CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTEMPORARY POETS IN ENGLAND, FRANCE,	PAGE
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	xli
CHAPTER I	
INTRODUCTORY—THE SCOPE AND NATURE OF THE SUBJECT	1
CHAPTER II	
THE CHARACTER AND SOURCES OF MEDIÆVAL POETRY .	11
CHAPTER III	
THE POETRY OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS	79
CHAPTER IV	
Anglo-Norman Poetry and its Influence on English	
VERSE	112
CHAPTER V	
THE EARLY RENAISSANCE: ITS EFFECTS ON LITERATURE	
IN ITALY, FRANCE, AND ENGLAND	152
CHAPTER VI	
LANGLAND	200
CHAPTER VII	
CHAUCER . ,	247

CHAPTER VIII	
THE EPICAL SCHOOL OF CHAUCER-GOWER, LYDGATE,	PAGE
OCCLEVE	302
CHAPTER IX	
THE PROGRESS OF ALLEGORY IN ENGLISH POETRY	341
CHAPTER X	
THE RISE OF THE DRAMA IN ENGLAND	393
CHAPTER XI	
THE DECAY OF ENGLISH MINSTRELSY	426
CHAPTER XII	
A RETROSPECT	<i>1</i> 60

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

The Scope of the Subject.

English Poetry the reflection not simply of the imagination of individual poets, but of the inward life of the nation.

English Poetry the product of (1) National Character and Institutions, (2) Ecclesiastical Education, (3) Ancient Civilisation.

The Poetry of Chaucer the fitting starting-point of the History.

Difficulty of tracing the History of English Poetry backward beyond Chaucer.

Since the Poetry of Chaucer has no connection with the Poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, it follows that Chaucer's originals must be looked for through the line of Education and Ancient Civilisation.

A sketch of the plan of the History.

The Method of Criticism to be employed.

CHAPTER II

The composite character of Chaucer's Poetry due to the character of the Middle Ages.

No real breach of continuity between the Civilisation of the Ancient World and the Civilisation of Modern Europe.

The changes in the continuous imaginative life of the Western World to be explained by (1) The Decline of the Civic Spirit under the Roman Empire, and the corresponding decay of Classic Taste, (2) The Transformation of the system of Imperial Education by the Latin Church, (3) The Rise of a New Mythology among the nations embraced within the system of Latin Christianity, (4) The influence of Feudal Institutions, Scholastic Logic, Oriental Culture.

I. THE DECLINE OF CIVIC LIBERTY AND CLASSIC TASTE

The πολιτική παιδεία, in the Greek and Roman Republics, the natural product of political liberty.

The έγκύκλιος παιδεία, the accompaniment of Imperial despotism.

The greatest literary works of Greece and Rome the fruits of the πολιτική παιδεία.

The literature of the Roman Empire, a reflection of the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία: its decadence and corruption.

II. THE TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH SCHOOLS

The Church takes over from the Empire the duty of providing for public instruction, and the encyclopædic system of education.

The School of Tertullian prevails over the School of Origen in determining the principle of Church Education; the objection to the study of grammar.

Counter influences in Church Education.

The Compromise: illustrated by Alcuin's Poem in the Library at York Final character of the Educational System of the Middle Ages.

III. THE RISE OF A NEW MYTHOLOGY

Mythology, the parent of Poetry.

The essential difference between Pagan and Christian Mythology as shown in (1) The Supernatural Machinery of Poetry, (2) The Character of Heroic Legend.

The gods in Greek literature the offspring of Polytheism and Oral Tradition.

The supernatural agents in Modern Poetry derived from Dualism and Imagination operating on the text of Scripture: Metamorphosis of Pagan Superstition: The Satanic Legend: Works of the so-called Dionysius the Areopagite: The Gospel of Nicodemus.

The Heroic Legends of Greece the product of the Greek mind.

The Heroic Legends of Mediæval Europe the result of (1) The Decay of Civil History, (2) The Substitution of the Ecclesiastical Chronicle, (3) The Union between the Ecclesiastical Chronicle and the Principle of Romance.

The growth of the Legends of-

- (1) The Destruction of Troy.
- (2) The Wars of Alexander.
- (3) The Deeds of Charlemagne.
- (4) The History of Arthur.

IV. THE INFLUENCE ON POETRY OF FEUDAL INSTITUTIONS, SCHOLASTIC LOGIC, ORIENTAL CULTURE

The Teutonic Scop, the original fountain of Modern Poetry.

