of perceiving ultimate truth without any help from reason to reason, in fact, is dangerous so is science.

Blake’s short poems are always remarkable, always highly individual. At their best, they are forceful indictments of the repressions that he spent his life fighting against- the repression of laws, religion and science. Some may



still believe he was another of the 18<sup>th</sup> century mad-men but his madness looks very much like sanity.

## Chapter 16

### Prose in the age of reason

Daniel Defoe ( 1660- 1731) was a journalist. The development of the newspaper and the periodical is an interesting literary sideline of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He was capable of irony. There are two stylistic tricks in his writings, no airs or graces, but there is the flavor of colloquial speech. His “Shortest Way with the Dissenters” states gravely that those who do not belong to the Church of England should be hanged. His books such as Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders, Royana, and many others are highly admired. The intention of these works is that the reader should regard them as true, not as fictions, and so Defoe deliberately avoids all art, all fine writing and the reader thinks: This isn’t a story-book, this is autobiography”. In Moll Flanders we seem to be reading the real life story of a “bad woman”. In Robinson Crusoe the fascination lies in the bald statement of facts.

The greatest prose writer of the first part of the century is Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), a great humorist and a savage satirist. There is a core of bitterness in him, which revealed itself finally as a mad hatred of mankind. In his Modest Proposal, he ironically suggested that famine in Ireland could be eased by cannibalism, and that the starving children should be used as food. Some fools took this seriously. His greatest books are A Tale of a Tub and Gulliver’s Travels. The first of these is a satire on the two main non-conformist religions – Catholicism and Presbyterianism. He tells the story of three brothers and what they do with their inheritance. This book is farcical and wildly funny. It shocked Queen Anne so much that she would not allow Swift to be made a bishop, and this contributed to his inner frustration and bitterness. Gulliver’s Travels hides much of this satire so cleverly that children still read it as a fairy-story. Swift is a great literary artist. He is skillful in verse as well as in prose.

The novel develops after the death of Defoe, with Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), a professional printer who took novel-writing at the age of 50. Richardson liked to help young women with the composition of their love-letters and was asked by a publisher to write a volume of model letters for use on various occasions. He was inspired to write a novel in the form of a series of letters. This novel was **Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded**, which describes the assaults made on the honor of a virtuous housemaid by a young man. Pamela resists; clinging to her code of honor and her reward is, finally, her marriage to that man. Richardson’s **Clarissa Harlowe** is about a young

lady of wealth and beauty, virtue and innocence who, in order to avoid an arranged marriage, seeks help from a man handsome, but unscrupulous. He seduces her and asks her to marry him, but she will not: instead, worn out by shame, she dies, leaving him to his remorse.

The greatest novelist of the century is Henry Fielding (1707-54). He started his novel writing career almost by accident. His **Jonathan Wild** is truly picaresque, with its boastful, vicious hero. Tom Jones is Fielding's masterpiece. We appreciate Tom Jones for its boisterous humour, its good sense, and its vivid characterisation.

Tobias Smollet(1721-71) is responsible for Roderick Ransom, Peregrine Pickle and Humphry Clinker. The 1<sup>st</sup> gives us an insight into the life of the British Navy which Smollet knew. It is about life at sea. Peregrine Pickle is a gentler tale of sailors living on land and Humphry Clinker is an account of a journey through England and Scotland by a family from Wales.

Laurence Sterne (1713-68) produced a remarkable eccentric novel in his Tristram Shandy, which breaks all the rules of language and punctuation.

The last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were shaken by great political changes. America broke away from England, and in 1789, the French Revolution took place. English thinkers and politicians were much agitated, taking sides, preaching for and against the new violent movements, and a good deal of the prose of this last period is concerned with Liberty, Anarchy and Justice. William Godwin (1756-1836) wrote a book about Political Justice. His book had a great influence on Romantic poets like Shelley. Tom Paine (1737-1800) defended the revolt of America previously, the Revolution now in France and he wrote about them in his Rights of Man. This period produced the great historian, Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) with the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

The later days of the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel produce names like Fanny Burney (1752-1840), whose Evelina and Cecilia are realistic, humorous and full of credible characters. There were novels of "mystery and imagination" by writers like Mrs Ann Radcliffe (1764-1822) and Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818). Mrs. Radcliffe's the Romance of the Forest, the Mysteries of Udolpho, and the Italian are skillfully written, her mysteries always have a rational explanation at the end, and she never offends conventional morality. Lewis's The Monk with its devils, horror, torture, magic and murder – is very different. Its popularity was short-lived.

The man whose personality seems to dominate the whole of the Augustan Age is Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-84). Johnson is worth reading. He wrote sermons, prayers and meditations, biography (the Lives of the Poets), speeches, political pamphlets and even Dictionary of the English language

and critical writings. The Dictionary is a great achievement. As a critic, he was honest, and honest and independence shone throughout all his writings, as they shine throughout the record of his personal career.

## **Chapter 17**

### **The Romantics**

The Romantic movement in literature began with the storming of the Bastille in Paris and the first spilling of blood in the French Revolution in 1789. The key-year for English Romanticism in 1798, which saw the publication of the Lyrical Ballads by William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772- 1834). Wordsworth was insistent that the language of poetry should be the language of the ordinary men and women. He wanted to return to the imagination, legend and the human heart. He believed the poet was the man who gave life its meaning. His attitude to nature is original and remarkable. Nature is the great teacher of morals. Coleridge's contribution to the Romantic movement lay in a return to the magical and mysterious. Coleridge and Wordsworth could never see eye to eye.

Wordsworth wanted poetry to stay on the ground but Coleridge wanted it to fly into the regions of the marvelous. His great three poems- The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Christabel, and Kubla Khan- are coloured with the mysterious and the supernatural.

The Romantic spirit had to be associated with youth, and it was in the work of men who died when they were still young, such as Lord Byron (1788-1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792- 1822), and John Keats (1795- 1821). Byron's reputation in Europe has always been greater than his reputation in England. He is the hero of Childe Harold, of the remarkable anti-religious drama Cain, of the Corsair and the Siege of Corinth. Don Juan is his masterpiece. However, it is not strictly a romantic poem as there is too much laughter in it and too much of sharp edge of social criticism. He died heroically.

Shelley is against all existing laws, customs and religions. His queen Mab is long philosophical poems with learned notes. His long poems have the theme of revolt, of suffering humanity in chains: the revolt of Islam, Hellas etc. He also write about the indestructibility of beauty ( the Sensitive Plant) and of the power of love as in Epipsychidion. He was the same sensitivity as Wordworth, e.g.:

I could lie down like a tired child  
And weep away this life of care  
Or

Oh, lift me from the grass!

I die, I faint, I fail !

John Keats (1795-1821) could have become one of the great poets of all time if he hadn't die so early. His poems are models of the purely sensuous aspect of the Romantic movement. His themes are simple: beauty in art and nature; the wish to die; happy and unhappy love. In his poems we can feel the heart-ache which comes from the awareness that beauty dies.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) was both poet and novelist. His poems – Marmion, the Lady of the Lake, the lay of the last minstrel – made him wealthy and famous. At the age of 43, he realized that his poetic genius was exhausted, and he returned to the writing of novels. He wrote too many novels, and wrote them too carelessly. This was not his fault. His printers and publishers, with whom he was in partnership, went bankrupt, and Scott was faced with the task of paying off the debt of 147,000. this meant turning himself to a kind of writing machine and sacrificing quality to quality. After 5 years he was able to pay back 130,000 but then his health broke. He died at 60, leaving behind a vast number of romantic novels and a few poems. Scott's themes are historical. They deal with European history – sometimes French, as in Quentin Durward, but more often English and Scottish. Some of the novels are Waverley, Old Mortality, Rob Roy, the Heart of Midlothian, The Bride of Lammermoor etc. He was interested by the great political and religious conflicts of the past. He tells his stories of personal hate, of revenge, of love, of the hard lives of the common people and of their earthy humour. His invented characters are women too good and men too honourable to be true.

Jane Austen (1775-1817) is the first important novelist. She stands above both the classical and the romantic movements. She bridges the gap between the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. She is unique. In her novel, Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, Emma, Persuasion etc...she shows a small corner of English society as it was in her day – the sedate little world of the moderately well-to-do country families.

