

her language, should have been so rich a genius and so cheerful a spirit; that he should have lived in that splendid fourteenth century, which was the flower of the age of chivalry, and the preparation for the wonders of the next age; and that he should have belonged to the English court when that court was the most magnificent in Europe. This fair beginning had much to do with endowing English literature with a largeness of view hardly to have been expected from the literature of an insular people.

Large indeed was the canvass of Chaucer! From the coarse fun and practical jokes that were to re-appear at a far-distant day in the inn-scenes of Fielding and Smollett—art such as Hans Sachs put on the stage and the Flemish painters in their pictures—to the glowing ideals of love and heroism which chivalry formed, such as Sir Philip Sidney afterward poured into his sonnets and his *Arcadia*; surely the range is wide. He inherits from the troubadours, the trouveres, and the minnesingers, on the one hand, and from the makers of the *fabliaux* and the *contes*, on the other. At the same time, he is possessed of a treasure richer than any amassed by either of these classes of writers. He has the great gift of seeing and reproducing character. The prelude to the *Canterbury Tales* is a prelude to the great picture-galleries of Shakspeare, Marlowe Jonson, Fletcher, Webster, Massinger and all that rich array of dramatists; it is a prelude to the whole literature of the novel, from Richardson to our *too* analytical character-painters of to-day, the story-tellers who leave out the story altogether.

Nor in all the literature since Chaucer have there been characters etched more truly and clearly than those of the

"veray parfit gentil knight;" the squire that "was as fresshe as is the moneth of May;" that elegant lady, "Madame Eglantine," the prioress; the monk that Scott expanded into his Prior of Jorvaux; the friar that lisped "To make his English swete upon his tongue;" the clerk "of Oxenforde," who is believed to present the poet himself; the lawyer who "semed besier than he was;" the doctor whose study "was but litel on the Bible;" the wife of Bath, who had married five husbands; the good parson who taught

"Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,  
But first he folwed it himselfe,"

that exquisite picture of a true shepherd of souls which even Goldsmith's copp in *The Deserted Village* can scarcely be said to have improved upon the merry host of the Tabard.

"Bold of his speche, and wys and wel i-taught," and all the rest of that delightful company of pilgrims to the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury. He makes his England luminous for us.

### Government.

To write intelligently upon any subject it should be well understood and carefully defined. The first step then, in all inquiry, as well as in discussion of whatever character undertaken for the expansion of truth, is to set forth as clearly and distinctly as possible the meaning of the words and terms which constitute your subject matter, and from which your conclusions are to be drawn. This is the work of definition, and is no less essential in political investigations than it is in scientific. It is the beginning of progress in every department of learning whether moral, intellectual or material.

Government then in its true sense