Gradual transformation of the character of the Scop from the contact of the barbarians with Latin Civilisation.

Jongleur, Trouvère, Troubadour.

The genealogical song of the Scop branches into the Chanson de Geste, Roman, Lai, Dit, Fabliau.

These varieties of poetry modified to suit the tastes of audiences and readers in the Castle or the Town.

Effects of Scholastic Training on Poets: illustrated from Dante and Chaucer.

Rise of the metrical system of the Romance languages from the decomposition of Latin verse.

Influence of Arabian metrical compositions on the infant poetry of Mediæval Europe.

CHAPTER III

Elements of the English language.

The Anglo-Saxons: their origin, Pagan beliefs, institutions, and system of poetry.

The course of Anglo-Saxon Poetry divided into three stages—(I) The primitive Teutonic pre-Christian compositions; (II) Compositions in which the art of minstrelsy is applied to Scriptural subjects; (III) Compositions in which the influence of Latin ecclesiastical education has prevailed over the Teutonic spirit.

I. THE PRIMITIVE POETRY

The Song of Beowulf.

Wolf's principle of interpretation: how far it is applicable to *Beowulf*. *Beowulf* regarded as illustrating primitive Teutonic life and character. Other forms of pre-Christian poetry.

II. ANGLO-SAXON POEMS IN WHICH THE ART OF MINSTRELSY IS EMPLOYED ON SCRIPTURAL SUBJECTS

Cædmon.

The works ascribed to him: their character and style.

III. LATIN SCHOOL OF POETRY REFLECTING THE ENCYCLOPÆDIC EDUCATION OF THE CHURCH

Cynewulf.

Character of his genius. Influence of Latin poetry of the decadence, and the works of Gregory the Great.

Decay of the inflected forms of the Anglo-Saxon language: traces of Anglo-Saxon rhythms in later English poetry.

CHAPTER IV

The Normans: character of their genius.

STAGES OF ANGLO-NORMAN POETRY

(I) Romances derived from Histories. Robert Wace: his Roman de Rou and Roman de Brut. Benôit de Sainte More: his Roman de Troie.

- (II) Chivalric Romances founded on lays and legends. Influences of (1) Celtic Mythology; (2) the Greek Novel; (3) the moral code of Feudal society.
- (III) Lays of Marie of France.

GRADUAL INFLUENCE OF THE NORMAN FRENCH ON THE ANGLO-SAXON LANGUAGE

Ormin: his metrical homilies; introduction of new metre.

Layamon: his Brut; obligations to Wace; remains of the genius of Anglo-Saxon minstrelsy; decay of the alliterative style.

INFLUENCE OF THE ENCYCLOPÆDIC EDUCATION OF THE CHURCH
IN RECONCILING THE ANGLO-SAXON AND ANGLO-NORMAN
GENIUS

Philip de Thaun: his Computus and Bestiaire. English Bestiary. Moral Ode. Orison to the Virgin Mary. Domesday.

NEW SPIRIT OF OPPOSITION TO THE MONASTIC TRAINING

The Hule and the Nightingale.

Character of the poem; influences visible in it; its style.

UNION OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH IMAGINATION IN THE NORTH AND EAST

William of Wadington: his Manuel des Pechiez.

Genesis and Exodus.

Cursor Mundi: introduction into the Anglo-Saxon monastic style of the Norman principle of Romance.

Robert Mannyng: his *Handlyng Synne*; combination of the tales of the Trouvère with the Homily.

INFLUENCE OF HISTORY IN FUSING THE SAXON AND NORMAN RACES

Robert of Gloucester: his Chronicle; its character and style. Praises of England.

Robert Mannyng: his Chronicle; obligations to Wace and Peter de Langtoft; his intention to write in English for Englishmen; his admiration of Arthur as a national hero; purity and fluency of his style modelled on the French.

CHAPTER V

Uniformity of subject matter in European poetry up to the middle of the

twelfth century to be ascribed to the lingering tradition of the universal Roman empire.

Theory of Church and State in Mediæval Europe.

Illustrated by the Diet of Coblenz in 1338.

Decay of the recognised system of Church and State.

The early "Renaissance."

Ambiguous meaning of the word.

Growth of civil ideas of government through Europe in the midst of the Feudal and Ecclesiastical Systems.

Corresponding growth of national characteristics in the rising literatures of Europe.

International influence of one European literature on another.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY ITALIAN LITERATURE

General tendency of the Italians to regard themselves as citizens of the Roman Empire.