Her primary interest is people, not ideas. Her achievement lies in the exact presentation of human situations, the delineation of characters who are really living creatures, with faults and virtues mixed as they are in real life. Her plots are straightforward; there is little action.

The most significant prose of the Romantic writers is not to be found in fiction. Four important writers normally grouped together are Charles Lamb ( 1775-1834), William Hazlitt (1778-1830), Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) and Thomas De Quincey (1785- 1859). They are specialised in literary criticism.

Lamb is noted for his *Essays of Elia*. It is full of archaisms. Hazlitt has less fantasy. His *Lectures on the English Poets* and *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* are admirable in their direct, forceful analysis of the essential quality of a writer, but his spirit of the Age shows certain prejudices. Leigh Hunt is less famous. His *Autobiography* gives a useful picture of the age and its literary and political personalities. De Quincey is an opium – taker. His *Confessions of an English Opium-taker* is a series of his visions and nightmares.

## **Chapter 18**

### **The Victorian age**

The Victorian age has a large number of problems to face. In many ways, it was an age of progress, - of rail-way building, steam ships, reforms of all kinds – but it was also an age of doubt. There were too much poverty, too much injustices, too much ugliness, and too little certainty about faith and morals – thus it became also an age of crusaders and reformers and theorists. It was an age of conventional morality, of the large families with the father as a godlike head and the mother as a submissive creature like Milton's Eve. The strict morality, the holiness of family life, owed a good deal to the example of Queen Victoria herself, and her indirect influence over literature, as well as social life, was considerable.

One characteristic of Victorian literature – especially prose – is the high moral purpose allied to a Romantic technique; language is rich and highly ornamental. Our first two writers were Thomas Carlyle (1795- 1881) and John Ruskin (1819- 1900). Carlyle was much concerned with German philosophy and literature. He produced an astonishing book in *Sartor Resartus* in which he presents an imaginary German philosopher who sees experience as a suit of clothes, through which he must try to find the nakedness of reality. Later, Carlyle takes the history. His masterpiece is the French Revolution. He hated materialism and material progress: behind the suit of clothes of prosperity lay the naked truth of poverty. Life was real and earnest and should be spent on trying to reform the world through democracy. Carlyle anticipated the German Fascists in this doctrine and his style seems permeated with German spirit: he use German words and German constructions, exaggerating the Germanic element in English.

Ruskin's concern was with beauty. His early works were the works of the modern painters, and books like the *Seven Lamps of Architecture* and the *Stones of Venice* could verse as an example. He tackled the burning questions of poverty and ignorance in *Unto This Last* and *Sesame and Lilies*,

advocating national education, social reform, and the need to bring beauty and purpose into the lives and jobs of the workers.

The prose-writing of Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) are refreshing after Carlyle and Ruskin and his doctrines are sympathetic to our own age. Ruskin wanted a return to the Middle Ages. Carlyle adored Germany but Arnold praised Greece and Rome and wished to see something of the old "classical harmony" in art and life. It was the Anglo-Saxon element that Arnold disliked in English literature. Arnold, by profession, was an inspector of schools, and his comparison of the educational systems of the Continent with that of England was eventually to reform English education. He is also an important poet.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is the greatest of the Victorian story-tellers. Everybody is aware of the faults of Dickens – his inability to construct a convincing plot, his clumsy and sometimes ungrammatical prose, his sentimentality, his lack of real characters, but he is still read while finished writers are neglected. The secret of his popularity lies in an immense vitality. He creates a special Dickensian world – a mad world. The worlds created by Dickens is mainly a kind of nightmare London of chop-houses, prisons, lawyer's offices and taverns, dark, foggy and clod but very much alive. Dickens's novels are all animated by a sense of injustice and personal wrong; he is concerned with the problems of crime and poverty, but he does not seem to believe that matters can be improved by legislation or reform movements. Dickens is unlearned, his style is inelegant and unpolished. He concentrated on the social conditions of his own day as in *Oliver Twist* and *Hard Times*. *David Copperfield* is autobiographical in its essence. The finest of the novels is *Great Expectations*- a long but tightly knit work, moving. It is in this book that Dickens reveals his understanding of the mind of the child, his sympathy with its fantasies and its inability to understand the grown-up world. In some ways, Dickens remained a child

Another novelist at that time was William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63). Dickens wrote a low life and was a warm-blooded romantic. Thackeray wrote of the upper classes and was anti-romantic. Thackeray started his career as a satirist, and wrote many humorous articles for the comic weekly *Punch* and some other books like *The Book of Snobs*; *The Yellow plush Papers*. These books made fun of the pretensions of the upper classes, and their worshippers in the mid is still his middle classes. *Vanity Fair* is still his best novel. It tells of the careers of two girls with sharply contrasted characters- *Becky Sharp*, unscrupulous and clever; and *Amelia Sedley*, pretty, moral but unintelligent. He also draws clever, but wickedly clever portraits of officers, and gentlemen of the time of Waterloo. He wrote

historical books such as *Esmond* and *The Virginians*. In many ways, Thackeray is closer to the Age of Reason than to his own times. Among his books for children- *The Rose* and *The Ring* – is one of the best loved of all Victorian fantasies. Thackeray is capable of tenderness, but never of sentimentality.

Meanwhile, there were 3 sisters in Yorkshire Vicarage. None of them destined to live long. They were writing novels and poems. Charlotte Bronte (1816-55), who admired Thackeray, dedicated her *Jane Eyre* to him. This is a genuine love story of great realism, full of sharp observation and not without it. This story was something of a bombshell. The Professor tells of her own experiences as a teacher in Brussels, and Shirley is concerned with industrial Yorkshire. *Jane Eyre*, one of the really significant Victorian novels, remains her masterpiece. It is a story of the governess who fall in love with her master, but he himself is married to a mad woman. Emily Bronte (1818-1848) had a more remarkable talent than her sister. Her poems are vital and original, and her novel *Wuthering Heights* is the very heart and soul of the romantic spirit. This is a story of wild passion. Anne Bronte (1820-49) is remembered now with her *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of wild fell Hall* Her talent is smaller than that of her two sisters.

George Eliot (1819-1890), whose real name was Mary Ann Evans, is also a writer with admirers. Her life is interesting: she lived, unmarried, with George Henry Lewes from about 1854 to 1878 (the year of his death) and had less than a year of legal marriage (with Walter cress) before she died. Her strong personality and fine mind are evident from her books- *Scenes of Clerical Life*, *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Romola*, *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda*, and others. She was interested in German philosophy. She is always concerned with moral problems. She always shows sympathy in her novels for the faith of others. She deals with mostly country people (*The Mill on the Floss*). George Eliot is important because she is prepared to analyse human conduct, to show the moral consequences of even trivial actions- this makes her very modern- and to show how the minds of even humble people can be made noble through suffering.

Last of the novelists is Samuel Butler (1835- 1902). He wrote *Erewhon* and *Erewhon Revisited* ( *Erewhon*: “nowhere”). These are pictures of England, highly satirical, full of attacks on English institutions and English stupidity. His *Book of the Machines* warns that machines may well develop to a point where they can destroy human beings and take over their function. Butler has no mercy on Victorian England, and his masterpiece, *The Way of All Flesh*, is a sustained onslaught on everything the Victorians held dear. Butler attacks not only the Church but also the family, the institution of

marriage and the false gods of Victorian education. *The Way of All Flesh* is a very amusing novel, full of masterly character sketches.

Prose- writings of general interest include the studies of gypsies by George Borrow (1803- 81) such as *Lavengro* and *the Romany Rye*, and his travel book *The Bible in Spain*. Borrow is full of the “open air” and the “wind on the heath”.

We turn now to poetry of the age with Alfred Tennyson (1809- 92), who later was made Lord Tennyson for his contribution to literature. His *The Palace of Art* teaches that beauty must be shared. Tennyson is most Victorian in his attitude to the sexes: the men and women of his *Idylls of the King* are symbols of Victorian morality. They may sin, but the code of Victorian responsibility always wins. In *Maud* and *Locksley Hall* there may be bitterness towards woman, who rejects passion for a safe marriage, but he does not grapple with problems of sex. Finally, Tennyson is an optimist. Some of his visions, as in *Locksley Hall*, are of a happy, liberal future.

