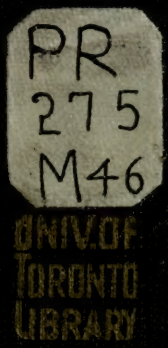

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

AUREATE TERMS

A STUDY IN THE LITERARY DICTION OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

BY

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A THESIS

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PREFACE

I have made this study in the literary diction of the fifteenth century for the purpose of looking further into the important problems that still confront one who wishes to investigate the development of form in English style. That there was a very vital feeling for form throughout the medieval period is a fact that has been disregarded, or too lightly touched upon, in most of our literary histories. Without a knowledge of these early canons of form, many of which survived with little or no change into later times, our idea of subsequent developments is incomplete or even erroneous.

As a beginning, I have made a topographical survey of the literature now available for the period, and investigated more particularly the influences which determined that significant feature of style—word-choice. In my work, I have had from members of the Department of English of the University of Pennsylvania much friendly help and counsel, which I wish here gratefully to acknowledge. My indebtedness is especially great to Professor Clarence Griffin Child, to a suggestion of whose the choice of theme was due, and under whose inspiration it has been completed.

JOHN C. MENDENHALL.

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I

Aureate Terms Defined

Many histories of literature, in treating of the late fifteenth century, make mention of the Latinical vocabulary then affected by authors for the purpose of dignifying their style. This vocabulary included many fine words which had exact, or nearly exact, simple synonyms, as *procelle*, tempest; *tenebrous*, shadowy; *perdurable*, lasting; *puberitude*, youth; and so on. Great numbers of them are now obsolete, as *equipolent, ocyosite, circumfound, exute, splendidious.* Obviously many were never used outside of the manuscripts in which they are found, as *flaskisable, fabrify, obnubilous.*[1]

Such long and supposedly elegant words have been dubbed "aureate terms", because, as Professor Saintsbury, who has made most frequent use of the phrase in recent years, explains in numerous books of his in which the subject is touched upon, they represent a kind of verbal gilding of literary style. The phrase may be traced back through various editors and writers, as Ingram, Horstmann, Schipper,[2] all of whom employ it in the sense of long Latinical words of learned aspect, used to express a comparatively simple idea. Ultimately, in Lydgate, at the dawn of the fifteenth century, we come upon the term *aureate* used for the first time in English as an epithet of praise for noble style. In his sense, which is of course derived from the similar use of *aureus* in late and medieval Latin, the word was frequently employed throughout the fifteenth century and later, a use which is paralleled in the Ro-

[1] These and other like words, where not specifically assigned, are chiefly from fifteenth-century works, some by unknown authors, others by Lydgate, Metham, Caxton, etc.

[2] See the bibliography below.

mance tongues. The application of it to words or "terms", which are so important an element of style, is a natural one.

The question arises as to what part these terms really played in the literary vocabulary of the period in which they have been noted, and also why they were employed. The sort of word, long and to the average modern mind fantastic, of which examples were quoted above, has hitherto been most frequently noted in the work of the "Chaucerians", especially those of Scotland,—in the so-called "court" poetry of the fifteenth century, which, most editors hasten to add, is not poetry at all, and which, by scrupulous editing of careless Mss., they generally contrive to represent as not even verse. It is, however, found more widely. Such an editor as J. K. Ingram has necessarily noted in the introduction to his texts of the fifteenth-century translations of the *De Imitatione Christi*, which are in prose, the occurrence of the same unusual sort of word. So have editors of Caxton. The same sort of words is also much in evidence in a fifteenth-century translation of the famous *Polychronicon*, written originally in Latin, by Ralph Higden, in the early part of the fourteenth century. Similar terms have also been discovered in numerous prefaces, epilogues, passages in the mystery plays, and so forth.

The occurrence of such terms in prose as well as in verse seems to have stirred no great enthusiasm for a comparison. Neither does the fact that the "Old Version" of the *De Imitatione* and the translation of Higden referred to were certainly made in the earlier half of the century prevent most of those who casually use the phrase "aureate terms" from speaking of them as if they are to be found only in the last years of the century and are to be regarded as symptomatic of the Renaissance. On the other hand, sober students of language in the abstract rather than of literature, who note the fact of extensive linguistic borrowing from Romance or Latin all through the century, do not stress the fact that much of this borrowing was literary, made for decorative purposes.

Now as a matter of fact, this very sort of Latinical words, which, if they occur in something written about 1500, are today called "aureate", is to be found in the literature of the mid-fourteenth century, in the alliterative romances of that time. Large numbers of them could be culled from Chaucer. One may dip into our literature from that time down to the present, and find all along the way words to match with *perambulant, degouted,* and *stellify.* The merely unusual Latinical formation, which gives us a shock of surprise when we meet it, pleasant or annoying, as our receding classical studies have left us the power to comprehend it or not, will always be with us in English. Only yesterday, as it were, Francis Thompson seasoned his verse with *repured, omnific, consentient, translucencies, predilectedly,* and *arborous,* while today Compton Mackenzie offers us *dislustered, rufous, mucid, inspissate, caducity, transuming, feculent, tintamar, pandemoniac, peregrine,* and *gravid.* But why look to lesser folk? Shakespeare and Milton did not write in words of one syllable.

It is, therefore, clear that aureate terms were not distinguished from our vocabulary as a whole by their Latinity or their rarity. Nor can it be said that the spirit in which they were chosen is essentially different from that prompting the choice of similar words before and since. That seems to have been the double desire for sententiousness and ornament. The aim of writers then was to be both weighty in meaning and distinguished in expression, an aim which is naturally achieved, to a large degree, through word-choice.[1]

[1] One should note the frequent use of *sententious* or equivalent terms in the literature of the time, *e. g.*,

"In fewe wordes swete and sentencious"
Hawes, *Pastime of Pleasure.*

"Depured rethoryke"
Ibid.

"But Lydgate's workes are fruytefull and sentencyous"
Controversy between a Lover and a Jay.

The sententious word was looked upon as a precious ornament.

Is, then, the phrase "aureate terms" justifiable as the designation of a diction, or word-choice, of one period really distinct from that of others? Only from the point of view of novelty, quantity, and acceptability to its time. These characteristics, however, are pronounced enough to make the diction of the fifteenth century somewhat distinct from the literary diction of other ages. The difference is more apparent than real, but it is sufficient for purposes of separate study. Furthermore, for reasons stated below, it may be assumed that aureate terms, with these characteristics, were a marked feature of literary style from about 1350 to 1530.

With regard to novelty, it should be noted that many more words than those now regarded in that light were novel in the fifteenth century. It is a common experience to readers in the byways of literature to find words that today pass unnoticed the subject, when new, of comment, even of condemnation, for their rarity. Thus Thomas Nashe ridiculed Gabriel Harvey for his phrase *villainy by connivance*. Words to us so simple as *vapour* and *firmament* were explained by William Tyndale in his translation of the New Testament. It is obvious that when Chaucer put forth, for the first time in English, the word *eternal*, it would have impressed his readers with the same sense of novelty as *eterne*, also of his introduction and still distinguished. Thus many words now familiar would have given fifteenth-century readers the same sensation that *consuetude, occysion, divertycle*, and *facundious* give us and gave them.

A caution is necessary at this point. Every word that may have been new in the fifteenth century was not aureate. Technical words like those found in the astronomy, alchemy, medicine and other sciences of the time are not aureate when used in their exact technical sense for technical purposes. Should such words be used in general discourse with extended or figurative meaning, adorning or making sententious the style,

they of course became aureate. In its merely technical sense of salve or ointment for wounds, *triacle* was scarcely more suited to dignified style than its modern descendant *treacle*, though for slightly different reasons; but since Venetian Triacle came from far, was costly, and highly prized, it was possible to use the word with dignified effect as signifying medicine for a troubled heart or a mind diseased. Then, of course, the word was aureate.

With regard to quantity, the proportion of unusual words employed with stylistic intent was high in the period under consideration. The tendency was not confined to England, for France had her Grandes Rhetoriqueurs, with their *mots-dorés*, and Scotland has already been mentioned. In the latter case, the phenomenon is admittedly due, in part, to English example; so far, however, as France is concerned, the case seems merely parallel, since the tendency was well under way in England before the Grandes Rhetoriqueurs began. Yet even admitting, as we must, that aureate terms included many more words than those which immediately impress us with their unusual quality today, their proportion to the number of simple terms then employed by authors should not be considered overwhelming. Though clustered thick, especially in prologues (the pompously worded introduction is not yet an extinct species), epilogues, orotund passages, and so forth, and though worked into the tissue of everything stylistically conceived during the period named, they give at times only a tinge to the style, and are sometimes lacking for pages. Indeed, they are employed quite consciously for the purposes named above, being omitted if the subject is simple.

With regard to their acceptability, we find them, at their start, sanctioned by what today would be called authority. Readers of culture and refinement accepted, even expected, them. When, in the course of the fourteenth century, English began to be more extensively used as the language of

literature for a courtly class of readers, terms of aureate effect, as mentioned above, begin to appear. Their use increases, under encouraging conditions, during the fifteenth and into the early sixteenth century. At that time influential critics, first Sir John Cheke, then Roger Ascham, later Thomas Wilson, and still later Puttenham, all protested against the extensive use of new or odd words for purposes of style. They insisted that the weight of a book should be in its matter; that the words of it should be familiar or simple, not far-fetched or newfangled. These precepts, as such, have generally persisted, and have had some influence on diction, though obviously they have not prevented either innovations in vocabulary or recurrent outbreaks of floridity. Nevertheless, they constitute a check such as was not consciously applied before the Revival of Learning, so that we may say, for convenience, that about 1530, after the death of recognized aureate writers like Hawes and Skelton, and the rise of a newer criticism "aureation" came at least under external discipline. Sir Thomas Elyot (1490-1546), who argued for the enrichment of English by extensive importation of fine Latinical words in his *Boke of the Governour*, in 1530, shows, under the growing criticism of the age, a tendency, in his later books, to use a somewhat simpler vocabulary.[1]

It may, then, be said that aureate terms were those new words, chiefly Romance or Latinical in origin, continually sought, under authority of criticism and the best writers, for a rich and expressive style in English, from about 1350 to about 1530. While recognizing that such a search and corresponding choice was not peculiar in results to that period, one may, in view of its wide operation and sanction by critical authority during that time, assume it to have been a distinctive mark of the period, and discuss, as such, the causes of it.

[1] See the article by E. E. Hale, Jr., listed below.

Hitherto, several suggestions have been advanced for this preference on the part of the fifteenth century for an aureate vocabulary. Schipper, in his *Life and Poems of William Dunbar* (in German, Berlin, 1884), speaking more particularly of Scotland, ascribes it to emulation of England, newly established classical studies, and climate! Horstmann, in his edition of the early sixteenth-century life of St. Werburge (E. E. T. S. 88, O. S.), mentions the delight then felt in the sound of certain terminations. Saintsbury, in his *History of English Prose Rhythm*, implies that aureate terms are likewise assignable to a delight in rhythmic sound. Professor John M. Berdan, in an article in the *Romanic Review* for 1916, comes nearest to the truth when he treats of how medieval precepts for finding rhyme, and allied study, influenced verbal coinages. These suggestions are all helpful for the formation of opinion, but not conclusive. Before proceeding, however, to an independent investigation, it might be well to consider what the age itself had to say on the point.

Words and *colours*, that is, figures of speech, verbal or intellectual, were the elements then chiefly praised in style, or in an author's "rethorike" or "eloquence", as the terms then ran. When an author's use of these moved admiration, his style was *gay, mellifluous, curious, elect* (*i. e.* select), *dulcet*, or *aureate*. These epithets seem not to have been too nicely differentiated; in their general purpose they were synonymous. To words, or terms, as the foundation of style, they were frequently applied. *Aureate*, the most picturesque, is the one now best remembered. Looking, then, to Stephen Hawes, who at the height of the tendency defined fully what he understood by *Rethorike* and its elements, including especially *Elocusyon, i. e.* words, or diction, we find the latter, to his mind, such as will

> . . . claryfy
> The dulcet speche from the langage rude,
> Tellynge the tale in termes eloquent:
> The barbary tongue it doth ferre exclude,
> Electynge words which are expedyent,
> In Latin or in Englyshe, after the entente,
> Encensyng out the aromatyke fume,
> Our langage rude to exyle and consume.[1]

Thus it is clear that to this acknowledged exemplar of the aureate style, his ideal of diction included words that were choice and suited to the matter, preferably rare or new, at once exact and beautiful. Though they might be Latin or English, his practice shows that they were generally the former. This exactly sums up our definition; words designed to achieve sententiousness and sonorous ornamentation of style principally through their being new, rare, or uncommon, and approved by the critical opinion of their time. This opinion was specifically embodied in the rhetorical study which had been continuous since classical times, and the importance of which to our study of medieval literature is beginning at least to be appreciated.[2]

[1] *Pastime of Pleasure*, cap. XI.