Dante: his scholastic view of the relations of Church and State, and of the relations of the present to the past, illustrated from his writings.

Petrarch: his sympathetic imagination; illusions created in his mind through judging the actual life of the present by the literature of the past.

Boccaccio: his artistic power of adapting the literary productions of antiquity to the circumstances of his own time.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY FRENCH LITERATURE

Natural antagonism of the French Monarchy and Hierarchy to the central power of Emperor and Pope.

Consequent development of the spirit of revolt against established authority both in Church and State.

The absence of any strong central power in France, after the division of the Empire of Charlemagne, develops (1) a peculiar code of manners among the chivalrous aristocracy resident in the castles; (2) the analytic and satiric temper of the university scholar and the bourgeoisie.

Both tendencies are reflected in the Roman de la Rose.

William de Lorris: his unfinished fragment; he embodies the ideas and sentiments of the aristocracy and the Cours d'Amour.

John de Meung: he completes the work of William de Lorris in a satiric spirit, representing the feelings of the scholar and the bourgeois.

Analysis of the Roman de la Rose.

Its remarkable oppositions of principle; its great effect on the imagination both in France and England.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH POETRY IN THE THIRTEENTH AND THE EARLY PART OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Maturity of political ideas in England as compared with the other countries of Europe.

The political spirit of the people reflected in its songs :-

The Song of the Husbandman.

The Fable of the Fox, the Wolf, the Ass, and the Lion.

The Sayings of the Four Wise Men.

The Song against the King's Taxes.

The Song against the Justice of the Law Courts.

The War between the Barons and the King.

The growing national spirit of the people expressed in verse: Laurence Minot: characteristics of his poetry.

No trace of the influence of classical literature visible in the English poetry of this period.

Definition of the sense in which the word "Renaissance" is applied to the English political songs.

CHAPTER VI

Langland compared with Nævius.

He is the last representative of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of poetry, and of the Anglo-Saxon genius trained under the monastic system of the Latin Church.

His great authority with succeeding poets.

Decline of the Papacy and the Feudal System in the fourteenth century.

Corruption of the Monastic Orders; Exhaustion of the Crusades.

External splendour and success of the early part of Edward III.'s reign.

Disasters of the concluding portion; pestilence and storm.

Moral reaction against the corruptions and luxury of the time.

Langland's education, position, and character.

Analysis of the Vision of Piers the Plowman and the Vision of Do-Well, Do-Bet, Do-Best.

Comparison of Langland with Dante.

Langland's conception of society founded partly on the scholastic teaching of the Church, partly on the established order of the Feudal System.

His idea of the structure of temporal power: Oratores, Bellatores, Laboratores.

He conceives the King to have supremacy over the Church, in so far as the clergy offend against the moral law, and to have absolute power to provide for the good of the realm.

His principles of Monarchical Absolutism mitigated by his view of the duties of knighthood.

The duties of Labour lie at the foundation of his conception of Society.

Piers the Plowman at first the type of the honest labourer.

Afterwards idealised as the Redeemer, represented under the figure of a knight.

After the disappearance of the Redeemer from the earth, Piers resumes his ancient employment of ploughman.

Comparison between Dante and Langland: Dante the poetical offspring of the Schoolmen; Langland of the principles of the Montanists, Paulicians, and others.

Langland's use of Allegory compared with that of Dante.

Specimens of his allegorical style.

His adoption of the alliterative system of versification.

Defects of the alliterative system as a metrical instrument in modern English.

CHAPTER VII

Chaucer, the Ennius of English Poetry.

Connects the Poetry of England with the Poetry of the Continent; prepares the way for the Renaissance.

His parentage and personal history.

List of his authentic works.

Viewed as a translator, imitator, and inventor.

I. HIS WORK AS A TRANSLATOR

Translation of the Roman de la Rose.

Translation of Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiæ.

Troilus and Criseyde adapted from Boccaccio's Filostrato.

II. HIS WORK AS AN IMITATOR

The Book of the Duchess.

The Parlement of Foules.

The House of Fame.

The Prologue to the Legend of Good Women.

III. HIS WORK AS AN INVENTOR

The gradual development of the Trouvère: the Fabliau.

Collection of tales: Fables of Bidpai, History of the Seven Wise Masters, Arabian Nights.

Boccaccio: the first to find a framework for a collection of fictitious miscellaneous tales in an episode of real life.

The design of The Canterbury Tales.

Its superiority to the design of all previous collections.

Table showing the sources of the different tales.

Dramatic propriety observed in the distribution of the tales between the different story-tellers.