Robert Browning (1812-89) approaches, in his language and imagery, the poetry of our own time. His language is often colloquial and even slangy. There is also humour and a kind of self –mockery in his *The Pied Piper*- a children’s poem. Browning thought of himself as the dramatist, but his stage plays were not successful. His poem about love are vigorous and virile: he believes again in acting rather vacillating when love is crossed. *The Statue* and *The Bust* tells of two lovers who, unable to be together because of circumstantial difficulties, die apart. We appreciate Browning best as the dramatic realist – his *Ring and the Book*, a long murderer story in verse, has a psychological penetration; his technique is always vigorous and fresh.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) was thought to be superior as a poet to her husband. Her *Aurora Leigh* was hailed as the greatest thing since Shakespeare. Her lyrics – especially the sonnets from the Portuguese – are pretty, displaying a woman’s passion.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) is a poet who also deserts thought and hymns beauty. He is much influenced by the contemporary French poets.

Geogre Meredith shone both as a poet and a novelist. His *Modern Love* has the same insight into human relationship as is shown in the novels. He is a fine- nature poet.

Finally, we must glance briefly at Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89). He burned his early poems and began writing again in his thirties. His poems became famous and he became almost immediately a powerful influence. We see him as a “modern”, but his work belongs to the very heart of the Victorian era. He is deeply a religious poet.



## **Chapter 19**

### **Fresh life in the drama**

Plays at that time were called melodramas (music-dramas or plays with music). The features of melodrama are still well-known for Sweeney Todd and Maria Marten. Villainy is black, virtue too good to be true. Violence, sadism, attempted seduction, low humour, murder, sensationalism, conventional moralising- all are to be found in the melodramas of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the early part of the century, practically all the poets tried their hands at five-act plays. Dramas owed more to its producers and actors than to its author. But one sees the beginning of a new dramatic outlook in the work of Thomas William Robertson (1829-71), especially in *Caste* (1867). *Caste* is not a great play, but at least it has credible story and characters. Its subject may now seem out of date: a girl of the lower classes should not marry into the upper classes, but there are exceptions. This play has pathos, comedy. This is not too long and it does not bore.

Arthur Jones (1851-1929) introduced contemporary problems, contemporary speech, and wished to startle Victorian audiences into regarding the drama as a serious entertainment. His plays number altogether about 60, and some of them are *The Liars*, *The Silver King*, *Saints and Sinners*.

But English drama in its nascent stage needed other elements than a mere attempt at "realism". It needed fantasy and wit. Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) gave it wit in his admirable artificial comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest*, one of the most amusing plays ever written.

W.S. Gilbert (1836-1911) produced with Arthur Sullivan the famous series of comic operas – *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Patience*, *The Mikado* etc... which combined satire with small lyrics and ravishing music. Gilbert's skill as a stage-producer helped to improve standards of acting in the theatre. But the really great dramatic genius of the age was not to come from England, but from Norway.

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) delved deep into the social and domestic problems of his age, and his presentation of a failed marriage in *A Doll's House*, and the sins of the father being visited on their children in *Ghosts*, caused a sensation when William Archer translated these plays into English for production in London. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) defended Ibsen against the attacks of the critics.

G.B. Shaw was an Irishman, born in a middle class bourgeois family. He was always very active in the social and political life of his country. Shaw

made a revolution in the English theatre with the new ideas he brought into it. He considered that theatre should rouse people, make them think and suffer. He introduced the play in which he set different social problems and try to solve them through the dialogue of his characters. The main theme of Shaw's plays was the criticism of capitalism. With this criticism, he began his activities as a playwright in 1892, when his first comedy- *Widower's Houses*, was written. This play reveals to the audience that the riches of the upper classes were obtained by means of a shameful exploitation of the poor. From this play onward he dominated the European theatre. His another best play was *Pygmalion*, written in 1912. This is a story of a poor young girl, who sells flowers in the streets of London. She speaks very bad English. Professor Higgins, a linguist, wants to prove that he can teach a person to speak perfect English in a short period of time. The he achieves his aim, turning the girl into a young aristocrat, and they both fall in love with each other. Shaw's works are important and their role is progressive in the literature of the century. His contribution to the theatrical art is very great.

In Ireland there were certain important dramatists. In fact, there were two movements: a realistic one and a poetic one. Among these dramatists was William Butler Yeats (1865-1939). His works *Cathleen in Houlihan*, *the Countess Cathleen*, *The Land of Heart's Desire* are about traditions, even superstitions of the Irish people.

A greater dramatist was John Lillington Synge (1871-1909), whose *Playboy of the Western World*, *Riders to the Sea*, *The Tinker's Wedding*, and others, dealt with the Irish peasantry and used a wonderfully rich and poetical style. The plays were completely realistic.

William Somerset Maugham (1874-?) wrote on social theme – marriage, adultery, the conflict between children and parents. His last play, *Sheppey*, is among his most original, with its ironical but touching examination of the place of human charity in a non-religious age.

In England now, the theatre seems to be becoming obsolete. People are now staying at home to listen to the radio or to watch television. Because the people do not come to the dramatists, the dramatists are coming to them, especially on the radio. Radio drama is a new medium. This is an age of private communion with film-star, radio-star, the quiet voice or the bright screen in the cozy darkness and flesh-and-blood actors and actresses must seem to many to be far less glamorous than their disembodied voices or magnified or reduced images.

## **Chapter 20**

### **The Coming of the modern age**

Queen Victoria's reign ended in 1901, but the Victorian age ended about 20 years earlier. The peculiar spirit called "Victorianism"- a mixture of optimism, doubt and guilt- began to disappear with men like Swinburne the rebel, Fitzgerald the pessimist, Butler the satirist, and others. The literature produced from about 1880 to 1914 is characterised by an attempt to find substitutes for a religion, or by a kind of spiritual emptiness- a sense of the hopelessness of trying to believe in anything.

There were many possible substitutes for religion. One was Art. "Art for art's sake" was the theme of books like *Marius the Epicurean* and *Studies in the history of the Renaissance*. It was one's duty to cultivate pleasure, to drink deep from the fountains of natural and created beauty.

Another substitute for religion was Imperialism. Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was the great singer of Empire. Both in India, Kipling knew the British Empire from the inside. This concern with Empire expresses itself in many forms – the sympathy with the soldiers who fought the frontier wars, kept peace in the Empire. Kipling's reputation as a poet has always been precarious among the "intellectuals". He is not a great poet, but he sums up for all time a certain phrase in English history. As a prose-writer, Kipling is known for one novel (*Kim*) and a host of excellent short stories.

Pessimism reigned in the novel. Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) produced a whole series of books dedicated to the life of his native Dorsetshire, full of the sense of man's bond with nature and with the past- a past revealed in the age-old trees, fields, heaths, and so on. In his novels, man never seems to be free; the weight of time and place presses heavily on him, and above everything, there are mysterious forces which control his life. Man is a puppet whose strings are worked by fates which are either hostile or indifferent to him.

George Gissing (1857-1903) presents grim pictures of futility with a classic restraint. *The Unclassed* shows the effects of poverty upon human character; *Demos* shows that no matter how much the depressed classes may agitate, they cannot build a juster world.

A return to optimism is shown in the verse and prose of Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), but it is rather superficial. He is at his best in adventure stories, such as *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae*, *Treasure Island* etc. His *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* deal with the duality of good and evil within the same man. The poems, especially those for children, are

charming. His short stories are good and the short story was becoming an accepted form now.

A new faith was still needed. Bernard Shaw and H.G.Wells (1866-1940) found one in what may be called Liberalism – the belief that man's future lies on earth, not in heaven, and with scientific and social progress, an earthy paradise may eventually be built. Wells is one of the great figures of modern literature. His works are the Time Machine, The First Men in the Moon, The War of the Worlds, The Invisible Man, When the Sleeper Awakes and The Food of the Gods. Wells sometimes described himself as a "Utopiographer". He was always planning worlds in which science had achieved its last victories over religion and superstition, in which reason reigned, in which everybody was healthy, clean, happy, and enlightened. Wells tackles the major social problems. In Ann Veronica we have the theme of woman's new equal status with men; in Joan and Peter education is examined; in The New Machiavelli we have his philosophy of politics. These works remain novels.

