appeared. For, art has this advantage over science: It creates form, and its creation remains unchanged. The soul of the artist has passed into it, and looks forth from it forever beautiful.

It is not going too far to say that Chaucer was the first among poets to study differences of character, and note them with accurate and discreet touches of portraiture. Emphatically a realist in art, however gracefully bedewed his spirit may have been with the morning freshness of the ideal, he painted in his really original works the life of the age, selecting with exquisite judgment from all he saw around him the most striking and noteworthy objects.

Although two hundred years in advance of the Elizabethan Age, he is—in virtue of his human pictures, at once recognized by the mind as true individuals, and at the same time admirable types of the varieties in humanity—almost an Elizabethan poet. Certainly he is nearer to the dramatists of that age in spirit, and even in language, than the writers of the preceding or those of the succeeding ages.

The Canterbury Tales—and especially the Prologue—are written with the careful thought and firm, foreknowing labor of a great artist. Unfortunately for us, it was the work, and the unfinished work, of his old age, written in that short period of restored prosperity which he was permitted to enjoy. He had been a favored courtier, employed in numerous and important missions, and allied by marriage, it seems, to the Lancastrian prince, Great John of Gaunt. He had fallen suddenly from court favor, and had been for a time poor and desolate. These facts make the sunny temper in which he composed his charming Tales creditable to him as man and poet.

But, could he have lived to complete his great work and to write other poems, after having won consciousness of his real powers, how great would have been our debt to him! For, here, as in so many other cases, the old paradox proves true; the part is greater than the whole. He had just attained ripeness. Almost all his earlier work was a sort of training in his art. The chains of an age of imitation, of a language which he had to shape for himself, and of a people who had as yet developed no literary skill, had fettered him too heavily to allow his passing out at once into the free air of his own happy invention. Much of his earlier work was in the way of translation, with more or less of parahprase, as when he turned the famous Romance of the Rose into English verse. Still, even in this sort of work, he did inestimable service to the language.

We all know what a different fortune the English language had from that of the other tongues that sprang up in the Teutonic States of Europe; how, while those of the South and the West became to a great extent modified forms of Latin, and the dialects of the heart of the continent remained in the main Teutonic, inflected English underwent less change than any, until the Norman-French came to cover it out of sight for a time. We all know how great was the change when it did at last emerge, and how the forced marriage of the two speeches produced what might almost be called a new tongue. It is all very well to talk of the vigorous Saxon speech; but we owe a great debt to those other Teutons who went first to a Romance-speaking country, before their splendid exploit of mastering the land of their Low-German