Direct imitation of Nature.

Chaucer the greatest representative of the Mediæval Epic School in England.

The predecessor of the Elizabethan dramatists.

And of the English satirists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The first European poet of the Middle Ages to revive the classical principle of the direct imitation of Nature.

In this respect the herald of the later Renaissance.

CHAPTER VIII

FAILURE OF CHAUCER'S POETICAL SUCCESSORS TO DEVELOP HIS PRINCIPLES.

Stagnation of poetry in England from the death of Chaucer till the appearance of Surrey.

Mediæval reaction.

These facts explained by the social and political conditions of the times.

GOWER

His relations with Chaucer examined.

His personal history.

His Vox Clamantis.

Analysis of his Confessio Amantis.

Characteristics and merits of his poetical style.

LYDGATE

His personal history and the list of his works.

His relations with Chaucer.

Characteristics of his poetry.

His inharmonious versification; the causes of the speedy degeneration of Chaucer's metrical system.

OCCLEVE

His personal history.

Autobiographical tendency.

His Male Regle, Complaint, and Dialogue.

Characteristics of his style and versification.

CHAPTER IX

THE VARIOUS USES OF ALLEGORY IN THE MIDDLE AGES: HISTORY OF THE STYLE.

- (1) The allegorical method of interpreting Nature and Scripture, illustrated from Dante.
 - (2) The use of the figure of Impersonation.
 - (3) The employment of Allegory as a distinct species of poetical composition. Allegory in Greek literature first referred to by Plato.

Plato's use of it as an aid to the mind in abstract reasoning.

Application of Plato's allegorical method to the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures by Philo Judæus.

And to Greek poetry by the Neo-Platonists.

Extension of the principle to the interpretation of the Christian as well as the Jewish Scriptures by Origen.

Adoption of Origen's method of interpretation by Gregory the Great and establishment in the Christian schools.

Development of the figure of Personification in Latin literature through the Roman genius for abstraction.

Love the most prominent impersonation in Allegory through the influence of Plato.

Allegory extended into a distinct species of Poetry by Prudentius in his Psychomachia.

Chiefly used in classic times in prose compositions, such as the Amor and Psyche of Apuleius, and the Marriage of Mercury with Philology of Martianus Capella.

Allegorical treatment of Love by the Troubadours.

Inquiry into the sources of the Provençal treatment of Love.

ALLEGORICAL POETRY IN ENGLAND OF TWO KINDS, SCHOLASTIC AND CHIVALROUS.

Two subdivisions of the Scholastic Allegory represented by (1) the Vision of Piers the Plowman, (2) The Pearl.

The Pearl a product of the spirit of monastic devotion developed among the Anglo-Saxons.

Its poetical qualities; its archaic style.

The Chivalrous Allegory, a form of composition adapted to the Norman element in the English nation.

Meaning of the word "Love" in the Chivalrous Allegory.

Chaucer the first to introduce the Chivalrous Allegory into English Poetry. His half-ironical treatment of the theme.

Examples of the Chivalrous Allegory furnished by Lydgate's Temple of Glass, The Court of Love, The Kingis Quair.

Analysis and historical significance of each of these poems.

Superannuation of the Chivalrous Allegory with the decay of Feudalism.

RISE OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF ALLEGORY ILLUSTRATED FROM SCOTTISH AND LATER ENGLISH POETRY;

CAUSES OF ITS DEVELOPMENT.

THOMAS HENRYSON

His personal history.

Orpheus and Eurydice.

Testament of Cresseid.

Robene and Makyne.

Moral Fables.

Specimens of his poetry.

WILLIAM DUNBAR

His personal history.

Golden Targe.

Thistle and Rose.

Beauty and the Prisoner.

Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Specimens of his poetry.

GAVIN DOUGLAS

His personal history.

Palace of Honour.

King Hart.

Prologues to the Translation of the Æneid,

Specimens of his poetry.

Continued decline of Allegory in England.

STEPHEN HAWES

His Pastime of Pleasure.

JOHN SKELTON

His personal history.

Dirge of Philip Sparrow.

Bowge of Court.

Garland of Laurel.

Colin Clout.

Tunning of Eleanor Rumming.

Specimens of his poetry.

ALEXANDER BARCLAY

His personal history.

Château de Labour.

Ship of Fools.

Eclogues.

Specimens of his Eclogues.

General Survey of the course of Allegorical Poetry in England.

CHAPTER X

CONNECTION BETWEEN ALLEGORY AND THE DRAMA IN ENGLAND.