[2] Ebert in his *Allgemeine Geschichte der Litteratur des Mittelalters im Abendlande* (1880) clearly emphasized the importance of the study of the medieval Latin literature; Norden in his *Antike Kunstprosa* (1898) traced the continuity of the conscious idea of an artistic prose style from the time of the first Greek rhetoricians up to the beginning of the Renaissance in Northern Europe; and late books touching upon particular phases of English style, like Croll and Clemon's edition of *Euphues*, ascribe characteristic features of it to these inherited ideals. In English, the existence of these medieval canons of taste is set forth at greatest length in Saintsbury's *History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe* (vol. I). Their influence on authors in their time is strikingly put by Kittredge, in the case of Chaucer in *Chaucer and His Poetry*.

II

The Tradition of the Schools

The ideal of the select vocabulary is practically as old as articulate language, and its ultimate origin indeterminate in time, but certain aspects of the question touch our present topic very nearly. Amongst the Troubadours there were two schools, the *trobar clus* (*sotil, oscur, etc.*) and the *trobar clar*.[1] The former, of which Marcabrun was one of the first and most brilliant exemplars, deliberately sought rare and unknown words in developing its style. Its aims and methods, no doubt, became known in England, since Marcabrun's active career practically coincides with the reign of Henry II, through whose consort, it is generally assumed, troubadour influence was implanted in England, but to what extent the *trobar clus* grafted his style upon our literary consciousness seems not now determined. For us, the chief interest of the two schools lies in the fact that they indicate the existence of literary discussion and criticism based upon the fundamental of word-choice. Dante, in his treatise on language *De Vulgari Eloquio*, and also in his *Convivio* and elsewhere, plainly shows himself the heir of these discussions. By the Illustrious Vulgar Tongue he meant the cultivated dialect, especially of literature, which he declared[2] to be something that transcended local peculiarities, not only of place, but of time. It was developed by conscious selection. Much of this contemporary constructive criticism was probably never recorded, or remains

[1] See H. J. Chaytor, *The Troubadours*, pp. 34-5, *et alibi*.

[2] *De Vulg. Eloq.*, lib. I, cap. 16 *ad fin.*

unknown. Enough has been gathered together, however, as in Saintsbury's *History of Criticism*,[1] to convince anyone who glances at it that the problem of word-choice, amongst others, was continually being considered by medieval authors.

But if the interesting details of the subject are imperfectly known, the standards to which the discussions were constantly referred are well-known and easy to get at. They were the same for all western Europe, for the fifteenth century as well as for the twelfth, namely, the rhetorical precepts preserved from classic times and, like those of grammar, known to all who had any education to speak of. Grammar, however, with a view to correctness, told rather what to avoid. It was rhetoric, which, with a broader view, indicated what was elegant or ornamental.

It should be remembered that Christianity was not uniformly favorable to formal education. Some of the early Fathers, educated men themselves, argued against the mobocratic spirit which would have rejected anything marked by old dignity or difficult of attainment, and which adduced plausible arguments to justify its hostility. St. Augustine countered the argument that nothing should be studied if it had heathen associations by insisting that anything good in itself was proper for Christians to use. How far matters had been pushed may be implied by his illustration: that it is no reason to neglect the alphabet because Mercury was believed to have invented it. The various encyclopedias of learning that were made later were undertaken largely because the loss of useful learning was threatened as much by indifference as by the troubled political and social conditions of the time.

Yet Augustine himself in his treatise on Christian education abandoned much of the old formalism. He insisted, rightly enough, that sense or spirit should be the paramount consid-

[1] Volume I treats specifically of the period reviewed here.

eration in discourse. He relaxed the old discipline in favor of usage; put example above precept. He did not foresee, or did not care, that such principles encourage the lazy in their laziness, the formless in their chaos. Gregory the Great, in his time, also laid much stress on sense as against form, though fond himself of equal clauses and similar endings (*isocolon* and *homoio-teleuton*), and the influence of these two really great men was felt throughout the medieval period. Still, the old discipline was, to some extent, maintained always, and at times, in the hands of sane and forceful men, very brilliantly.

Of course, all medieval study of this kind was primarily in and for Latin. Nevertheless, it was inevitable that it should influence the vernacular tongues. Dante, for instance, in speaking of vernacular Romance literature, specifically declared [1] that a poem, rightly considered, was nothing else than a rhetorical composition (*fictio rhetorica*) set to music. Cicero might have set him right on the latter point. About eighty years after Dante's essay was written, Chaucer, in the prologue to the Clerk of Oxenforde's tale, speaks of Petrarch as one

> ". . . whose *rethorike* sweete
> Enlumyned al Ytaille of poetrie . . . "

This is the first reference of the kind in English, but not the last. The fifteenth century abounds in them, many being to Chaucer himself. In Chaucer's use the precise meaning of the term may be somewhat doubtful, but afterwards it is plainly directed at style, oftentimes at diction. Hence it becomes important to understand the significance of rhetoric at this time.

Its position in the medieval curriculum of study, as the second or third study of the elementary *Trivium*, was, indeed, largely traditional. It was excused as being useful to preach-

[1] *De Vulg. Eloq.* II. 4.

ers. The teaching of it was frequently superficial in the extreme.[1] Still, a thorough and enlightening study of it as a critical guide to reading and composition cannot be said ever to have ceased entirely. From the late schools of southern Gaul it passed to Ireland and then to Great Britain, where in Wales it perhaps survived from Roman times. Not to linger over details, we notice that Bede (who wrote on this very subject),[2] Alcuin and his pupils, Servatus Lupus, Abbot of Ferrières, and Rabanus Maurus, Abbot of Fulda, various less distinguished men in the tenth century; then Bernard of Chartres, his pupil, William of Conches, and the great school of Orleans in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, form a series, overlapping and interpenetrating, which prolonged a tradition that Petrarch and his contemporaries and successors merely revivified. In very many of the men named there was a genuine humanistic spirit. The tradition which thus survived and grew in northern Europe was, of course, never lost in Italy, whence also it continued to spread. Weak as it may often have been from the fifth to the fourteenth century, it yet lived. For during that time not only was rhetorical study continuously pursued but it was constantly being adapted to new needs or interests.

The nature of this latter development may be shown by citing three descriptions of rhetoric from the fifth, thirteenth, and early sixteenth centuries. The first is from that extraordinary work *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* by St. Augustine's pagan contemporary, the African rhetorician,

[1] See, for example, John of Salisbury, *Metalogicus*, lib. II, cap. 11: *Relegi quoque Rhetoricam, quam prius . . . tenuiter auditam paululum intelligebam.*

[2] See his little work *De Schematis et Tropis*, and the notices of authors in his *De Re Metrica*. In the former, he does not use the trite examples quoted by generations of writers on the subject, but illustrates from the Bible. *Works*, J. A. Giles, ed., Whitaker and Co., London, 1843, vol. vi. Also in Halm.

Martianus Capella. At the beginning of his fifth book, he describes the Lady Rhetoric as tall and with a face of brilliant female beauty; she appeared, to the flourish of trumpets and the noise of popular assemblies, helmeted, her head engarlanded with royal majesty, in her hands weapons for defence and to wound adversaries—weapons that flashed lightning; her ample cloak was embroidered with brilliant figures, and across her breast was a baldric set with exquisite gems. The weapons are obviously arguments at law, for success in which rhetorical training had generally been regarded as necessary since the time of Gorgias.

The second citation is from the preface of a book of model letters by a certain Pontius Provincialis, a master at the famous school of Orleans. It dates from about 1259. In substance, the description is as follows. While the writer was wandering about over valleys, plains and mountains, he met a maiden, love of whom suddenly wounded him to the marrow. He describes her beauty very fully, and tells, with something of a troubadour's gallantry, how he besought her to accept him as her servitor, lest he die. Then she, looking at him over her shoulder with mirth in her eye, said, "If you hold fast what you have found". Taking him by the right hand, she showed him a wonderful city with seven gates and eighteen palaces, to which she, Rhetoric, had the keys. The city, she explained, was the complete art of letter-writing.[1]

Here is nothing of the forum. So far as the description means anything, it is that at Orleans, in the thirteenth century, rhetoric was regarded as literary training for the quite practical purpose of learning official correspondence. At about the same period, as we know from several extant treatises, poetry, as a species of literary composition, was iden-

[1] *Ars Dictaminis.* The whole passage is quoted in Delisle's article; also in Valois, *De Arte, etc.*, cap. VI (pp. 46 *et seq.*). See below, p. 27.

tified with the same discipline. Its formal aspect was more prominent, its application to the written word closer, its concern with legal training and declamation correspondingly less.

With the description from the Orleans master's book ought to be associated the third, from that famous allegorical poem by Stephen Hawes, a groom of the chamber to Henry VII. The seventh chapter of his *Pastime of Pleasure* tells how Graunde Amour was received of " Rethoryke, and what Rethoryke is."

Than above Logyke up we went a stayre,
Into a chambre gayly glorified,
Strowed wyth floures of all goodly ayre,
Where sate a lady gretly magnified,
And her true vesture clerely purified,
And over her head, that was bryght and shene,
She had a garlande of the laurell grene.

The last lines of the next stanza seem to imply that the poet had not found rhetoric so fiendish [1] as students often thought it in that day also. After this general description, the five parts into which the study was traditionally divided are all treated. In the midst of them is " a replication against ignoraunt persones ", and at the end a commendation of the poetical triumvirate, Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate. Here we see how completely rhetoric had been identified in the popular conception with literature. Its separation from the old art of legal training appears still more plainly upon reverting to Hawes's treatment of *memoria*. The memorizing of a speech was a very necessary part of the old training for the law-courts or the assembly, but has very little to do with the conception of rhetoric held by Hawes. He retains the term, but alters its meaning.

[1] More lyker was her habitacyon
Unto a place which is celestiall,
Than to a certayne mancion fatall.

With this general development in mind, we may proceed to an examination of the rhetorical precepts of diction. The whole subject was divided under five heads, which represented the natural stages in the making of a formal speech: conception, planning, phrasing, memorizing, and delivery; or, to give the technical terms, *inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria,* and *pronunciatio.* It was under the third head that diction was especially treated of. According to the universal belief, this determined the style of the speech, or whatever it was, for good or bad. An interesting concrete statement of this belief is found in Alcuin's dialogue on the subject with Charlemagne. Consciously or not, the author, who is indebted particularly to Julius Victor and Cicero, has the pupil, not the master, remark, "The plan of our discussion has now brought us to the point at which we inquire into the nature of Elocution, which confers great beauty upon the plea, and upon the pleader, reputation." [1] The legal contents of rhetoric are especially treated of.

In this treatise, and in all the others, insistence was laid on *Fitness,* and the power of words to adorn an idea.[2] In a figure often quoted, Cicero had said,[3] that just as clothes were first used from necessity and then became a means of adornment, so with such use of words as metaphor, etc. This idea might be considered the central thought in all subsequent discussions of the matter. *Elocutio* was an appropriate dressing-up of the subject-matter of your speech or book.

As for the bare rules themselves, they had become nearly stereotyped as early as the time of Cicero. To speak in good Latin (that is, as the later writers defined it, according to the

[1] *Iam nunc nos ordo disputationis ad elocutionis deduxit inquisitionem quae magnam causae adfert venustatem et rhetori dignitatem.*

[2] *Cf.* Victor, Cassiodorus, Isidore, Alcuin, etc.

[3] *De Oratore,* III., 38.

rules of grammar); to suit the words to the subject — fine words for big things, the plain term only for what was too terrible to be disguised; to avoid certain faults and to cultivate certain virtues, especially copiousness and elegance; these were, in a nutshell, the precepts of the rhetoricians. Borrowing from other languages was permitted (*ne quid nimis!*); formation of compounds and wholly new words allowed (with the same caution); and figurative expression much encouraged.

In detail, however, there are some interesting and significant differences to be noted. The last half of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century saw a high-water mark established in rhetorical studies and a number of treatises produced, of which several are extant.[1] Three of these are of peculiar interest in our inquiry: those of Gaius Cheirius Fortunatianus, of Sulpitius Victor, and of Gaius Julius Victor.