John Galsworthy (1867-1933) came of a well-to-do bourgeois family; after graduating from Oxford University he became a lawyer, but soon left this occupation for the sake of literature. He began to write in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup>, but his first works were not very important. In some of his works we can find a reflection of the opposition of the progressive-minded people to imperialism, to the wars... He is best known for his Forsyte Saga, a series of six novels which trace the story of a typically English upper-class family from Victorian days to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Forsyte Saga seems to develop a sympathy for the hero of The Man of Property, Soames Forsyte, the epitome of the money-seeking class which he detests. This work is still widely read.

Hugh Walpole (1884-1941) also wrote a saga – The Herries Chronicle. His best work is Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill. It is a story of rivalry between two school-masters.

Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) brought a new quality into the novel. Conrad was a Pole, but born in the Ukraine, in love with the sea from an early age. This led him eventually to a British merchant ship. He produced his 1<sup>st</sup> novel at the age of 40. He normally writes of the sea, of the Eastern Islands, of the English character. His handling of English is distinctive. His

best novels are Lord Jim, Youth, Typhoon, The Nigger of the Narcissus, the Secret Agent.

G.K Chesterton (1874-1936) and Hillaire Belloc (1870-1953) are other great writers. Chesterton is the single of a joyful, beer-drinking, colour-loving spirituality. His vigour is infectious and his love of paradox and fun is sometimes a little tiresome. He wanted to shock his audience into a realization of how dull their lives were without faith. His novels are excellent, especially The Man Who was Thursday and The Flying Inn. Belloc seems a less forceful figure than Chesterton. He was French.

Verse generally, did not flourish in England of the early modern period.

## **Chapter 21**

### **TO THE PRESENT DAY**

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has been much concerned with finding something to believe in, just like in the last 20 years of the Victorian era. But whereas the 1<sup>st</sup> of our moderns were satisfied with their hedonism or liberalism or medievalism, the later age has demanded something deeper – it has wanted the sense of a continuous tradition, the sense of being involved in a civilization. An artist has to have subject-matter – a civilization, a religion, a myth, and the emotions of people who belong to these things, but it should not have to be the artist's job to create his subject-matter – it should be ready, waiting.

Americans are sick of two aspects of American life – Puritanism and materialism. They found a myth in the continuity of European culture. Henry James (1843-1916) was an American, born in New York, educated at Harvard, a member of a great American family. He felt that his spiritual home was Europe. His most significant novels – beginning with The American and the ending with The Ambassadors and The Golden Bowl deal with the theme of the impact of Europe on visiting Americans; the Americans feel themselves uncivilized, young, inexperienced, and Europe seems so old, wise and beautiful.

The Americans of The Ambassadors are bewitched by a civilization almost against their will. Ezra Pound (1855-?) and Thomas Stearns Eliot

(1888-?), both Americans, made their homes in Europe. Both have seemed concerned with trying to converse what is best in European culture before European civilization is finally destroyed. Eliot produced in 1922 an epoch-making poem of some 400 lines. His "The Waste Land" set out in a new poetical technique a picture of a materialistic age dying of lack of belief in anything. The Waste Land is a closely organized poem, and not a word is wasted: it repays the trouble spent on it.

In 1922 there appeared an important work in prose which sometimes sounds like verse. This was *Ulysses*, written by the Irishman James Joyce (1882-1941). It is a novel of enormous length dealing with the events of a single day in the life of a single town – the author's native Dublin. It is the most carefully written novel of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce tried to present the whole of human history as a dream in the mind of a Dublin inn-keeper.

One reaction against the Liberalism of Wells and Shaw was to be found in the novels and poems of the Englishman David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930). His novels are *Sons and Lovers*, *The Plumed Serpent*, *Aaron's Rod* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. These works are concerned with the relationship between man and woman, and he seems to regard this relationship as the great source of vitality and integration.

Often associated with Lawrence is Aldous Huxley (1894-?). His novel – *Antic Hay*, *Those Barren Leaves*, and *Point Counter Point*, showed a world without aim or direction and offered no solution to the puzzle of a meaningless existence. Huxley found a faith in brotherly love and in non-violence.

Graham Greene (1904-?) has been obsessed with the problem of good and evil, and his books are a curious compound of theology and stark modern realism. In his last work *The End of the Affair*, he shows a concern with paradox of the man or woman who is really a saint. His *Quiet American* deals with the Indo-China War and turns to a moral theme – entertainments.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has been the great age for women novelists. Virginia Woolf is the most important. All her novels deal with family relationships, all her settings are upper middle-class homes in the late Victorian period, and character is revealed through endless dialogue.

Among those novelists – senior novelists is William Somerset Maugham (1874-?). He has told good stories. He is the mere observer who refuses to be too deeply involved in humanity. His alleged masterpiece – *Of Human Bondage* – is distinguished by clumsy prose. His wittiest and warmest book is *Cake and Ale*. It is a story of an eminent novelist who has a humble background. He is best as a writer of short stories. Some novelists found their subject-matter in modern political ideologies. One of them was George Orwell (1904-1950). Politics provided an inspiration for poets, too. Auden (1907-?) has produced *New Year Letter*, *For the Time Being*, *The Age of Anxiety*.

## **Chapter 22**

### **LITERATURE OF THE 1970-1980 S.**

Literature of the Great Britain today reflects all the conflicts of the society, such as the complicated international situation and the sharp social political conflicts, the “mass culture” movement and the opposition to this movement etc.

All these can be noted clearly in the works of Graham Greene: *Getting to Know the General: the Story of Involvement* (1984). This novel is dedicated to the president of Panama. Greene gives a colorful description of the President and his belief in the struggle for liberation. He also shows the selfless love of the people for the President.

Margaret Drabble (1939-..) must be mentioned when speaking of the literature of the 80s. Her works *The Garrick Year* (1966); *The Waterfall* (1969), *The Realms of Gold* (1975), *The Ice Age* (1976) and others are dedicated to woman, her place in the family and society, her insecurity in the world.

Another well-known writer is Susan Hill (1942). Her novels *A Bird Of Night* (1972), *A Bit of Singing and Dancing* (1973) are characterized by her keen interest in the inner world of man. Susan Hill's prose is psychological, lyrical and reticent.

The problem of reflecting the inner world of people is one that troubles not only realistic writers, but also modernists, including John Fowels (1926). One of the peculiarities of Fowels is that he always tries to separate his main character from his environment.

There are so many other new names appearing in the literary arena of England that we cannot mention them at a time./.

## QUESTIONS

1. What is literature ? What are its branches and forms?
2. What is English literature ? Does history or geography seem more important to an English writer ? Prove it.
3. What are the features of the early literature of the Anglo-Saxons ? Say about BEOWULF.
4. What happened to the country when the Danes invaded England ? Is King Alfred an important figure in English literature ? Why ?
5. What do you know about religious and non-religious work in middle English ?
6. Speak about Geoffrey Chaucer.
7. Speak about William Caxton.
8. What is a Ballad ? Tell about “The Nut-brown Maid”.
9. What do you know about the English Bible?
10. What is drama ? What was the first drama based on?
11. What do you know about the Morality tradition ? Speak about “Everyman”.
12. Speak about the differences between the Greek and the Shakespearean conceptions of tragedy ?
13. How does Elizabethan drama begin ?
14. Which name had considerable influence on Elizabethan dramatists ? How ?
15. Speak about William Shakespeare.
16. Speak about Ben Jonson.
17. What play written by T. Heywood do you know ? Say about it.
18. How much do you know about the Tudor Prose ? Say about Thomas More and his “Utopia”.
19. What about the Tudor poetry ? How were Edmund Spenser and John Donne different from each other ?
20. What great changes took place in English life and thought after Shakespeare’s death?