Conditions necessary for the development of a national Drama.

Religious origin of the modern Drama.

Early Miracle Plays in England.

Gradual removal of the management of the Drama from the hands of the clergy.

The celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Cycles of Plays arising out of this celebration: York, Wakefield, Chester, Coventry.

Character of the performance of the plays.

Contrast between the development of the Drama in Athens and in England.

Causes which led to the change from the symbolical to the imitative character of the English Drama.

THE YORK PLAYS

Their symbolical and religious spirit.

Dramatic feeling shown in the scenes imitative of everyday life.

Specimens of the play.

THE TOWNELEY PLAYS

Predominance of the spirit of comedy and direct imitation of Nature. Want of taste and self-restraint.

Specimens of the play.

THE COVENTRY PLAYS

Predominance of the symbolical motive. Introduction of Allegorical personages. Specimens of the play.

EXPANSION OF THE FORM OF THE DRAMA EXHIBITED IN THE LATER MIRACLE PLAYS: THE DIGBY MYSTERIES

The Killing of the Children.

Its comic episodes.

Mary Magdalene.

Its crowded incident.

Its allegorical Dramatis Personæ.

Its introduction of extra-Scriptural action.

THE MORALITIES: THEIR CLOSE CONNECTION WITH THE MIRACLE PLAYS

The Castle of Perseverance.

Introduction of a plot and hero.

Allegorical Personages.

Adherence to the constructive tradition of the Miracle Plays.

The Wisdom that is Christ.

Attention to stage scenery.

The World and the Child.

Careful attention to the representation of the moral by means of the plot.

Transformation of traditional characters in the Miracle Play.

Everyman.

Beauty and simplicity of the plot.

Specimen of the style.

Hick-Scorner.

Realistic treatment of Abstract Characters.

Imitation of real life in the Dialogue.

CHAPTER XI

CONNECTION BETWEEN ENGLISH MINSTRELSY AND ENGLISH POETRY. Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.

Percy's main propositions as to the Progress of Minstrelsy and Romance.

Ritson: his character and personal history. Attacks Warton and Percy in his Select Collection of English Songs, and his Ancient English Metrical Romances.

Examination of the nature of the evolution from Minstrelsy to written Poetry.

I. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BARD OR SCOP.

Separation of the Scop's functions through the growing necessities of civilisation.

Influence of Latin culture on the German bard.

Separation between the poetical and instrumental duties of the Scop.

Decline of the oral poets in consequence (1) of writing, (2) of printing.

Maintenance of musicians in Royal Households.

II. THE TRANSFORMATION OF ORAL INTO WRITTEN POETRY.

Variety of poetical compositions arising out of the simple Lied or Lay: Chanson de Geste, Roman, Lai, Fabliau.

Distinction between tales told, and tales sung.

Change of the Teutonic Chanson de Geste by the assimilation of (1) Romantic Latin History, (2) Romantic Celtic Legend, (3) Romance of the Greek Novel.

Benoît de Ste. More.

Chrestien de Troyes.

Character of the earlier mediæval prose Romances based on the metrical Romances of Chrestien de Troyes and others.

Character of the later Prose Romances.

III. CHANGE OF THE ROMANCE INTO THE BALLAD: THE RESULT OF THE PROGRESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

The older Ballads: The Hunting of the Cheviot, The Battle of Otterburn. Surviving characteristics of the Chanson de Geste and feudal tradition.

Indications of change in the character of the audience.

Comparison with Anglo-Saxon heroic songs: The Death of Byrhtnoth.

The Robin Hood Ballads.

Composed to suit a popular audience.

Influence of the Romances on the Robin Hood Ballads.

The Romantic Ballads: their Literary origin.

Sir Aldingar.

Thomas the Rhymer.

The characteristics of the style of the Romantic Ballads.

The decay of taste and refinement illustrated from the Romantic

Conventional features of the Ballad style and the nature of Ballad Poetry, illustrated from Mary Hamilton.

CHAPTER XII

Retrospective survey of the period covered in the volume.

Gradual fusion between the civilisation of the Roman decadence and the institutions of the Barbarians.

Fusion between the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans.

Characteristics of the composite imagination of the period illustrated in

- I. The Tale.
- 2. The Allegory.
- 3. The Drama.

Gradual movement from symbolism to the direct imitation of Nature. Character of the evolution shown to be produced by

- 1. The Encyclopædic Education of the Church.
- 2. Feudal Institutions.
- 3. The Growth of Civil Order.