The first of these presents perhaps the most points of interest. It is in the form of question and answer; for example, in treating of diction it begins: *Elocutio quibus partibus constat?* The answer is: *Quantitate verborum et structurae qualitate.* With regard to words, we learn that our vocabulary should be large and choice. We should enlarge it by reading, by observation (that is, by picking up technical and professional words), by innovation—either by borrowing or by composition; but we must restrain ourselves in this,—and finally by the habit of translating. We should make it choice by omitting vulgarisms, archaisms, provincialisms, and the like, and by seeking words which, elegant in themselves, become more so when used in conjunction with others. The illustration makes it plain that *sound* should play an important part in choice. Plain things should be called by plain names; short

[1] They may be found most conveniently in C. Halm's collected *Rhetores Latini Minores*, in that section of the several works entitled *Elocutio*.

words, it is said, are sometimes better than long. The last rule implies that long words and learned words were then also regarded popularly as making fine style.

This, though by no means the whole of Fortunatianus's advice, includes its most interesting features. The advice for extending one's vocabulary is quite orthodox today. On the whole, it could hardly be said that definite attempts to follow such precepts would result in anything unusual, unless the fluency contingent upon a large and semi-learned vocabulary proved a temptation to use recondite and out-of-the-way allusions, or words of that sort. But, it should be noted, this is aureateness.

The second and third treatises referred to are alike in upholding a literary as against a colloquial vocabulary. Sulpitius Victor, whose treatise, not intended for wide circulation, begins by limiting the older definition of rhetoric as "the science of speaking well" with the differentia "in civil suits", advises that, besides their other qualities, words should show *good grooming;* that is, "be not taken from mean or vulgar sources, or, as they say, from the street, but be chosen from books and drawn from the clear well of learning." This definition is very illuminating. Gaius Iulius Victor, at the end of his treatise, draws a distinction between conversation and oratory. In the former, words are chosen for the meaning rather than for the sound, and complicated decoration is lacking. Such an artificial distinction shows a conception of literature bound to foster preciosity or extravagance of words as an idea of fitness. So, too, does a remark like that of Sulpitius, that big things should be put in big words, and that paltry things should not be couched in a swelling or inflated style. The first part of the rule is dangerous, since the second part is apt to be overlooked. An author is unlikely to confess writing "paltry" things. The tendency of all this is to favor ornamentation by words for its own sake.

Upon these late classical treatises and the earlier works from which they were derived (those of Cicero, especially his *De Inventione* and *De Oratore*, and Quintilian's *Institutes*), were founded the books on rhetoric in the three great compends of liberal education that were in use in medieval times. Besides the work of Martianus Capella already mentioned, there is that of Cassiodorus Senator (sixth century), and that of Isidore, Bishop of Seville, whose encyclopediac *Etymologies*, containing a résumé of the seven liberal arts, was written early in the seventh century. It is not necessary here to dwell upon the position these works occupied in the medieval schools, even after the works of Aristotle became, in the thirteenth century, the foundation stones of education. In respect to diction Capella's rules, except for their picturesque setting, present nothing unusual: "The foundations of eloquence are to speak correctly and clearly; its pinnacles to be copious and ornate." [1] These are to be attained to by hard work and daily practice. The drier work of Cassiodorus and of Isidore, who practically recopied, with some explanations, his Christian predecessor's work in this field, urged, especially, appropriateness in style. Such words should be used (so run their precepts) as the matter, place, time, and audience require: we should not use profane language to the godly, immodest to the pure. . . . It is not enough to speak clearly and smoothly, but what is said should be eloquent as well. Dressed up, that is, for that was what the glosses upon the text of appropriateness in the end generally came to.

Such in brief were the rules of diction with which the schools started. To realize the more clearly the tendency of such principles, it would be well to notice what they tried to

[1] *De Nuptiis, etc.*, III (31) under *Elocutio. . . . cuius Cicero duo quasi fundamenta, duo dicit esse fastigia. Fundamenta Latine loqui planeque dicere . . . fastigia vero sunt copiose ornateque dicere, quod non ingenii sed laboris est. . . .*

summarize. There were the Symmachi, Ausonius, and Bishop Apollinaris, whose poems and epistles are in the most elaborate and over-decorated of styles. As for the men themselves whose compends were so much used, the example of Capella was more potent even than his precept for a style rhythmic and barbarically enriched: how impressive is his reference to the majestic thunder of Cicero's grandiloquence! Cassiodorus, though he wrote dryly and meagerly enough himself, shows a pretty taste in words. He praises Fortunatianus, to whose books on rhetoric he was himself much indebted, as a novel artigrapher; he recommended Felix of Gaul to the Senate as a novel sower of words. Isidore was praised as he praised others for eloquent diction. At the barbarous court of northern Gaul, Venantius Fortunatus at the end of the sixth century could write eloquent poems, prefaces and epistles, and criticize those which he received, in correct verse, limpidly flowing or ingeniously wrought, as seemed to him best. His praises of style in others defy translation. Pompous is a favorite word of his—*pomposa poemata, pomposae facundiae florulenta germina, crepitantia verborum vestrorum tonitrua*—such are his critical phrases and such the background of rhetorical tradition at the time of the establishment of the Christian medieval schools.

Not to linger over the ingeniously enriched Latin poems and epistles of our English Aldhelm, whose style was formed perhaps by his Celtic master, himself trained in the florid schools of Gaul, and was later enriched by the Byzantine traditions of the early school at Canterbury; or over traces of grandiloquence in Alcuin's dialogues; or even over that premature humanist, Servatus Lupus, Alcuin's pupil, who wrote to the Pope for complete copies of the Mss. of the *De Oratore* and Quintilian's *Institutes* which he had seen at the Vatican (his own copies were incomplete); or over St. Abbo of Fleury, who studied the rhetoric of Victorinus, with good re-

sults, because its writer had taught St. Jerome that same art; I pass on to the twelfth century and the famous school of Orleans. Here the so-called Renaissance of that century had its center; classical literature was read, commented upon, and imitated. The school gave the Popes from 1159 to 1185 their secretaries. Alexander Neckham wrote in the next century that nowhere else were the songs of the Muses better interpreted; the while another Alexander (of Villadei) declared that Orleans was so engrossed in literature its clerks would never get to heaven if they didn't change their tune. Its significance to poets is clearly seen in that now rather famous allegory, *Le Bataille des Sept Arts*, by the trouvère, Henri d'Andéli, written when this early Renaissance had everywhere else yielded to scholasticism.

At this school, as I stated above, there was a very famous faculty of letter-writing which rivaled those of Italy. The importance of this art during the Middle Ages has been very well set forth by Noel Valois in a Latin thesis *De Arte Scribendi Epistolas apud Gallicos Medii Aevi, etc.*, submitted at the University of Paris in 1880. This little book clearly shows how the old rhetorical traditions of diction were transmitted to later times. Since most letters were at least semi-public, their style was carefully developed. Unusual words and resounding phrases were much sought after. The simplicity now commended in a letter was then entirely lacking. The old rhetorical idea that important communications to people of importance should be couched in magnificent style was pushed to its limit. The letter of Johannes Octo [1] is no mere *tour de force*.

There is, perhaps, greater danger of underestimating than of overestimating the importance of the influence which this epistolary art had. Many collections of letters from this

[1] See Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, book III.

period show how thoroughly the rules had been learned. Such a style as that seen in the interesting letters of Walter, Abbot of Dervy in France, to his fellow-countryman, John of Salisbury, is an excellent example. In its allusiveness, its excessive use of allegory, and the pompous abstractions in which it abounds, it is aureate diction itself. Interesting also are the letters, earlier in time, of Herbert of Losinga, Bishop of Norwich,—including letters of advice to students, bits of criticism, and numerous stylistic references. At least one word is consciously coined by their author to express in neat and dignified fashion a pressing idea: *libidincolas* (slaves to lust) on the analogy of *ventricolas* (slaves to the belly). Such formation of new words, natural in language, and sanctioned by rhetoric, is common.[1]

Moreover, it is not unworthy of note that Dante's teacher, Brunetto Latini, wrote of this art, and was well-versed in it, as no doubt the poet was too. Chaucer was familiar with it. Formal letters, or bills, are not uncommon amidst the poetry of the fifteenth century, and during that time books on the subject of formal correspondence figure amongst the scanty possessions of Oxford students which have been recorded.[2] No educated man was unacquainted with this "flowery" style, or with praise of it.

At the same time that this art of letter-writing became a science, appeared, as has also been said, several treatises on the art of poetry. These made use of the same general rules, especially as to diction. Of them the most famous is the *Nova Poetria*, itself in verse, written at the beginning of the thir-

[1] E. g., In Grosseteste's *Letters*, Rolls Series, 25, nos. 9, 20, 123, occur several rare or new words: *aggratulatio, dulcifluus, refocillatus, fulcimentum, fundamentalis, supportatio.* These words occur in letters written to a stylistic friend and to the Regents of Oxford, which make use of much figurative language—a habit not so obvious in some of his other epistles.

[2] E. A. Savage, *Old English Libraries*, p. 278.

teenth century by the Englishman, Geoffrey de Vinsauf.[1] This work, with its purple patches and advice touching the use of rich figurative diction, had been read by Chaucer, and though he gibes at it, he was not insensible of its merits—in their place. Many authors of the fifteenth century knew and praised the work and its author: it harmonized with their taste. Hoccleve, Lydgate, Bokenham, and other versifiers, some anonymous, are on the list. Indeed, his "colours purpurate of rethoryke" are of a sort to be remembered.

Thus it is clear that ideas of decorative diction did not grow faint or fail with classical antiquity. They persisted, and became, if anything, stronger.[2] Decorated style was considered fine style, and in select words especially was supposed to lie the power to adorn. This particular thought was given wide currency by the letter-writing art and the study of versification in the twelfth century and later. The rules themselves are well known and were illustrated by examples specially designed as models of ornateness. They were re-enforced by reading of the classical literature most in favor, such as Ovid, Martial and Seneca (despite Quintilian's censure). The perfervid style of the constantly read Church Fathers, and that of the admired Boethius, written under the same traditions, had the same effect. This is the ground from which the "aureate" style of the fifteenth century was nourished.

[1] *Nova Poetria*, II. 743 ff. The opening advice is: Consider sense first, form last. Observe fitness. . . . Rich thought is honored by rich diction; let not the influential matron go blushing for shame in ragged gown, etc.

745. *Verbi prius inspice mentem,*
Et demum faciem . . .
760. *Dives honoretur sententia divite verbo;*
Ne rubeat matrona potens in paupere panno.

[2] *Cf.* Croll, Introduction to his *Euphues*, p. xxviii, and the reasons there given.

III

How the Tradition Became English

I. FLOURISHED WORDS

There is no lack of evidence that the theories of diction just discussed had an application in general literature. In establishing this point, we should remember that the medieval literature in Latin is an organic part of the whole. Indeed, except in England, it is the only literature of note in western Europe before the eleventh century, and in England the early vernacular literature owes it a great debt, both in translation and in inspiration. Furthermore, although, from the twelfth century onward, the vernacular literature everywhere assumed increasing importance, Latin, and not for learned purposes alone, was a powerful force, with a living tradition, until well on in the seventeenth—and, indeed, is scarcely dead now.

All this Latin writing was consciously influenced by the school ideas of style. One of the earliest extant Latin compositions by an Englishman, Eddius, a contemporary biographer of St. Wilfrid, the apostle to the West Saxons, begins with an apology for the slenderness of the author's understanding and eloquence. Aldhelm, nearly contemporary with Eddius, is distinguished for his rhetorical ingenuity and "precious" diction. Bede is more restrained, but shows no less interest in style. He praised Aldhelm, and wrote on the subject. (*v. sup.*) Alcuin, a little later, carried letters to the Continent, lecturing, in a heightened style, to Charlemagne. Willibald, his contemporary, writing the life of St. Boniface, pretends a distinct sensitiveness to diction. He speaks

of lively narration, of elegantly allusive phrasing (*eleganti verborum ambage*), and deprecates his own pinched style in writing of such a subject as *only heralds should handle.* Yet his work comes up to his ideals pretty well. After the time of these brilliant scholars, in spite of the sorrowful laments of Alfred and of Aelfric the "Grammarian", Latin never ceased either to be read or written. The tenth century produced one distinctly "aureate" stylist whose name has survived—the historian Aethelwerd, long noted for his showy diction, but that there were others is plain from the reference in Malmesbury's preface to a writer of Aethelstan's reign. (*v. inf.*)

In Anglo-Norman times the Latin literature of England was very brilliant. Letter-writing has been mentioned above. Geoffrey of Monmouth influenced the literature of the whole west. The line of genuine historians, beginning with William of Malmesbury, deserves more than passing mention, and not for their matter alone. Giraldus Cambrensis, John of Salisbury, Geoffrey de Vinsauf (already mentioned), Alexander Neckham, Walter Map, Roger Bacon — to name only the greatest — may be claimed as ours, though their genius is almost cosmopolitan. The *Philobiblon*, in praise of literature, written during Chaucer's boyhood by Richard de Bury, who was known to Petrarch, a work unique in medieval times, is the production of an Englishman.