21. Speak about John Milton.
22. What's the main characteristic of the literature of the Age of Dryden ?  
Speak about John Dryden ?
23. Say about England in the Age of Reason and the greatest poet of this period.
24. Speak about Daniel Defoe.
25. Speak about Jonathan Swift.
26. Who seems to dominate the whole of the Augustan Age ? Say about him.
27. When did the Romantic movement begin in literature ? In English literature ? Say about W. Wordsworth and S.T. Coleridge.
28. How well do you know about Walter Scott ?
29. Say about the Victorian Age and Victorian literature (and T. Carlyle and J. Ruskin).
30. Speak about Charles Dickens. Compare him with W.M. Thackeray.
31. Which writers are 3 sisters you know ? Say more about their novels you've known/read.
32. Who's the last of the novelists of the Victorian Age ? Say about him.
33. G.B. Shaw made a revolution in the English theatre: Prove it. Which of his plays have you known/heard ?
34. How can 1880-1914 literature be characterized ? What possible substitutes for religion were there you know?
35. Speak about one of the writers in the early modern age you like best.

**FACES OF**  
**ENGLISH AUTHORS**  
**GEOFFREY CHAUCER**  
**( 1340 – 1400 )**

Geoffrey Chaucer was the greatest writer of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in London in the family of a wine merchant. From the age of 18 he was connected with the Court of the King of England. During his life he visited France and Italy several times. In Italy he got acquainted with the works of Dante, Petrarch and Bocca-cchio. What they wrote was full of new, optimistic ideas and loves of life and had a great influence on his future works, the most important of which was the Canterbury Tales.

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**  
**( 1564 – 1616 )**

The great English playwright and poet William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 in the small town of Stratford-upon-Avon, about seventy-five miles from London. He was the son of the tradesman. When a boy, he went to Stratford Grammar School, where Latin and Greek were almost the only subjects. Life itself, contact with people and his acquaintance with the rich English folklore gave him more than the scholastic methods used at school. In those days Stratford-upon-Avon was often visited by traveling groups of actors. It is quite possible that Shakespeare saw some plays performed by such actors and was impressed by them.

Shakespeare lived in Stratford-upon-Avon until he was twenty-one. By that time he was married and had three children. At twenty-one he left Stratford-upon-Avon for London where he joined a theatrical company and worked as an actor and a playwright.

In the late 90s a new theatre called *The Globe* was built on the bank of the Thames. Shakespeare became one of its owners. The people of London liked it better than any other theatre. It was in *The Globe* that most of Shakespeare's plays were staged at that time.

In 1613 Shakespeare left London and returned to his native town of Stratford-upon-Avon. Three years later, on April 23, 1616, he died and was buried there.

Shakespeare is the author of 2 poems, 37 plays and 154 sonnets. His creative work is usually divided into three periods.

The first period that lasted from 1590 to 1600 was marked by the optimism so characteristic of all humanist literature. It is best reflected in his nine brilliant comedies:

***The Comedy of Errors (1592), The Taming of the Shrew (1593), The Two Gentlemen of Verona (1594), Love's Labour's Lost (1594), A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595), Much Ado About Nothing (1598) and so on.***

## **DANIEL DEFOE**

**( 1660 – 1731 )**

Daniel Defoe is rightly considered the father of the English and the European novel, for it was due to him that the genre became once and for ever established in European literature.

Daniel Defoe's life was complicated and adventurous. He was the son of a London butcher whose name was Foe, to which Daniel later added the prefix De. He sometimes used it separately giving his name a French sound. His father, being a puritan, wanted his son to become a priest. Daniel was educated at theological school. However, he never became a priest, for he looked for another business to apply his abilities to. He became a merchant, first in wine, then in hosiery. He traveled in Spain, Germany, France and Italy on business. Though his travels were few they, however, gave him, a man of rich imagination, material for his future novels. Foe's business was not very successful and he went bankrupt more than once.

He took an active part in the political life of Britain. In 1685 he participated in the Duke of Monmouth's revolt against James II. The rebellion was defeated in a compromise of these aristocracy and the bourgeoisie and resulted in a compromise of these two classes. After this

defeat, Defoe had to hide himself for some time. When the Dutchman William of Orange came to throne of England in 1688, Defoe was among his most active supporters. After years of political ups and downs, including imprisonment for his attacks against the Church, he died at the age of 71 having written numerous works.

## **JONATHAN SWIFT**

**( 1667 – 1745 )**

The greatest satirist in the history of English literature Jonathan Swift was the contemporary of Steele, Addison, Defoe and other English enlighteners of the early period. However, he stood apart from them, for while they supported the bourgeois order, Swift, by criticizing different aspects of the bourgeois life came to the negation of the bourgeois society. Lunacharsky called Swift one of the first critics of bourgeois system and capitalist reality.

Jonathan Swift was born on November 30, 1667 in Dublin in an English family. His father died seven months before Jonathan's birth leaving his family in poverty. Jonathan was brought up by his prosperous uncle Godwin Swift who sent him to school and then to Trinity College in Dublin. There he studied theology and later became a clergyman. His favorite subjects, however, were not theology but literature, history and language. At 21 Swift went to live in England and became a private secretary of distant relative, Sir William Temple, a writer and a well-known diplomat of the time. At Moor Park, Sir William estate, Swift made friends with Hester Jonson, the daughter of one of Temple's servants, fourteen years his junior. Hester, or Stella as Swift poetically called her, remained his faithful friend through all his life. His letters to her, written in 1710-1713, were later published in the form of a book under the title of *Journal Stella*.

During the two years at Moor Park, Swift read and studied much and in 1692 he took his Master of Arts Degree at Oxford University. With the help of Sir William, Swift got the place of vicar in a small church in Kilroot (Ireland) where he stayed for a year and a half. Then he came back to Moor Park and lived there till Sir William's death in 1698.

## **ROBERT BERNES**

**( 1759 – 1796 )**

Robert Burns was born on January 25, 1759, in a clay-built cottage near the river Doon on Alloway, Ayrshire (Scotland). His father William Burns was a gardener on a small estate. The life of the family was full of the privations. Here is what Robert's brother Gilbert said later about the early years of the poet : "We live sparingly. For several years meat was a stranger in the house, while all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength and beyond it in the labors of the farm. My mother (Robert) at the age of twelve, threshed the corn crop, and at fifteen was the principal laborer on the farm...".

When Robert was seven, their father decided to give his children to the best education he could afford and engaged a teacher to educate them. John Murdoch, an eighteen year-old scholar, was a very enthusiastic teacher. He taught Robert, who was his favorite, many subjects, French and literature among them. However, Robert could not afford much time for his studies. His father wanted to try his hand at farming and Robert had to help him on the farm. At the age of thirteen he had to take over most of the works as his father was growing old.

Robert's mother, Agnes Brown, was fond of old popular songs and ballads. She knew many and often sang them. From her Robert inherited the love for folklore. Later he remembered and used in his works the songs and the stories he had heard at home. Burns wrote his first verses when he was fifteen. Very soon his poems, verses and, especially, his witty epigrams became popular among his friends and acquaintances. In 1785 he met a girl, who became the great love of all his life and the inspirer of his numerous lyrical verses. Jean had a wonderful voice and knew a lot of old melodies to which Burns composed his songs.

The hard daily work on the farm, the constant starvation and privations finally undermined Burns' health. On July 21, 1796, at the age of 37, Burns died. His body rests in Mausoleum in Dumfries. The house in Alloway, where he was born, has now been restored. Every year thousands of people from all over the world come here to pay homage to the great poet.

Robert Burns' poetry was inspired by his deep love for his motherland, for its history and folklore. His beautiful poem *My Heart's in the Highlands* full of vivid colorful descriptions, is a hymn to the beauty of the Scotland's nature and to its glorious past.

## WALTER SCOTT

( 1771 – 1832 )

The name of Walter Scott is closely connected with the genre of historical novel which he introduced into English literature.

Walter Scott was the son of a well-to-do Edinburgh lawyer who wanted to study law. However, his great interest in history and passionate love for his country changed the course of his life. The wealth of Scottish folklore attracted his attention. He collected the legends and popular ballads of Scotland and published them under the title of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

Up to 1814 he wrote poems on legendary and historical subjects and became quite famous as a poet. In 1814 he published his first historical novel *Waverley*; it was a success and from then on Walter Scott dedicated himself entirely to prose, mostly to writing historical novels; he wrote twenty-nine novels in all. The historical events that attracted his attention were those connected with the relations between Scotland and England. For many centuries England, that was socially and economically more developed than Scotland, had oppressed the freedom-loving people of its northern neighbor. The English were often helped by the Scotch bourgeoisie.