In all the writers named, intimate references to style and diction are to be found: in some of them, frequently. Even scientists like Roger Bacon, not primarily interested in the ideal of *belles-lettres*, still, like Huxley in recent times, were not indifferent to the claims of style. In his *Opus Tertium*, for instance, sent by request to Pope Clement IV, he wrote: "Knowledge without eloquence is a sharp sword in a hand powerless to wield it . . . the objects of a public speaker or

writer are three: to set forth the truth, to please, to influence; and to these objects three styles correspond: the simple, the medium, the grand. My chief purpose is to set forth the truth, and therefore, according to writers on eloquence (I express myself) in the simple style without verbal panoply." [1] Curiously apposite to our subject now is a reference in the twelfth or early thirteenth century life of Harold, last of the Saxon kings, a work which, "rejecting all rudeness of speech", wished to see its theme expressed in an elegant style, for literature had also its fine artificers, goldsmiths, brass-workers, and carvers.[2] Most interesting of all, in view of the limitation of our subject to England, is a reference in the second chapter of the first book of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum.* In speaking of Aldhelm as first abbot of the Celtic-founded monastery which in his own time his own genius adorned, he remarked, half in defence of Aldhelm, that various nations develop national styles. The tendency of the English is to express themselves pompously.[3]

History, according to numerous prefaces, justified itself to the medieval mind by its useful moral examples. And because of its importance as literature, it was allowed, as rhet-

[1] *Opus Tertium*, cap. I (Rolls 15, p. 4). *Sapientia sine eloquentia est gladius actutus in manu paralytici . . . cum enim tria sint opera oratoris, ut veritatem aperiat, ut delectat, ut flectat . . . tres styli correspondent, humilis, mediocris, grandis . . . non intendo principaliter nisi veritatem aperire et ideo secundum auctores eloquentiae humili stylo sine verborum phaleris.* All this is St. Augustine's teaching, *De Doctrina Christiana*, IV. 7. 16-20, and ultimately Cicero's (*Orator*).

[2] See Michel, *Chroniques Anglo-Normandes*, vol. ii (1840); reprinted in vol. xvi of the Caxton Society publications: *Lives of Anglo-Saxons.* The Latin runs thus: *sententiam (si videbitur) reserventes elegantiori, ut dignum est, stilo explicandam; nec enim desunt, largiente Domino, coetui sanctitatis vestrae Beseleelis, Ooliab, seu Hyram peritissimi successores.*

[3] *Denique Graeci involute, Romani circumspecte, Galli splendide, Angli pompatice dictare solent.*

oric declared was proper, a pleasing and impressive style.[1] Many writers of history abused this privilege. Malmesbury, himself a professed stylist, makes many references to the style of others, not always to approve. Thus, in speaking of a contemporary Latin history of the great king Aethelstan (c. 924), he says it was just what Cicero defined as bombast in diction.[2] He remarks (*Praef.*) that Aethelward (who died c. 988), in searching after sounding and far-fetched phrases, shipwrecked his intention of making a good connected Latin history out of old scattered chronicles, a task which, if divine favor smiled upon him, he himself promised to perform.[3] Yet no doubt such diction was admired by some in its time, as it certainly would have been later. Malmesbury himself was quite capable of grandiloquence. Lesser men, in writing local monastic chronicles and hagiographies, show, like provincial reporters, much more of the latter quality when, as is not infrequently the case, they make any stylistic pretense at all.[4]

That choice or exalted diction was one of the principal features of this style is quite distinctly stated, in the fourteenth century, by Ranulfus Higden, who, in the exalted preface of his *Polychronicon*, asks why *inter caeteros . . . ac sesquipedalium verborum efflatores . . . nostri non erunt laudi*

[1] See Eadmer, Richard of Cirencester, the *Flores Historiae*, the *Eulogium Historiae, etc., etc.* The last named contains interesting personal reasons of the author for writing history that throw a vivid light on certain phases of monastic life.

[2] *eo dicendi genere quod suffultum rex facundiae Romanae Tullius in rhetoricis appellat.* See *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, lib. II, cap. 6, 132.

[3] The Latin of the passage about Aethelward runs as follows: *Haec ita polliceor si conatui nostro divinus favor arriserit, et me praeter scopulos confragosi sermonis evexerit ad quos Elwardus dum tinnula et emendicata verba venatur miserabiliter impegit.*

[4] A very good example will be found in that part of the *Eversham Chronicle* which was written by Prior Dominic, especially in the *Prologus* to the life of Egwin, the patron saint of the house. It is argued that eloquence is not heretical. Time, first half of the twelfth century.

digni . . . dimensores? In translating this, Trevisa, neglecting the rhetorical question in which the idea is couched in his original, wrote, " Wherefore, among othere noble travaillours of the thre pathes and faire florischers and highteres of wordes and of metre . . . we mowe nought ful preyse (historians)." This association of long, impressive words as an element of style with those educated in the *Trivium*, for that is the " thre pathes ", is noteworthy. Trevisa's picturesque word for such men, " florischers ", may be taken as a current English term for inveterate users of a superfine or " aureate " vocabulary, and used as a clue to their presence in the vernacular literature of the fourteenth century.

Acting upon this hint, we discover at the very outset of the century (c. 1303), in Robert Mannyng of Brunne's translation of William of Wadington's French *Manuel des Pechiez*, " flourished words " spoken of as a form of one of the Seven Deadly Sins, Pride. Evil shall betide thee, warns the author, if " yn thin queynte wurdys hast pryde ", and he adds, a little later,

> Yn feyre wurdys and yn queynte
> With pryde are swych men ateynte;
> Flourshed wurdys and otherwhile lovely
> Are ful of pryde and trechery.

In these lines Mannyng is attempting to render the French *beal langage* and *beal parler*, phrases which seem near akin to Rhetoric, the *ars bene dicendi.*

In Trevisa's own time, late in the century, the same expression is found in Wiclif's sermons. In one of his countless denunciations of the friars, he declares that they deprave themselves to their parishioners " bi florisshed wurdys that thei bryngen yn ". Like Chaucer's Pardoner, they evidently believed in " saffroning " their " predication ". Elsewhere, in speaking of the begging of the friars, Wiclif uncompromisingly declares, "And this chaffair is sellinge of preching, how-

ever that it be florished". From a sentence accompanying the first of these two references [1] it is plain that the friars derived their style in sermonizing from the precepts of rhetoric; the latter reference is obviously to a sort of euphemism used to glose over an ugly fact.

Can we know more particularly the nature of "flourished words"? "Flourishing" of words might refer to any bombastic or exaggerated phrasing, but "flourished words" were apparently words of a certain kind. They were obviously pretentious words, unusual words, or words finer, often, than their critics deemed necessary.

Their nature, I believe, can be ascertained exactly. Until well within the fourteenth century, the native English vocabulary was still quite distinct from the French-Latin. This was particularly true of religious diction. The early thirteenth-century English treatise on the *Vices and Virtues*, contemporary with the *Brut* and the *Ormulum*, has, if possible, fewer than they of Latin-derived words. Forms like *heved-sennes* for *cardinal sins, mihte* for *virtue, swynk* for *labour* (*toil* or *work*), *dierne* for *secret*, and so forth, indicate a vocabulary nearly as pure as any purist could desire.

The *Genesis and Exodus*, written about the middle of the same century,

With londes speche and wordes smale,

contains about half a hundred different Romance terms. These are for the greater part technical, and so in no sense stylistic; not a few indeed, like *bissop* or *crisme*, of such long standing in English that no one would ever give a thought to their foreign origin, or think them in any sense unusual. It is interesting to note how the word *bigamy* (*bigame*) is glossed in the text itself of this work (partly, perhaps, to prevent confusion with English *game*):

On engleis tale, twie-wifing.

[1] *De Officio Pastorale*, 26. *v.* E. E. T. S., 74 O. S., p. 445.

Such glossing of Romance terms, even those soon destined to become familiar, was common much later. *Pardon* was explained, in its technical sense, in writing, after it must have been familiar to the ear, as *forgiveness*, and, in the fourteenth century, *inobedience* as *unbuxomness*.

Robert Mannyng's own bungling attempt to explain "manual", which in his French original is clearly described as a little book that can be carried in the hand, by *handlyng*, and Dan Mitchel's title, so strange to modern ears, *Ayenbite of Inwyt* for *Remorse of Conscience*, show the same repugnance to Romance terms. The vocabulary of the latter work is studiously English. It contains words like *boc-house* for *library, vor-speche* for *prologue, poure of goste* for *poor of spirit*, and so forth.

Just when this tendency to restrict themselves to native roots or compounds ceased to control the diction of popular religious writers—it never died out entirely, though it should not be confused with mere simplicity—it is difficult to say. The *Ancren Riwle*, written for ladies of gentle birth, who were supposed to know Latin, is cited as earliest authority in English for a number of new words derived from French, or French-Latin sources: *e. g., comfort, delight, liquor, etc.* A century later, Hampole's diction, in similar case, is clearly Latinized. In works certainly his are to be noted the earliest surviving occurrences of many fine words like *accusour, compunction, constrain, crystalline, disease* (vb.), *fruitless, glorify, incorrigible, mortality, protestation, reprehend, subtlety, etc., etc.* It has been said that, like the Wiclifites, he deliberately avoided "strange English" and, by his own confession, sought "the easiest and commonest, and such as is most like the Latin".[1] It would seem that the exalted

[1] John Stoughton, *Our English Bible, its Translations and Translators*, Scribners, *n. d.*, p. 38. No reference is given.

mood in which Hampole's compositions were conceived, and his facility of expression in both Latin and English, caused him to take the words nearest him. Something also *bonae sonoritatis* in them corresponded to his favorite mood of mystic exaltation. The epithet " mellifluous " was applied by commentators more appropriately to his work than to that of some others.

Some of his words, like *grace, levation, temptation, etc.*, represent an irresistible drift towards the use of familiar ecclesiastically " technical " terms of Latin (or French-Latin) form in preference to English. Wiclif and those who labored with him, or after him, in translating the Bible, show an accentuation of the tendency to use such familiar words rather than to make strange native compounds.

But not entirely. If the archaic verse Psalter is really Hampole's work, it shows that when not writing in a distinctly individual vein, or to certain individuals, Hampole imitated the earlier usage. Horstmann points out some errors in this work which indicate that its author was not entirely familiar with older English diction. The Purvey-Wiclif translation of the Bible, especially as first conceived, used such expressions as *again-buying* for *redemption, again-rising* for *resurrection, boroughtown* for *city, comeling* for *stranger, etc.* In the next century, Pecock, in his unfortunate *Repressor*, occasionally yielded to the old notion. So, later, did Sir John Cheke in his translation of Scriptural passages. The Humanists then began to generalize the notion by emphasizing the precept that our words should be " proper " to the tongue in which we speak, though they conceded that borrowed words might be naturalized. Dryden and others of our so-called classicists theorized about the point. The last century saw in William Barnes and others a distinct " movement " to reduce English to complete Saxon impurity. Except, however, to a few enthusiasts, the movement has made no strong appeal.

In contrast to the earlier, these later practices are sporadic, or purely academic. The earlier habit of choosing only native words was, as applied to popular religious writing, an effort to comply with a then powerful living taste and need.

In other forms of writing, such as romance and history, there was not quite the same conservatism. In these, many things were called by their Romance names because they could have no other. But at first the difference between the two vocabularies was strongly felt there also. Thus, in the rhymed chronicle of Robert of Gloucester (c. 1297), a work whose vocabulary as a whole has a perceptible Romance tinge, in the familiar passage calling attention to the bilingual condition of English society as something incongruous, the author uses the term "high-men", as if to illustrate his point, though he knew the terms *nobles* and *noblay*, and used the latter some ten times in his book. The entire passage contains no Romance word.

It is clear then that in a normal English vocabulary any new, unexpected, or unexplained Romance terms would have been very noticeable. "Flourished words" ordinarily would have been such less usual Romance or Latin-derived words, often long words, *sesquipedalia verba*, the antithesis of "londes speche and wordes smale". It is no contradiction of this conclusion that Wiclif, who condemned "flourished words", used many Romance words himself. Those he employed were chiefly technical or such as had become current in his own time, and did not, therefore, attract much attention.

Thus the "flourished words" of the fourteenth century were the forerunners of the "aureate terms" of the fifteenth. Furthermore, Wiclif's clause "that they bringen in", and his attribution of rhetorical intention to the friars, imply that with them, at least, rhetoric was an active cause in the development of an ostentatious Latinized vocabulary.

2. CHAUCER

All this development, however, was in a sense merely preliminary. It was Chaucer, who, according to the universal opinion of his age, really gave us a stylistic vocabulary. At first, his innovations were regarded with nothing but admiration, but later the curious idea arose that his introduction of Romance terms had "corrupted" the language. This notion was persistently held, and still may be, by many people who labor under the mistaken impression that no language should borrow from another any word for which it has itself, or could possibly make, a synonym. Defenders of Chaucer then attempted to prove that he was no more addicted to using Romance terms than were his contemporaries. G. P. Marsh many years ago summed up the case thus: "it is by no means the *proportion* of foreign words which distinguishes his poems from the common literary dialect of the time. It is the selection of his vocabulary, and the structure of his periods that mark his style as his own." [1] Since that was written, the publication of the *New English Dictionary* has made it possible to test Chaucer's vocabulary from the point of view of style, or selection, with greater exactness.

While studying the language of Chaucer's great tragedy, *Troilus and Criseyde*, which he acknowledges to have been written according to the rules of art,[2] I was struck by the number of words amongst those which might be considered novel and impressive in their usage now or in Chaucer's time, that began with the letter E. Upon looking up the number of words beginning with that letter which the *New English Dictionary* records as introduced into English prior to 1400, I

[1] *Lectures on the English Language*, VII (Scribners, 1867, p. 169).

[2] See his final charge to his book: "Subgit be to alle poeseye!" (V. line 1790).

found that almost half of them, about one hundred and ten,[1] were either used for the first time by Chaucer, or given a new application by him. If, according to Skeat, new words in English prior to 1400 are especially to be looked for under the letters J, V, P, C, and E, it is obvious how large was Chaucer's contribution. A more general test, chiefly for *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Boece*, yielded similar results. Of one hundred and fifty selected words, seventy were cited as entirely new with Chaucer, while a score of the remainder were by him used for the first time in new or extended figurative senses.[2] The investigation of Dr. Reismueller, referred to below, reveals some interesting comparative facts. Of words used by Lydgate which are recorded as having been previously used by only one author, three are found in Mannyng, eight in Hampole, thirty-five in Trevisa, thirty-one in Gower, and about *one hundred and fifty-nine* in Chaucer. These figures indicate, not simply that Lydgate found Chaucer more interesting to read, but that Chaucer had an unusual vocabulary. The *Chaucer Dictionary* will presently show the exact degree

[1] For example: *elate, envelop* (verb), *envoi, envy* (verb), *epicycle, equal, equation, equator, equinoctial, equinox, erect, err, erratik, eschaufe, especial, espial, espice, establish, estimation, eternal, eterne, eternity, exaltation, examining* (noun), *exceed, exception, exchange* (noun), *excusation, execute, execution, executrice, exempt* (adj.), *exerce, exercitation, existence, expert, express* (adj.), *extend*, and so forth, all first uses, some, of course, technical.

[2] The list includes: *abusioun, accident, accordable, accusacyon, adiust, adverse, advertence, aliene, ambages, amiable, amenuse, argument, aspre, audience, bestialite, combust, conject, counterpese, curacioun, defet* (= "done out"), *defusioun, delicacy, delicate, determine, disaventure, disfigure, dispone, disseveraunce, dissimule, disturne, fervently, fortunate, governaunce, imperial, lethargy, mansuete, martial, moleste, mortal, painture, palestral, palpable, parodie, participation, perdurability, perturbe, perturbation, pervert, pietus, plit, propinquity, reconfort, redress, refigure, revoke, sentement, suasion*, and some already listed above under E. Those of the words noted in verse occurred mostly within the line, not as rhymes.

of Chaucer's innovation, but the facts just cited to some extent anticipate the general nature of its revelation in this particular.

Thus we have firm ground to stand upon in judging what Chaucer's own near contemporaries said of his language. It is not necessary to recapitulate here what has been so well set forth elsewhere:[1] the chorus of universal praise that echoed through the century after Chaucer's death, the century preeminently of aureate diction. John Lydgate early called the style "gay", an epithet frequently used later for diction (see Caxton's prefaces, for example). Henry Scogan (c. 1407) called it "curious" (*i. e.* carefully made, ingenious). Later, Robert Henryson, amongst others, spoke specifically of the "gudelie termis" of *Troilus and Criseyde*, and William Dunbar summed up the common opinion of "the golden rose of rethors" and his style when he characterized Chaucer's words as "fresch anamalit termis celicall". There can be no doubt that Chaucer's successors regarded him as a great rhetorician, and in so doing bestowed upon him the highest praise in their power.

For that term meant to them all that *artist* implies today. They recognized that which the greatest modern critics so well insist upon: Chaucer's artistry. They understood that he worked within a great tradition, yet they were by no means blind to the independence that he achieved within it. Trained, nearly all of them, in the tradition of the ancient schools, they naturally applied their time-honored precepts to Chaucer's work, yet they were men, like us, and were stirred or moved to admiration by much the same things as we. Granted that their feelings were similar to ours, the language they used in expressing them is not so essentially different that we can safely assume that they were bad judges.

[1] Spurgeon, *Five Centuries of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion.*

To what extent was Chaucer himself influenced, in forming his vocabulary, by the rhetorical principles which his successors found illustrated in his practice? That Chaucer was well-versed in the principles of the rhetorical tradition is certain. He was no untaught wonder. We know that he was not only a wide reader, but a critical; he was interested in the manner as well as in the matter of his reading. The specific evidence now at hand on this point is quite conclusive.

There is, for instance, his knowledge of that once famous master of rhetoric who has been referred to above, and whose name has occasionally been confused with his own—Geoffrey de Vinsauf, Galfridus Anglicus. Tyrwhitt is credited with having first called modern attention to the *Nova Poetria* as the source of Chaucer's reference in a well-known passage in the *Nun-Priest's Tale*—the invective against Friday as an unlucky day.[1] Professor Kittredge has identified a direct translation of another passage (lines 44-46) from the same work, the lines in the Troilus (I. 1065-69) reading:

> For every wight that hath an hous to founde
> Ne renneth not the werk for to beginne
> With rakel hond; but he wol bide a stounde,
> And send his hertes line out fro withinne. . . .[2]

It is possible, Professor Kittredge says, that the passage in the *Squire's Tale* about oral delivery of a message, especially the lines,

> Accordant to his wordes was his cheere,
> As techeth art of speche hem that it lere. . . .

may have been suggested by de Vinsauf's lines on this topic.[3]

[1] *Canterbury Tales*, B 4537-41.

[2] See *Modern Philology*, vol. vii (1909-10), pp. 481-3. De Vinsauf's lines are as follows:

> Si quis habet fundare domum, non currat ad actum
> Impetuosa manus: intrinseca linea cordis
> Praemetitur opus, seriemque sub ordine certo.

[3] *Tales*, F. 98-104. *Cf. Nova Poetria*, 2022-58.

In addition to these passages, I would call attention to de Vinsauf's striking lines advising that a speaker be represented in a story by his own words just as he utters them, which is corroborative of Chaucer's own theory so forcefully expressed in *The Canterbury Tales* (*Prologue*, 725-42).[1] Proverbs, which are so noticeable in the *Troilus*, especially in the conversation of Pandarus, are much praised in the *Nova Poetria* and similar medieval treatises. Altogether, it would seem that Chaucer had not read de Vinsauf inattentively, nor in a derisive spirit.

On the contrary, his interest in such critical discussions seems to have been keen. Professor Lowes has traced the famous reference to change in language, which occurs in the beginning of the second book of *Troilus* (II. 22-25),

> Ye know eek that in form of speech is change
> Within a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
> That hadden pris, now wonder nice and straunge
> Us thinketh hem; and yit they spake hem so. . . .

to Dante's *Convivio*,[2] and very likely other of his critical dicta had their place in the literary discussions of his age. That he should have used in this way the gathered wisdom of past ages and his own in forming his style, is more natural and quite as admirable as that he should have done what some people think geniuses do: spun it entirely from his own vitals like a spider.

We may note also his direct references to rhetoric in his most mature work, *The Canterbury Tales*. Four of the most significant are put into the mouths of the Clerk, the Franklin, the Squire, and the Nuns' Priest. The Clerk's reference, ac-

[1] *Cf. Nova Poetria*, 1266-67:

> En alium florem personae: quando loquenti
> Sermo coaptatur, redolentque loquela loquentem.

[2] See *Modern Philology*, vol. xiv (1916-17), p. 710.

cording to the New English Dictionary, is probably the first free use in English of the term *rhetoric* as synonymous with literary style. The Clerk speaks of Petrarch as one

> . . . whos rethorike swete
> Enlumnyd al Ytaille of poetrie. . . .

The Squire cannot do justice to his heroine's charms; it would need a rhetorician with all the " colors " of his art to do that. The Franklin, a plain man, is similarly handicapped. The Nuns' Priest gibed at De Vinsauf. The last reference has been supposed to express Chaucer's personal opinion of the *Nova Poetria.* This view, in consideration of the evidence cited above, is scarcely justified. The gibe is necessary to the tone of the story, and suited to the character of the Priest—just as the other references are to those who make them.

Professor Kittredge, in his admirable book *Chaucer and His Poetry*, has made so plain Chaucer's use of his rhetorical knowledge in the structure of all his work that it is unnecessary to pursue the general subject further. I shall pass on to the particular matter of word-choice, and note to what extent that was accordant to the principles of rhetorical art as then interpreted.

Nothing could be more obvious than that Chaucer chose his words according to their fitness. Especially is this true of the " high style ". *The Man of Law's Tale* and the *Troilus* are singled out as two of his works conceived in a lofty spirit, and their diction, particularly in the latter, is appropriately dignified. The effect of the former upon a typical intelligent auditor of the time, a plain and downright man, is represented in the words of Harry Bailey, the host, at the conclusion of the story:

> This was a thrifty tale for the nones. . . .
> I se wel that ye lerned men in lore
> Can moche good, by Goddes dignite![1]

[1] *Tales*, B 1165; 1168-9.

Even more to the point for a study of diction is the effect of the Doctor's tale. Much moved, mine host invokes a blessing on the teller, and on the utensils, and even on the terms of his art, until he feels himself a little incoherent—

> Seyde I nat wel, I kan nat speke in terme?

Too frank to be satirical, he recovers himself by a half-jest about the *cardynacle* he has so nearly incurred that he must have a *triacle, viz.* " of moyste and corny ale ".[1] Thus the strain of sentiment is relaxed, but in the meantime, fine words have inspired imitation.

Yet Chaucer had no special theory that one kind of word is better than another. He believed more in the spirit than in the letter, and at times deliberately simplified his language. In line 1218 of the fourth book of the *Troilus*, for instance, Chaucer first used the infinitive *conforte*. At this point he was following his original, Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, and from that took the word. Later, perhaps carelessly, he changed the word to *to glad*. Had Chaucer, and not, presumably, some irresponsible scribe with a penchant for fine words, written " The auricomous Phebus " found in V. 8 of Harl. Ms. 3943,[2] it would have represented an interesting heightening of the style in the rhetorical prologue to a book. The accepted reading is " gold-(y)tressed ", supplying the participial prefix *y*. " Auricomous " is metrically exact. It is interesting to note further Chaucer's careful habit in the *Boece* of translating literally the highly figurative meters, and then explaining them in simple language—the third of the second book is a good

[1] *v. Tales,* C 287 *et seq.*

[2] The same Ms. contains similar curious readings, such as *laur(i)gerus* for *laurer-crowned* (V. 1107).

example. This is like his trick in the *Tales* of describing night poetically, and concluding,

> This is as muche to seye, as it was nyght.[1]

Yet at other times he wrote thus without any gloss.[2] Obviously, he was master of his rules, not they of him.

It would be interesting to trace, if possible, some of Chaucer's effective words to their source, to ascertain which, if any, have a distinct origin in rhetoric, but when one remembers how difficult it is to recall where or how he learned most of his own words, even the most unusual, he will probably despair of tracing Chaucer's. Chaucer' favorites *eternity* and *eterne*, which he may be said to have introduced into English, he learned doubtless from Boethius. Certain others first used by him in English occur in Geoffrey de Vinsauf, notably: *abusioun*, which occurs in the *Nova Poetria* several times close together; *expert*, and *defusion*, an uncommon word, which occur in one of the two passages of the Latin poem with which there can be no question that Chaucer was familiar; *mansuete* (first used by him to describe Criseyde), which occurs in a passage telling how to describe a woman. Chaucer was familiar with such passages, and not unlikely with this very one. Again, the highly effective epithet *erratik* (*the erratik sterres*) at the end of *Troilus* is borrowed literally from Boccaccio.[3] In like manner, the source of many other of his words might be traced or surmised, but the origin of most must remain undiscovered.