Of the twenty-nine novels written by Scott, nineteen are on Scotch subjects. The periods chosen by the author are the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Among these books are *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*. Walter Scott understood the important role the common people played in the historical development of a country. In many of his novels he chose the common men of Scotland for his heroes – those brave, against England's oppression.

Scott wrote six historical novels about England; the periods he chose, were the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, or the Norman Conquest, the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Here he wrote about the English Bourgeois Revolution and about the Restoration period that followed it. Among these novels are *Ivanhoe*, *The Abbot* and others. The subjects are at times connected with Scotland, for the two countries are very close in their historical development. Thus, in *The*

*Abbot* Walter Scott describes one of the episodes of the tragic life of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Four of Scott's twenty-nine novels are written in different subjects. Among them is *Queen in Durward* in which the writer gives an interesting portrait of King Luis XI of France. This King was one of the Most cunning politicians of his time.

## GEORGE GORDON BYRON

( 1788 – 1824 )

One of the great poets of England was the revolutionary romancist George Gordon Byron. He was born on January 22, 1788 in London, in an old aristocratic, but poor family. The boy spent his childhood in Scotland, with his mother. At the age of ten Byron returned to England, as heir to the title of Lord and the family of castle of Newstead Abbey. It was situated near Nottingham, close to the famous Sherwood forest. He went to school to Harrow, then to Cambridge University. When he was 21 he became a member of the House of Lords. In 1809 he traveled abroad, visiting Portugal, Spain, Albania, Greece and Turkey. He returned home in 1812.

In 1812 Byron delivered his speeches in House of Lords. His first speech was in defense of the Luddites. Later he spoke on favor of the oppressed Irish people. In his speeches Byron showed himself a defender of the peoples cause, and that made the reactionary circle hate him. When after unhappy marriage in 1812, he and his wife parted, his enemies in the governing circles seized this opportunity and began to persecute him. The great poet was accused of immorality and had to leave his native country.

In May 1816 Byron went to Switzerland where he made friends with the poet Percy B. Shelly, his great contemporary. Their friendship was based on the similarity of their political convictions. Both of them hated oppression and stood for the liberty of nations.

At the end of 1816 Byron continued his voyage and went to Italy, where he lived till 1823. There he became actively engaged in the Carbonari movement against Austrian rule, for the liberation of Italy. The defeat of the Carbonari uprising (1821) was a heavy blow to the great fight for liberty. In the summer of 1823 he went off to Greece to fight for liberation from

Turkish oppression. There, on April 19, 1824, Byron died of a fever. The Greeks, who considered him their national hero, buried his heart in their country and declared national mourning for him. His body was brought to England where it was buried near Newstead Abbey. In 1969 the authorities finally allowed his remains to be buried in the “Poets’ Corner” in Westminster Abbey.

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

( 1811 – 1863 )

W.M. Thackeray was born on Calcutta, India, in the family of an English official of high standing. Contrary to Charles Dickens, Thackeray had a very good education both at school and at Cambridge University. The future writer wanted to be an artist and went to Europe to study art. For some time he lived among the artistic circles of Paris. Later, when he returned to London, he learned that he had lost all his money, for the bank where it was deposited had gone bankrupt. Thus, he had to earn his living. He began sketches, but was not very successful. He started writing satirical and humorous stories and essays. Later he wrote novels and delivered lectures.

Thackeray wrote in the same year and under the same political conditions as his contemporary Dickens did. Together they’re better appreciated that apart; they present the life of their period more completely together. Dickens usually chose for his main character the “little” man with his troubles and difficulties. Thackeray directed satire against representatives of the upper classes of society, whom he knew better. Dickens was inclined to look for a happy solution that smoothed over existing contradictions. Thackeray, on the contrary, was merciless in his satirical attacks on the ruling classes. He considered that art should be a real mirror of life. He showed bourgeois society and its vices without softening their description. In this approach to art he was the follower of the great satirist of the Enlightenment, Jonathan Swift.

Thackeray’s most outstanding works are *The Book of Snobs* (under this title he published a collection of satirical essays) that appeared in 1846 – 1847 and his novel *Vanity Fair* (1847 – 1848).



## **CHARLES DICKENS**

**( 1812 – 1870 )**

Charles Dickens was born in Landsport, a small town near the sea, in a middle-class family. His father was a clerk in a navy office; he earned a small salary there and usually spent more than he earned. As a result of such living he was thrown into the debtors' prison when Charles was only ten. At that age the boy went to work at a factory, that was like a dark, damp cellar. There he stuck labels on bottles of shoeblacking all day long, for few pennies.

Later the boy went to school for three years and after that, from the age of 15, he went to work in a lawyer's office. He continued to educate himself, mainly by reading books. At the age of 18 he became a reporter of Parliament. Here he got acquainted with the politics of his country and never had a very high opinion of them afterwards.

In 1833 he began to write his first short stories about London life. In 1836 those stories were published in a book, under the title of *Sketches by Boz*; Boz was the pen-name with which he signed his first work.

In 1837 Dickens became well-known to the English reader. His first big work appeared, written in installments for a magazine at first, and later published in a book form. It was *The Posthumous Paper of the Pickwick club*. From then on, Dickens was one of the best known and loved writers of his day.

## **OSCAR WILDE**

**( 1854 – 1900 )**

Oscar Wilde was the most outstanding representative of Decadence. He was the son of a well-known Irish physician. In his youth he was very much influenced by his mother, who was a highly educated woman. She wrote poetry and was an ardent Irish patriot. Her scornful attitude towards the hypocrisy of British bourgeois morals was probably responsible for the disrespect that characterized Wilde's approach towards bourgeois customs and habits.

Wilde's youth coincided with the increasing crisis of bourgeois culture and heyday of Aestheticism. The vulgarity of bourgeois life in general, the money-making fever of bourgeoisie, its hypocritical approach to moral standards, all this made the young man turn to movement of the day – aestheticism. Attracted by its search for beauty and its motto “Art for Art's Sake”, Wilde became an avowed aesthete and was very soon considered the leading figure of the movement.

When Oscar Wilde turned to writing plays, he took up a new theme. He criticized the upper classes and gave satirical pictures of these classes, that were ruled by the love of power and money. The most outstanding of those plays is *An Ideal Husband* (1895), in which the author discloses the dirty machinations in the business and political circles of England. The figure of Sir Robert Chiltern is very convincing. He is an outstanding statesman, who enjoys the love of his wife and everybody's respect, because he is good, honest, and correct in his political activities. It turns out that impeccable statesman had begun his career of a politician and started his fortune by selling a state secret. Wilde brands the corruption that exists in the world of business. However, the criticism is mild, everything is settled in favor of the main character.

## **GEORGE BERNARD SHAW**

**( 1856 – 1950 )**

George Bernard Shaw was an Irishman. He was born in Dublin (Ireland) in a middle-class bourgeois family. At an early age he left Ireland and went to London to earn his living. He wrote later that he was then a simple proletarian. That's why, when he began to be interested in politics, he joined one of the socialist organizations that existed at that time. So he used to say “I became socialist and am proud of it”. It is true that his socialism was rather passive, like that of Galsworthy and Wells. He considered reform to be the main way of reorganizing society.

Shaw was always very active in social and political life of his country and saw very clearly where the evil in society lay. When World War II broke out, he stressed that the enemies of mankind were neither Germany nor Great Britain, but imperialism. He was among the first of the English

intellectual to welcome the Great October Socialist Revolution and remain a sincere friend of our country.

In 1931 Shaw came to the Soviet Union, where he celebrated his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. His first visit in Moscow was to the Lenin Mausoleum. On his departure he said that he was leaving the country of hope, to return to the country of despair.

Shaw made a revolution in the English theatre with the new ideas he brought into it. He considered that the theatre should rouse people, make them think and suffer. People, he said, should be taught to look at life soberly, intelligently. An oculist had once told him that he had perfectly normal sight, which only about ten percent of all the people of the world had. Shaw liked to add to this that his intellectual eyesight was also normal. That was why he understood things better than most people. He considered it his study to disclose the real state of things that people seldom saw. Therefore, he introduced the so-called “problem” plays in which he set different social problems and tried to solve them through dialogue of his characters. He used to say that his way of joking was to speak the truth. Indeed, many bitter truths were presented to the audience, hidden in playful paradoxes, which were the playwright’s favorite device.

The main theme of Shaw’s plays was, throughout his life, the criticism. With this criticism he began his activity as a playwright in 1892, when his first comedy, *Widower’s House* was written.

## **HERBERT GEORGE WELLS**

**( 1866 – 1946 )**

Herbert G. Wells was born in a family. In his youth he worked very hard, and, at the same time, managed to get an education. He became a biologist and for some time worked as an assistant of a well-known English scientist, a follower of Charles Darwin.

When Wells was quite young he became interested in social problems. He always called himself a socialist, but his socialism was very peculiar. He understood that the world had to be changed; it had to be freed from the anarchy that reigned in capitalist society. At an early age he came to the

atopian conclusion that only scientists and technicians could solve the exciting contradictions. According to Wells it was not revolution, but evolution – through certain reform – that could change the world. And only science and technology could do it.

World War I came as a shock to Wells. He could no longer be sure of peaceful progress. The Great October Socialist Revolution was, in his opinion a social “experiment”. He did not have much faith in it. However, in 1920 he visited our country and was received by V.I. Lenin in Moscow. Vladimir Ilyich’s stress on the importance of science and, especially electrification in the reconstruction of our country, astonished him. During his stay in Russia, Wells saw the devastation of the country. He described his impressions of this visit in his book *Russia in the Shadows* and called V.I. Lenin “the Kremlin dreamer”. Wells, the writer of science fiction, did not possess V.I. Lenin’s ability to imagine the bright future of the country. However, he was always a friend of the Soviet Union.

In Wells’ novels. Science and technology from the background against which the plot of the novel develops. Besides, there is always a very strong social aspect in his works. In this connection Wells always said that he was the follower of Swift’s *Guliver’s Travels*, he pointed out were also based in fantasy. This fantasy served as a basis for social criticism.

His early cycle of science fiction was written from 1895 to 1901. among the works of those years were *The Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The First Men of the Moon* and others. In the novels of this cycle Wells wrote about the destiny if the bourgeois civilization. This was his main social theme.

The later cycle of novels was written after 1901 and up to World War I. In those he meditated on the fate of mankind. Among them were *The War in the Air*, *The World Set free* and others.

After World War I, Wells turned to the genre of social novel. After his trip to the USSR he returned to social fantasies. In these novels he tried to reflect the danger of fascism in his country and in the world.

**JOHN GALSWORTHY**

**( 1867 – 1933 )**

John Galsworthy came of a well-to-do bourgeois family; after graduating from Oxford University he became a lawyer, but soon left this occupation for the sake of literature.

He began to write in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but his first works were not very important. His best novels were written in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In them the reader finds a reflection of the opposition of the progressive-minded people to imperialism, to the Anglo-Boer War adventure of Great Britain.

In 1904 Galsworthy wrote *The Island Pharisees*. In it he attacked the British privileged classes. He criticized the fact that their minds had become inert and lazy.

In 1906 Galsworthy's best novel appeared. It was *The Man of property*. He achieved great heights of generalization in this work. In it he gave the story of the class that dictated its laws to the country – the class of the bourgeoisie.

During the period 1907-1918 Galsworthy turned to different subjects. He wrote many novels and plays. His main subject, however, always remains that of reflecting the social contradictions and trying to find a humanistic solution to them.

## KATHERINE MANSFIELD

( 1888 – 1923 )

Katherine Mansfield was born in Wellington, New Zealand, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, 1888. Her father was a merchant. She received an education first in her own country, then in England. She left for London in 1908 to establish herself as a writer. She was nineteen when she started her literary career with a few sketches.

Her earliest volume, *In a German Pension* (1911), attracted the attention of the critics and the reading public. The background and variety of characters of these stories are almost all based on autobiographical facts.

During the years 1912 – 1914 K. Mansfield wrote stories for two London journals, *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review*. Most of the stories were based on New Zealand material.

The best story published at that time was *A Birthday*, where she speaks about her own family. The story is set in Wellington and the main character Andrew Binzer is a true-to-life portrait of her father. Wellington here is so accurately depicted that one can identify, even today, the actual house in the story.

During the year 1915 Katherine Mansfield wrote two of her best stories, *Something Childish But Very Natural* and *Indiscreet Journey*. Here for the first time Mansfield showed a deep understanding of the inner world of her characters which later became the basis of all her mature work.

By the end of 1917 Mansfield fell ill with tuberculosis but continued to work hard. At the beginning of the 20s her best collection of stories appeared: *Bliss and other Stories* (1920), and *The Garden Party and other Stories* (1922).

In January 1923 K. Mansfield died at the age of 35. Katherine Mansfield was a master of the psychological story. She wrote about the problems that showed the cruelty and hypocrisy of English bourgeois world. From the time of the publication of *Bliss* in 1920, the influence of A. Chekhov on Mansfield's creative work was greatly discussed. Mansfield herself admitted the influence and even called herself "the English Anton Chekhov".

Mansfield's first major theme is woman alone in the world. The stories *Lady's Maid*, *The Life of Ma Parker*, *The Daughters of the Late Colonel* re variations on this theme.

Mansfield's second major theme is children in their relation with one another and with the adults in the family. *Sixpence*, *The Little Girl*, *The Doll's House* and many other stories deal with this subject.

"Children are uncountable little creature", thus Mansfield begins the story *Sixpence* and these works explain her interest and concern about children's souls.

**RICHARD ALDINGTON**

( 1892 – 1962 )

Among the writers of the younger generation who took up traditions of the great critical realists of England was R. Aldington.

Richard Aldington was born in 1892 in Hampshire. He was educated at Dover College and the University of London. In 1913 Aldington was literary editor of the journal *The Egoist*. At that time he also joined the “Bloomshury” group. His poetry, written under the influence of imagism, however, was rather obscure and even meaningless. In 1916, at the age of twenty-four, he joined the Army and fought in World War I as a private in the infantry; later he became an officer. He was demobilized soon, however, for he was badly wounded. For several years he worked at *The Time Literary Supplement* and made his living by writing criticism and translating from Italian and Latin. During this time he managed to publish four volumes of poetry which attracted the attention of the leading literary circles. However, soon he dropped writing verse to devote all the attention to prose.

World War I greatly influenced his world outlook and brought him to regard the duty of the writer in a new light. He broke away from decadence and came to appreciate only those works which were written “out of man’s guts” and showed life as it really was. His hatred of aggressive wars was vividly reflected in his early works. The best examples of these are *Death of a Hero* (1929), novels sound as a warning against the danger of a new war. Aldington’s other important works are: *Images Old and New* (1915), *Very Heaven* (1937).

Aldington did not live much in his own country. His last years were spent in America and France. In 1962 he visited the Soviet Union and was greatly impressed by vital power and energy of the Soviet people. His passionate, truthful, antimilitary novels still live and inspire the readers to struggle against injustice and militarism.

## ARCHIBALD CRONIN

( 1896 – 1980 )

A. Cronin was born in Scotland in a worker’s family. His sympathy for the working class people was later reflected in his works. At school he took great interest in literature. At the age of thirteen he won a gold medal in

a nationwide competition for the best historical essay of the year. But his love for natural science got the upper hand and in 1914 Cronin began to study medicine at Glasgow University. His studies were interrupted by the service in the Navy. After the war, in 1919, he graduated from the University.

In 1921 he began practice in South Wales where he studied the life of the coalminers and their hard work. In 1924 he was appointed Medical Inspector of mines. In 1925 he was awarded the M.D. Honors by the Glasgow University.

The publication of the novel *Hatter's Castle* (1931) marked by the beginning of Cronin's fruitful literary career.

The characters of *Hatter's Castle*, Mr. Brodie, the main personage of the novel, in particular, are shown in more of a naturalistic than realistic way. The author neither analyses the social reason for the appearance of such people as Brodie, nor does he show anything of what he feels towards the characters and events depicted in his novels.