It is sufficient to observe how many genuinely fresh and new terms Chaucer used. To his contemporaries, this freshness was naturally more obvious than to us. By example and

[1] *Franklin's Tale*, F 1016-18.

[2] *e. g. Merchant's Tale*, E 1795-99, *etc.*

[3] *Troilus*, v. 1812.

even by precept they observed him to have chosen his words with care and, in the truest sense, to have adorned his matter. It could not have escaped their attention that his new words, so happily used, were chiefly borrowed from courtly French or learned Latin. All this accorded with the literary standards taught by rhetoric. So great and safe a guide, therefore, they never hesitated to follow as they could.

3. THE CHAUCERIAN SUCCESSION

The effect of Chaucer's example is clearly visible in the work of his younger contemporaries and immediate successors. Foremost among them is his professed disciple Lydgate. The vocabulary of that most prolific writer has been painstakingly checked up by Dr. Georg Reismueller of Munich with interesting results. The intention was to list all the words from French or Latin which Lydgate first used in English. The result is a total of over eight hundred words, the larger number of which are truly new borrowings or formations. Some, while not discovered earlier in English books, are quite natural developments of words already in use. One, at least, seems in error — *entermail,* which I believe to be a mere variant of *entermele* (= intermingle). Yet whatever allowances are made, the total number of genuinely new words employed by Lydgate is distinctly impressive. They are, moreover, generally striking and apposite.

In addition, Lydgate culled many choice words from his literary predecessors. Words first noted in Hampole, Trevisa, Gower, and others, Dr. Reismueller points out, are found next in him. But in particular, as stated above, he drew lavishly upon the treasury of Chaucer, especially upon the stylistic *Troilus.*

That this was conscious borrowing and not mere absorption, appears most certainly from Lydgate's frank confession

of how he used Chaucer. When, in the *Troy Book*, he attempted to describe Cressida, he was naturally reminded of Chaucer's great tragedy, and he acknowledges that he needs must crave his master's help,

> And seke his boke, that is left behynde,
> Som goodly words therein for to fynde,
> To sette among the crokid lynys rude
> Which I do write; as by similitude,
> The ruby stant, so royal of renoun,
> Withinne a ryng of copour or latoun.[1]

More specific still as an indication of what he regarded as admirable in his master's diction and sought to perpetuate is a passage in his translated *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, in the course of which occurs a hymn to the Virgin. Chaucer had translated this, the well-known A.B.C., and Lydgate, after duly noting the fact, announces that

> . . . ffor memoyre off that poete,
> Wyth al his rethorykes swete,
> That was the ffyrste in any age
> That amendede our langage,
> Therefore, as I am bound of dette,
> In thys book I wyl hym sette,
> And ympen this Oryson
> Affter his translation,
> My purpos to determyne,
> That yt shal enlumyne
> Thys lytyl book, Rud of makyng,
> With some clause of hys wrytyng.[2]

Now the diction of this poem is distinctly "aureate"—not excessively, but still noticeably. *Mercyable Quene, Queen of misericorde, so noble of apparaile*, whom God . . . *from his ancille*[2] . . . *made maistresse, vicaire . . . of al the world,*

[1] *L. c.*, II. 4677 *et seq.*

[2] *L. c.*, lines 19773-84.

and . . . governeresse[1] *of hevene*—all these words and many besides like them, make Chaucer's translation distinctly choice. Poems in honor of the Virgin were traditionally to be beautified. How Chaucer observed the tradition, so far as word-choice is concerned, is clear. It is also clear in what way Lydgate supposed that Chaucer "amendede" our language, and how a subject might be "enlumyned".

Of Lydgate, who became a great exemplar in his turn,[2] it is unnecessary to speak further. The general re-enforcement of rhetorical precept through Chaucer's example need not be traced in detail. A few examples will suffice in illustration. One is the imitation of Boethius, probably based upon Chaucer's translation, made by Thomas Usk in the poet's own lifetime, the so-called *Testament of Love*. Another is the imitation of the Troilus, in the tragi-comic romance, *Amoryus and Cleopas*, by John Metham, in the mid-fifteenth century. Metham's use of proems to the incipient books, mythological references, digressions, dialogue, apostrophes, his *Go, little book,* and long commendatory ending, are all as suggestive of their source as obviously borrowed incidents, such as the first meeting of the two principal characters in church. It has become a commonplace of literary comment to remark upon the imitation of Chaucer, his verse and his diction, by the "aureate" Scottish poets, especially the first James, Henryson, and Dunbar. It is not such a commonplace to remark that their new words are part of the imitation.

[1] First use of these words in English.

[2] He was early grouped with Gower and Chaucer into a kind of poetic triumvirate, probably first by Bokenham. *V. et* George Ashby's *Primier poetes of this nacion*, E. E. T. S. 76 E. S., p. 13; Hawes's *A Commendation of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, Pastime of Pleasure, etc.* Gower was accounted (*e. g.* by the printer Berthelette) the clearest in diction; his English was probably nearer the colloquial average of his time. This is further proof that Chaucer's vocabulary was select.

Thus we may realize from still another point of view the nature of the influence exerted by Chaucer's work. All the old high-flown epithets of praise take renewed meaning. We can feel the cumulative effect of so much admiration. The stylist's arguments were well-nigh irrefutable with such a model at hand, and Skelton's protest that Chaucer's " termes are not darcke " is just such a phrase of reaction as shows to what a pass things finally came. Who dare call the clerks blind who saw only the " golden " side of the shield? It was there.

IV

Special Aspects of the Tradition

I. RHYME

The general situation indicated by the foregoing account of the absorption of the rhetorical tradition into English was maintained and re-enforced by certain special causes. One of these was the necessities created by the requirements of rhyme. It is quite obvious to anyone reading in the literature of the fifteenth century that a large proportion of the rhymes are Romance words, and not only that, but many in addition are odd, choice, or "aureate". It is necessary, therefore, to inquire to what extent the exigencies of rhyme aided in developing the diction we are considering.

Since the influence of Chaucer was so great upon fifteenth-century literature, some observation of his practice is manifestly in order. A study of the first ninety-eight lines of the *Troilus* reveals some interesting facts. These lines comprise the first fourteen stanzas of the poem, eight of which are expository, six narrative. They contain in all seventy-two different Romance words, and, exclusive of mere relational words, one hundred and forty-one native words, besides proper names. Of the Romance words thirty-seven are rhymes, thirty-two occur within the line, three are in both positions. The total of Romance rhymes is forty-two, two being repeated. Of the other rhymes, fifty are English, thirty-eight different words being used: the remaining six are proper names. The number of Romance words in the expository portion is forty-five, including twenty-nine rhymes—a prepon-

derate proportion. Of these words, one only is incontestably Chaucerian—*expert* (line 67). One other, *benignity* (rhyme, 40), is perhaps here first used by him, but it occurs almost simultaneously in Wiclif and elsewhere. A few words (*auctorite*, line 65, rhyme; *generally*, line 86; *sorte*, line 76) are used, apparently, in senses new or slightly changed from those hitherto developed.

The general effect of the diction here and elsewhere in this indubitably stylistic poem is that of something elegant though not precious. All the words are used with such ease and propriety as to give the reader distinct pleasure. In addition, there is a distinct sense of novelty and freshness conveyed by most of them. Only one or two in this passage are new-minted, but, especially to conservative readers, many more would have seemed almost neologisms at that time. *Endite* (line 6, rhyme) and *instrument* (line 10, rhyme) would have been of this sort. It is of interest to note that Chaucer varies the word *pray*, used here several times, by the old native *biddeth*, indicating not so much that *pray* was trite, as that, having still an exact synonym, it was less commonplace then than now.

But what has this to do with rhyme? It will be noticed that the Romance words show a tendency to turn up frequently in the rhyme. Within this space, however, no very rare word occurs as a rhyme; one rhyme only may be new. The one word, *expert*, which, judged by its entire novelty and choiceness, might be regarded as a contribution to the aureate vocabulary of later times, occurs within the line. In the course of the entire first book there are about nine such new words: three of them occur first within the line, six under the rhyme. Mere newness, of course, did not constitute aureateness. Other words, like *instrument*, though not new, were not so common then and their choiceness was emphasized by their position under the rhyme.

The facts thus evidenced are fairly representative of Chaucer's usage. His new words and his choice words are distributed through the texture of his verse; they are not confined to the rhyme. The same fact is true of his immediate successors; their language is pretty homogeneous, not divisible into aureate rhyme-words and simple line words. In Lydgate's *Minor Poems*, out of some sixty-five words which for their unusualness or rarity would undoubtedly be called aureate by the critics, fewer than thirty are exclusively rhyming words.[1] Likewise in John Metham's *Amoryous* romance, the aureate terms in the first two hundred lines are distributed with reasonable uniformity. There are, within that space, but two arresting rhymes: *divulgate* (line 90), and *fabrified* (line 198). Noteworthy also for aureate terms within rather than at the end of the lines is the *Book of Courtesye*, called Caxton's, which is cited below.

As the fifteenth century wore on, aureate rhymes increased in number—partly because authors developed less ease and flexibility in their phrasing; they more frequently "stuck" upon a rhyme. Yet even Hawes, at first sight so rhyme-bound, was not incurably so. He never for one minute thought that the

[1] Among these, of words noted first in Lydgate, eight were non rhyme, *viz. advertyse, appallyng, aureat, celical, circumspect, inveterat, patyse, protectrix:* five, rhyme, *viz. commutable, domynyoun, indurat, odible, paucascioun.* The proportion was much the same amongst other words occurring once in the poems under observation, while several occurred in both positions. Such observation is, of course, far from conclusive. It would be desirable to trace the words entirely through Lydgate (not many are ἅπαξ λεγόμενα) and also through their original, if they are not primary with him. A greater knowledge of the exact chronology of the several works of Lydgate and other authors than we now possess would be necessary for drawing scientifically accurate conclusions. So far as anything approaching them could now be made, it was indicated that while a large number of the words were originally or predominantly rhyme words the total of such was less than forty per cent: while almost as many were originally prose or line words.

" dulcet " or " aureate " speech was a matter simply of rhyme. The very passage in which he defined aureate terms is finely homogeneous.[1] And almost as if for contrast, or to refute any wrong notion about aureateness, he followed that stanza by another in which the rhymes exclusively, and much of the rest, are as good homely " Saxon " English as could anywhere be found.

An interesting investigation of this phase of the subject of aureate diction has been made by John M. Berdan,[2] who has taken the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century treatise on poetics of Nicolaus Tybinus, and compared its rules for finding difficult rhymes with an annotated rhetorical *Epitaffe*[3] on the death of a Duke of Bedford, composed near the end of the fifteenth century by one Nicholas Smerte, the Duke's falconer. Professor Berdan points out, for instance, that two of a series of five rhymes (*abuse* and *excuse*) are used in this poem in senses slightly different from those recorded earlier in the *New English Dictionary*. Opposite the stanza containing these rhymes was set an orignal note, *C(olor) Introduccio*. This note Professor Berdan explains as referring to the method of finding rhyme described by Tibino (to use his Italian name) as *aliene dictionis introducio*. Two other notes are explained as proving a conscious application of two other rhyme-rules described by Tibino. " Thus," concludes Professor Berdan, " was formed the aureate vocabulary."

This conclusion can only properly refer to the general influence of rhetoric touched on in the article, and not simply to the influence of the rhyming manuals which are more particularly treated of. In the three illustrations chosen, I cannot believe that Smerte himself meant to indicate by his notes his

[1] *Pastime of Pleasure*, II; *v. sup.*

[2] *Romanic Review, l. c. sup.*

[3] *v.* Dyce's *Skelton* Appendix, vol. ii (Boston, 1864).

rhyme choices.[1] Though the examples quoted may be susceptible of different classification, the real principle involved is one which, consciously or unconsciously, is constantly being employed. Authors continually increased their vocabulary thus, and by no means only for the sake of rhyme.

In short, though rhyme may be reckoned as a factor in fostering aureateness, it was not a primary cause. The very tone of Tibino's concluding exhortation proves that. "I urge you to remember faithfully these said methods for finding rimes: for they are themselves not only valuable for finding rimes, but also to the ornamentation of writing and by them authors induce subtility."[2] That is to say, love of the fine word itself is fundamental.

[1] The rhymes themselves do not answer very well to the formulas for rhyme-finding supposedly indicated. *Abuse* and *excuse* were not borrowed words, (*introductio*) but words already long used in English, even if in slightly different senses. *Encombred* (another example) was not a new-coined word, (*fictio*) but likewise a word used in a sense slightly different from previously recorded usage. This term, *fictio*, might with equal or greater propriety be applied to the third example, *penalty*, did not the word occur in practically the same sense earlier. (*Cf.* the English *Imitatio Christi*, "Old Version", E. E. T. S., p. xxii). It is here explained as *transumptio*.

Moreover in those times the term Color, which is attached to all these examples, referred rather to the feeling that suffused a passage, its effect, and not merely to the verbal tricks producing that effect—certainly not to rhyme rules. Elsewhere in his poem Smerte's notes of *Color*, which appear attached to passages rather than to words, indicate this understanding of the term. The three now in question seem to me to indicate: in the case of *Fictio*, an imagined situation introducing the poem; in the case of *Introductio*, a paraphrase of a well-known example in Geoffrey de Vinsauf of lament for a hero—*his* Plantagenet, or "broom-cod" (*Nova Poetria*, 408 ff. *Si fas est accuso Deum, etc.*); and in the case of *Transsumptio* the transfer of an action, weeping, to hounds and falcons, who do not, literally speaking, possess it. Such forcing or extension of meaning as Smerte shows in the case of the words commented upon is a regular phenomenon of language, noted, of course, by the rhetoricians.

[2] Berdan's translation, *l. c.*

Besides, it must, of course, be remembered that aureateness is not confined to verse. It is a distinct trait also of prose. Many of Chaucer's new words were introduced into his prose, and several aureate prose works, plainly intended to be aureate, have already been mentioned, such as the fifteenth-century translation of the *Polychronicon* and the English versions of the *Imitatio Christi*.

2. RHYTHM

It may be noted that, in prose, aureateness was fostered by desire for rhythm. In the manuals of letter-writing already referred to, it was often recommended that words be chosen out of consideration solely for their decorative and euphonious quality, "*sola ornatus et bonae sonoritatis causa*".[1] The subject of prose rhythm, which had been extensively discussed in classical times, was revived, and certain rules laid down which unfortunate secretaries were supposed to follow in elegant Latin correspondence. For their aid, long resounding periphrases were developed, such as "*vestrae probitatis agnoscat discretio*", meaning *listen*.[2] A study of the rhythmic periods of "Johannes Octo"[3] will show that they are constructed in consonance with such principles. An interesting *bona fide* instance of rhythmic inscription has been noted[4] on a chapel near Bath, England, dating from the fifteenth century: "Thys chapill floryschyd with formosyte spectabyll . . . Prior Cantlow had edyfyd." In these and similar instances the fine words are valued for their rich rhythmic sound as well as for their other qualities.

[1] Clark, *Fontes Prosae Numerosae*, p. 13, *etc.*

[2] Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15; Valois, pp. 70-80. *Cf.* the *give credence*, or *audience*, etc., in the poets of our period.

[3] Wilson, *l. c.*

[4] *New English Dictionary*, under *flourished*.

Into this somewhat vexed question, the limits set for the present work do not permit me to go very deeply. A few examples may be quoted to represent the general contention. Thus from Lydgate's *Serpent of Division*[1] (*c.* 1422) I take the following: "Late every man . . . prudently adverten the mutabilite and the sodein change of this fals world and late the wise gouvernours consideren in her hertes the contagious damages and the importable harmes of Division." The polysyllables make a fine rolling period. Phrases in the same work, like *unstancheable and greedy Couetise, irrecuperable harmes, chief and premordial cause*, are at once aureate and rhythmic.

The fifteenth-century translation of Higden's *Polychronicon*[2] goes further. Phrases like *concorporate here lineamentally*, and *attendenge the intricacion inextricable of this labour presente*, are rhythmic, not only in their word-order but in their word-choice.

The translation of the *Imitatio Christi*, Caxton's prefaces and translations, and other prose works may be further examined with this point in mind. Since, however, Professor Saintsbury in his *History of English Prose Rhythm* has gone very fully into this aspect of the subject, I need say no more about it here.

3. ALLITERATION

If rhyme be considered a help to aureate diction, so must alliteration. The extensive alliterative literature of the fourteenth and early fifteenth century observed the principle of alliteration to a higher degree than Old English had done, for whereas in ancient times the number of alliterations in the four-stress line varied normally from three to two, in the

[1] *v.* H. N. MacCracken's fine edition, Yale University Press, 1911.

[2] *v.* the ed. in the *Rolls Series*, vol. lxi, pt. 1, *Prol.*

fourteenth century three are generally present, occasionally four, and in addition the alliteration is often carried over through several lines. The necessity so created resulted in the use of some terms that might be called aureate. Professor Lounsbury was led to remark, rather hastily, that because of the occurrence of *spelunke* (Latin, *spelunca*, cave) and several other such words in *Piers Plowman*, Langland more deserved to be called an innovator than Chaucer.[1]

Study of the great alliterative romances[2] and of semi-alliterative works like *The Pearl* will reveal a certain preciosity of diction which, though the words be not by any means all Latin or Romance, may yet be termed aureateness. It should be recalled that Stephen Hawes in defining aureate terms said that they are such as are "expedient" either "in Latyn or in English".

4. TRANSLATION

Translation has also been suggested as a cause of aureate diction. This is the case, to some extent, in works like the fifteenth-century translation of Higden, and that of Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi* made at about the same time (*i. e.* the one called the "Old Version" by its editor in the Early English Text Society's publications. Caxton's translations, also, contain many fine words lifted bodily from his originals, and many other examples might be adduced. The use of words like *concorporate* and *longanimity*, transferred from an original, afford strong evidence of the influence of translation in developing the aureate vocabulary.

In spite, however, of the comparative frequency of this practice, translation cannot be said to be more than a second-

[1] *Studies in Chaucer* V (v. pt. ii, p. 452, London, 1892).

[2] Instance may be made of the *Wars of Alexander*, in which occur *mascles* = spots; *morsure* = biting, *pariet* = wall.

ary cause in producing aureate diction. It simply suggested, like rhyme, a means to an end. Even in the case of the works above cited, this is true, for the first contains in many of its most aureate passages words unknown to Higden. Compared to Trevisa's, the translation is poor, abridged in some places, inaccurate in others, and not always clear. But it is undoubtedly aureate. The florid preface, for instance, though shorter than its original, contains some thirty-six noticeably aureate phrases. Of these, twenty-three are direct copies of the Latin, for example, *commixtion, context, exemplars of acciones spectable* (Latin, *spectabilium actionum exemplaria*), *divine miseracion, etc.* But the very respectable number of thirteen are the translator's own additions, *viz.: enhaunsede and exaltede* (Latin, *attollendi*), *mellifluous* (three times—a favorite word with the translator), *resplendence, a slawe soule and a slipper memory, ornate eloquence, inoppinable appetite, advertenge, obnubilous and clowdy, nowble and laureate poete callede Homerus* (Latin, *Homerianos*, adj.), *have indignacion, faith and credulity, contrarious.* The list of directly borrowed words in the *Imitatio* translation is more impressive.[1] A large number, however, of these words were already known to literature (as *abiecte, abusion, excusacion, etc.*), and so are not solely inspired by the fact of translation. Finally, in Caxton, the borrowed word is frequently coupled with another, sometimes native and simple, sometimes not, so that it would appear as if he took words over not simply for their own sake, but to provide those rich doublets which mark his own and other English attempts at a lofty style.

It was the general custom of the age, when translating, not to take over the word itself. This is readily apparent in translation before Chaucer's time. It is generally true of Chaucer's own work. That part of the *Romaunt of the Rose*

[1] See Ingram's edition, E. E. T. S., 63 E. S., pp. xxi-xxii.

translation which is usually conceded to be his, shows very few transfers; the language is comparatively simple, as in the original. His *Boethius* translation contains terms both rare and new in English, of aureate effect, derived from the original, but the whole translation impresses one as having been made in a simple, idiomatic diction, well-chosen, suggesting, as is most proper, rather speech than writing. As has already been remarked, the *Troilus* contains but few of Boccaccio's words, though among those few are one or two very striking terms. In the *A. B. C.*, praised by Lydgate for its aureateness, comparison of the first two stanzas with the original shows only three duplicated terms: *glorious, virgin, adversary;* perhaps also *socour:* by no means unusual, so that it would appear that Chaucer's fine words in that piece are largely of his own seeking, especially since he rather paraphrased the poem than translated it. What most impresses me, however, is the fact that even when words are transferred literally from an original, it is by no means always to the same position. Had aureate terms been always, or even largely, sought deliberately from translation, they would have been transferred immediately, as in so many cases in the fifteenth-century Higden.

It may be said that Chaucer is not a good example, since he was professedly anxious to render the sense primarily, and not to "adorn" his versions. Without arguing this question again, I will simply point to the usage of others, not to Trevisa, whose letter about translation is most interesting reading, or to translators like him, but to those professedly concerned about style as well as about sense, even though deprecatory of their own efforts. For example, Hoccleve's translations, where I have been able to check them up more completely, as in the case of his *Letter to Cupid* and in his rendering of *Gesta Romanorum* stories, do not show many direct transfers. Christine de Pisan's *Epistre au Dieu d'Amours*, the model for the former, may be less aureate than some of her other works; at

any rate, Hoccleve is not, verbally, much indebted to it for the dignified language *his* letter contains.[1] The language of both the Latin and the English *Gesta* is fairly simple and concise; these qualities are not closely imitated by Hoccleve in his rendering of the story of Jereslaus's wife, or that of Jonothas. In them, the stanza form chosen by him for his translation naturally tempted him to verbosity, and his manner of yielding reminds one of Malmesbury's saying that to an Englishman style means pomp.

It might be supposed that so great a translator as Lydgate would be the best man to examine on this score, especially in view of his fondness for novel words, but at present, unfortunately, many of his most important sources, while known, do not exist in easily accessible editions. His known habit of padding, and the fairly uniform character of his language, make it seem probable, *a priori*, that as with others translation simply gave him a store of words to use as he saw fit. The two instances given by Dr. Reismueller as presumptive evidence that translation furnished him directly with a large proportion of his new words are far from conclusive in a stylistic relation. They are *dondine*, an instrument of torture, and *bumbard*, a piece of ordnance, both occurring, Dr. Reismueller has ascertained, in the passage of his original which Lydgate was translating at that point. But both are technical words, used in their exact sense, and therefore hardly subject to remark stylistically. They were most likely current in English; they seem at any rate adapted to English speech (French, *dondaine, bombarde*). Furthermore, when in the *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* he wrote

> which that clerkys in sentence
> Calle wantyng, or carence,
> Of original ryghtwysnesse. . . .

[1] See the comparison, not very accurately made, in E. E T. S., 61 E. S., pp. 243-248. The full text of the *Epistre* is in *Soc. des An. Textes Fran.*, vol. ii, pp. 1-27 of its author's works.

the term *carence* may most likely be explained as induced by rhyme and only partly as a translation, yet I cannot help feeling that it was also a satisfaction to the author to introduce a word of this kind, with its scholarly and exact associations, into his verse, more so than *dondine* or *bombard*. There is this essential difference: that there were no other words for the material objects, but *carence* was an elegant equivalent for plain English *wantyng*. Incidentally, it is interesting to note how the fifteenth century in thus explaining an English by a Latin term reversed the practice of the fourteenth. Aureate diction had made considerable progress.

With regard to translation, my conclusion is, that the practice of it, as the rhetoricians themselves pointed out, simply increased the vocabulary in a general way. Translation of a highly "colored" piece of literature might involve an attempt to reproduce its beauties, but not (witness always the fifteenth-century Higden) by simple bodily transfer of its words. Their reading and translation together gave translators rich stores of words upon which they could readily draw when the stylistic impulse seized them. Therefore I reckon translation as a distinct help to the aureate style, or as sometimes providing an impulse towards it, but as neither a sole nor even a principal cause.

5. PATRONAGE

A fifth cause of aureate diction remains to be discussed. It is patronage. This term is one somewhat loosely used. It is oftenest limited to that habit of subsidizing authors which is most familiarly illustrated by reference to early eighteenth-century practice. It may also, however, mean simply an encouraging interest in letters on the part of those superior in station to an author, with or without donatives of money or honors. Probably even in the palmiest days of patronage no man ever received social preferment, wealth, or increased posi-

tion simply because he could write. If that were all he could do, and his services were wanted, he was hired. His literature, however, if it proved interesting or useful, might further recommend him, if it had not introduced him, to the attention of the great, and so indirectly contribute to his worldly advancement. The latter may have been the case with Chaucer; the former is more common.