His book *The Stars Look Down* presents an entirely different approach to reality. Cronin shows the relations between the miners and their masters.

The major conflict of the book is, as Cronin puts it, a social struggle that arises from the clash of "two nations". The author's satire is directed against the ruling classes. The injustice of the existing order, the social contradictions, unavoidable in the capitalist society, are well disclosed. Cronin also realistically depicts the hard struggle the miners carry on against the pit-owners.

## **GRAHAM GREENE**

**( B – 1904 )**

Graham Greene was born at Berkhamsted, near London. His father, Charles Henry Greene, was headmaster of a local Church school. Graham Greene was a catholic and this strongly influenced the views of the writer since his very childhood.



Graham Greene was educated in Oxford. From 1926 to 1930 he was sub-editor of the London *Time*. He traveled a good deal in Mexico, which later became a scene of many of his novels. Greene started writing in the late 20s. he wrote a lot of short stories, critical essays, travel books and plays.

Since the beginning of his literary career, Greene has been writing along two lines – the so-called “serious novels” and the “entertaining novels”. While the former are generally a meditation on the psychology of man, the latter are more of the detective type of novel. The group of “serious novels” is represented by *The Man Within* (1929), *England Made Me* (1935), *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), *The Quiet American* (1955), *A Burnt-Out Case* (1961) and others.

The “entertaining novels” are: *Stamboul Train* (1932), *A Gun for Sale* (1936), *The confidential Agent* (1938), *Loser Takes All* (1955), *The Ministry of Fear* (1968) and others.

The border line between these two groups is, however, vague because the former are often constructed along detective or adventure lines while the latter present serious problems.

Greene’s novels touch on the burning political issues of the day – the American war in Vietnam in *The Quiet American*, racism in South Africa in *The Human Factor* (1978), the people’s struggle against the reactionary dictatorship in Haiti in *The Comedians* (1966) and so on. The social and political events serve as a background against which problems of ethical character are solved. Greene’s novels present a profound research into depths of human psychology and are permeated with philosophical meditations of the nature of man and human predicament.

The major conflict in several of his novels occurs between believers; who live according to the law of the Church and unbelievers. And yet Greene avoids the easy solution that the believer will be saved and unbeliever damned. He tries to find a way to reconcile these opposite views, which at the early period of his writing was its weakest point.

**CHARLES PERCY SNOW**

### ( 1905 – 1980 )

C.P. Snow belongs to the greatest critical realists of contemporary England. He was born in Leicester in 1905, the second of four sons. Snow's father was a clerk in a shoe factory. Charles was educated in Alderman Newton Grammar School, where, in the sixth form he specialized in science. Later he wrote as a laboratory assistant at the same school, while studying for a university scholarship. At Leicester University College in 1927 he took a First Class Honors degree in Chemistry. After that he worked on molecular physics and became a Fellow of Christ's College in 1930. When World War II broke out, Snow joined the Civil Service. He was thus brought into public affairs.

When the war was over, Snow was made Civil Service Commissioner and was engaged in selecting scientific personnel.

Alongside with his public activities Snow dedicated himself to literature. His first novel was a detective story *Death Under Sail* (1932).

Literary fame came to Snow when in 1940 he started publishing a series of novels under general title of *Strangers and Brothers*.

## WILLIAM GOLDING

### ( 1911 – B )

William Golding denies any links with existentialism, yet his ideas are close to it. His works are complicated, they are full of implication. In them modernistic elements go side with realistic ones, concrete pictures alternate with allegorical images. Golding himself called his novels fables, thus stressing their didactic nature. His aim, according to the writer, is to record dark that he sees around, to show people the dark abyss into which they are, or may be thrown, to warn them against it and, if possible, to change life.

William Golding was born in 1911 in Cornwall. He graduated from Oxford University. During World War II he served in the British Navy; later he worked as a school teacher in the town of Salisbury. The atrocities of fascists, the horror of the war made him think of the nature of man and the future of mankind. All his novels, in one way or another, raise the problem of good and evil in man and society.

This problem has occupied people's thoughts for a long time. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophers and writers thought that man was born good and virtuous and it was the ugly environment that could sometimes spoil him. Yet they believe in the ability of man's reason to defeat evil. The complicated atmosphere of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the two world wars, the moral crisis of the bourgeois society, violence, criminality, characteristic of the modern capitalist world led some people, Golding among them, to see the cause of evil in man's nature. In his commentary to the novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954), Golding wrote "He who has passed through the year of fascist violence and had not realized that Evil is inherent in man is either blind or insane". As he was unable to see the social roots of evil, Golding, like many others, came to the pessimistic conclusion that evil was inherent in man, that man was born with a disposition to egoism, greed and violence.

## **JAMES ALDRIDGE**

**( 1918 – B )**

James Aldridge was born in 1918 in Australia. His father was an editor of the local newspaper. James started working early, first as a messenger boy, then as a correspondent of various Melbourne paper. His youth passed in the stormy years of the economic crisis of the 30s. the economic depression affected his family which could hardly make both ends meet. Aldridge's thirst for knowledge was strong, however, so he managed to graduate from Oxford University. Later he started his career as a London journalist. The civil war in Spain had a great effect on the ideological formation of Aldridge, the antifascist. He wanted to help the Spanish people in their struggle; therefore he finished a pilot's school so as to volunteer for the front. Despite all his attempts, he was strictly prohibited to do so by the English Government.

During World War II he was a correspondent in many countries and on many fronts. This helped him to understand that the popular masses are the decisive force of history. The tragic fate of Greece, sold out by its government to the fascist occupants, was of special interest to young Aldridge. He greatly sympathized with the ardent desire of the Greek patriots to set their country free.

His first novel *Signed with Their Honor* (1943) was followed by *The Sea Eagle* (1944). Both are dedicated to the struggle of the Greek people against fascist Italy and Germany.

## ALAN SILITOE

( B – 1928 )

Alan Sillitoe was born in Nottingham in the family of a worker. His childhood coincided with the hungry 30s. Alan had to leave school very early and at the age of fourteen he began to work at bicycle factory. At the age of twenty he joined the Army and spent two years in Malaya. There he fell ill and was sent to hospital, where he started writing and made a draft version of his first work and some notes of the novel *Key to the Door*.

Sillitoe's first novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) is a simple story about the life of the majority of the English working class of the period of relative prosperity. The author does not idealize his hero. Arthur Seaton does not worry about high matter of urgent world problems. His motto "I am all right, Jack" clearly speaks about his view and ideals. His pay is quite sufficient but his pastimes are rather dull, for they are mostly limited to drinking. He understands that his life is being wasted, but he makes no attempt to change it. The increasing difficulty of everyday life, brought about by the labor conditions that become harder from day to day, finally makes Arthur angry and dissatisfied. He begins to protest against hard labor and the Government, but young Seaton only instinctively hates the enemies of the working class. His protest is aimless as he only speaks and does not act. This protest, expressed exclusively in words, is the typical feature of all the main characters of the working class novel.

## JOHN OSBORNE

( B – 1929 )

John Osborne was the initiator of the new trend in drama. His play *Look back in Anger* (1956) not only presented a typical "angry" character but also laid foundation of the new English drama, which was later called the "New Wave Drama".

John Osborne was born in a suburb of London. He lived with his family until the early of the war. Osborne received an education in a boarding school in the West of England. He left school at the age of 16 and worked for a short while as a journalist. Then, quite by chance, he went on the stage. For some time he acted in different provincial theatres. In the early 50s he was invited to become a member of the English Stage Company in London. This company later staged his play ***Look Back in Anger***.

In 1956 John Osborne became a playwright; since then he has written a number of plays, such as: ***The Entertainer*** (1957), ***The World of Paul Slickey*** (1959), ***Inadmissible Evidence*** (1964) and many others. In them he satirises the foundations of the British capitalist society, its laws and traditions.

One of his latest plays – *A Sense of Detachment* (1973) – tells of the tragic fate of an artist in the bourgeois world. Osborne is known to have said once: “I do not like the society I live in. The more I know the less I like it... I am sure the theatre can become a decisive weapon of our time”. These words convey the great role which the playwright ascribes to art, to the drama in particular.

## **LIST OF LITERARY TERMS**