Hitherto, this concomitant of fifteenth-century literature has been by no means unnoticed, though somewhat imperfectly estimated. An interest in literature on the part of the Plantagenet and especially of the Lancastrian kings has often been remarked; Lydgate's biographers and editors, especially Schick, in his edition of the *Temple of Glas*, have listed his patrons and commissions; but there have been few thorough studies of the subject for this period such as that made by Professor Samuel Moore for Norfolk and Suffolk, c. 1450.[1] In Professor Moore's opinion, this patronage came to little in the end, because it produced no new literary types. He brings forward again, however, the question of the outburst of alliterative literature in the West Midlands a century earlier, suggesting that it may have been due to similar encouraging conditions. There is much in the refined and courtly character of that literature to support the suggestion.

These conditions of whole or semi-patronage, I believe, exercised a marked influence on the diction of the fifteenth-century *litterateurs*. Moore's articles prove that patronage affected not only Lydgate, but also Burgh, both of whom were aureate, and Bokenham, who knew what style was, though he had hardly any himself. Hulbert, who denies patronage to Chaucer, allows it to Hoccleve, on the testimony of their verses.[2] Not to cite other examples, like those of John

[1] See *Pub. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, 1912-13.

[2] P. 64, *op. cit. inf.*

Metham or William Atkynson in England, we might note that the aureate Scottish poets, in the opinion of Gregory Smith,[1] were influenced in their work by James IV's patronage of art and letters. In France, during the century, Christine de Pisan, Alain Chartier, and the *Grandes Rhetoriqueurs*, whose diction is in effect the same as that which we are considering, were all beneficiaries of patronage. The fact, then, that a book was to pass, presumably, under the eye of people educated as well as the writer, or better than he, in the rhetorical tradition, was quite as much a reason for the frequent apologies by authors for the imperfections of their works as was natural or artificial modesty, or a convention dating from classic times. This custom alone is clear, though negative, evidence of an existing critical taste. More interesting are some of the direct references to a cultivated public and its critical attitude.

Valuable testimony to the formal character of the age, are its numerous treatises on courtesy and etiquette. All of these enjoined care in speech and delivery as part of the reverent bearing due one's superior. At times, as in Lydgate's *Stans Puer ad Mensam*, they are themselves couched in choice language. But the most interesting of them is probably Caxton's, which, in addition to the usual precepts, elegantly expressed, contains a long digression, of one hundred and nineteen lines (stanzas 45-61) in praise of literature and especially of Gower, Chaucer, Hoccleve, and Lydgate, " founders of our language ". These stanzas are eloquently phrased. Their intent is to urge reading, that one's mind may be well-stored with matter and the means of adequately expressing it.

The class of noble and clerkly readers by and for whom the tradition of letters was chiefly maintained, were accustomed to be approached and addressed with formal dignity. This is

[1] *The Transition Period* (*i. e.*, the fifteenth century), in the *Periods of European Literature Series*. See p. 49.

especially plain in the epistolary tradition.[1] Lively examples of this are to be found in Chaucer. The young squire was familiar with the manners of court. He knew how a message to a king should sound, though he might not have been able to compose one himself, and he knew how it should be read aloud.[2] The negative example in *Troilus* is even more interesting. Towards the end of the second book, Pandarus gives the lovelorn youth good advice with regard to the letter he is to send to Criseyde.[3] The passage is a fine example of Chaucer's ideas of literary fitness. This particular letter is not to be *digneliche* endited. So reads the accepted version of line 1024. But collation of the *Troilus* Mss. reveals five other readings: *dyneliche ne mystiliche* (questioned by Pollard as a corruption of *deynousliche*); *clerkissly, clergaly, clerkly* (supposed by Professor Root, probably in view of the *scrivenly ne craftily* in line 1026, to be copyists' errors); and *papally*. The last variant is unaccounted for, but one thinks instinctively of the papal secretaries chosen from the "graduates" of the famous Orleans school, and the whole tradition of the *Cancellaria*. In such a process of constant revision of the text as that so vividly described by Professor Root, it is not impossible that one or two of these variants may represent tentative choices by Chaucer himself.[4] At any rate they present, taken together, almost a little epitome of the epistolary tradition, and the quarters in which one might expect to find it flourishing. However suitable for argument or royal or papal communications, such a style was too ornate to seem sincere in a genuine

[1] See the discussion of this topic by M. B. Hansche, *The Formative Period of English Familiar Letter-writers, &c.*, Phila., 1902.

[2] *Tales*, F 88-109. Note the joke about the "heigh" style!

[3] *Troilus*, II., lines 1023-50 *et seq.* The passage well illustrates what a fresh mind Chaucer brought to bear on rhetoric.

[4] See *The Textual Tradition of Chaucer's Troilus*, Chaucer Society, vol. 99, series 1.

love-letter. *Per contra*, it might be permissible in the former. And it is noteworthy that in literary imitations of these, and in the formal complaints, bills, and epistles between allegorical or mythological personages, of which the century was so prolific, aureate terms and turns of phrase are numerous.[1]

This, however, is simply a general condition, of which our subject demands more specific instances. These are not wanting. From the beginning of Old English literature in the seventh century, dedication of books to people of rank are accompanied by references to style and marked by efforts at it. The Latin letters of the eleventh and following centuries which have already been referred to, and of which large collections exist, "were not merely private letters, but elaborate and courtly compositions",[2] their style generally rising in proportion to the dignity of the writer or of the person addressed.

With the accession of the Plantagenets, patronage of letters and the obligations of style thereby imposed were perhaps even more distinctly recognized than before. It has been stated[3] that these kings fostered certain forms of literature, such as history and romance (almost always stylistic), for political purposes, just as it is known that they encouraged other forms, and of course these also, for pleasure only. Henry II was exhorted like the patrons of old, like Maecenas.[4] His son Richard was Geoffrey de Vinsauf's hero. Richard II, the unheroic namesake of that ill-starred champion, has been accounted a patron of English letters. His patronage may

[1] As an example of the former, see the letter from Lucius to Arthur in the alliterative *Morte Arthur*, E. E. T. S., 8 O. S., lines 86 ff.; of the latter, Chaucer's *Compleynte unto Pite*. Note the epithet *serenous*, line 90 (not a rhyme), so unusual a word that scribes misread it.

[2] Clark, *Fontes Prosae Numerosae*, p. 13.

[3] *Cf. Cambridge Hist. Eng. Literature*, vol. i, chap. ix; Greene, *Short History*, chap. iii, sec. i; *etc.*

[4] By Osbert of Clara; *v.* Caxton Society, vol. v, pp. 205-11.

have been overrated, but his interest in literature seems a fact. The gift of books detailed by Froissart is the best proof of this, even if their binding only appealed to the king as much as it did to their author.[1] All of Edward III's children were well educated. John of Gaunt has been called Chaucer's patron. The extent to which his "patronage", whatever it was, was a cause of Chaucer's receiving pensions and offices may have been overestimated,[2] but this fact does not disprove an interest in letters.[3] His descendants, the Lancastrian kings, were noted for literary commissions. Their court imitated them. Henry VI from the beginning was in the hands of the clerks for them to work their will upon. His uncle and regent, Humphrey of Gloucester, was famous for his interest in books and libraries. The mother of Henry VII not only gave commissions, but herself essayed authorship,[4] and was the object of dedications.[5]

Authors working under these conditions sought to make their diction choice, learned, or aureate. A striking example is Lydgate's *Legend of St. Margaret*, for instance, written by special request of Lady March. Subject or patron, or both together, shed, in this instance, some "aureate lycoure" into

[1] *Chronicles of England, France and Spain*, chap. xxii (Dunster's text, *Everyman's Library*, pp. 522 and 525). "I had taken care to form a collection of ... poetry ... finely ornamented ... He (*the king*) opened it and looked into it with much pleasure. He ought to have been pleased, for it was handsomely written and illuminated, and bound in crimson velvet, &c. . . He dipped into several places, reading parts aloud." Besides this, there are the lines, later suppressed, in the prologue of the *Confessio Amantis*, and an entry on the *Issues Roll* under 1380 for purchase of books.

[2] See J. R. Hulbert, *Chaucer's Official Life* (Univ. of Chicago thesis), Banta Pub. Co., 1912, p. 64.

[3] See review of Hulbert, *op. cit.*, by Moore, *Pub. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, 28 (1913), pp. 189-193.

[4] *Imitatio Christi, op. cit.* Her work is mildly aureate.

[5] Caxton, *Blanchardyn and Eglantyne*, E. E. T. S., 58 E. S.

his pen.[1] In like manner, his poem to St. Denis, said to have been written at the request of the French king, is gilded, like the *Legend*, with special heaviness, particularly at the beginning and end.[2] Aureate touches, indeed, are lacking in few pieces written by the Monk of Bury, but these are most noticeable in poems of his actually inscribed to people of dignity and condition, or in a sense dedicated to their subject, to the aristocracy of Heaven, as it were.[3] John Metham's aureate romance, *Amoryous and Cleopas*, was composed in elevated style because of dedication to Sir Miles Stapleton and his Lady. Other instances might be cited, but in Caxton they may be found all summed up in the preface to the *Aeneydos*, where he distinctly said that he would admit some, not the most, clerkly and learned terms into the translation because the book was intended for gentlemen. In so doing, he simply followed an immemorial tradition.

[1] *Minor Poems*, E. E. T. S., 107 E. S., pp. 173 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 127 ff.

[3] See the *Misericordias*, and the *St. Anne: Minor Poems*, pp. 71 ff. and 130 ff.; also the *Te Deum*, *ibid.*, pp. 21-24.

V

In Conclusion

All this evidence goes to show that the rhetorical traditions planted amongst the English with the establishment of the first Christian schools encouraged a select or precious Latinity both by precept and example. Strong in great scholars or clerks like Aldhelm, Bede, Malmesbury, John of Salisbury, and de Vinsauf, reflected in the letters, treatises, and histories of men as different as Alcuin, Æthelwerd, de Losinga, Monmouth, Roger Bacon and Grosseteste (to name only some of the more prominent—all men of affairs or varied interests), it was known, however vaguely, to all who wrote or read. This tradition expressed itself not only in figures or "colors" (verbal or intellectual), which have not been specifically considered here, but in a general effort to be refined, elegant or stately in word-choice itself.

Though associated at first only with Latin literature, this tradition necessarily exercised an influence on the minds of Englishmen which presently shows in vernacular composition. With the renewed cultivation of literature in the native tongue during the thirteenth and early fourteenth century, in so far as it was intended for plain people's reading, English was kept studiously "pure" in diction, picturesque, but simple and unelaborate. This point is clearly proved by reference to the work of Layamon or Orm, to the popular religious writing of the times, and especially to that of Robert Mannyng and Dan Mitchel. But when the work was intended for educated or courtly readers, rhetoric enjoined that it be "after a higher

rate". The stylistic pretence is present, and choice words, such as were more familiar to trained ears, crop out. This is visible in as early a work as the *Ancren Riwle*, but as the number of educated readers of English increased during the fourteenth century so did the tendency, until, upon coming to Chaucer, we find that all his first admirers said about the gaiety and freshness of his diction is, in view of his innovations, literally true. Chaucer used the language that was easiest and most natural to him and most suitable to his purposes. No theory that one particular sort of word was better than any other hampered him, but his experience and sense of fitness introduced an extraordinary number of new and choice words into English literature, large numbers of them being Romance or Romance-Latin in immediate origin. This example, strengthening the ideals they were continually taught, encouraged his imitators to make similar innovations. Lydgate was foremost in taking this course, and his example became fully as potent as Chaucer's. In the course of the fifteenth century such innovation became increasingly deliberate. Towards the close of the century it culminated not, however, in a sudden peak, but in a sort of tableland gradually approached. It terminated in the face of Humanism, or we may say assumed a new form. The seventeenth century witnessed its resurgence in such manuals as Henry Cokeram's, which would have been as welcome and well-thumbed a book in most fifteenth-century writing-rooms as a Roget's *Thesaurus* is said to be in newspaper offices today.

Fully to understand the phenomenon, we should remember that English words also were regarded as potentially choice. The whole matter cannot be entirely presented until the stylistic use of English and dialectal words has also been investigated, questions of personal taste examined, and evidence presumptive as well as evidence direct considered. These, however, have for the moment been regarded as secondary

issues and attention has been here called chiefly to direct evidence of word-choice consciously made under the influence of rhetorical precept.

The rhetorical tradition thus touched upon was very broad. Certain of its aspects, such as its application to rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, translation, and what is somewhat loosely termed patronage, have been more particularly dwelt upon. All of these habits were powerful in developing the diction sometimes regarded as peculiar to the fifteenth century.

Its peculiarity is more apparent than real, and due almost wholly to a break in tradition. Save by a few scholars, no author of the fifteenth-century aureate school has been read since the latter part of the sixteenth century. Rightly or wrongly, popular knowledge and reading, save of a few great outlying figures like Chaucer, does not usually go back further than to Shakespeare's contemporaries. The literary tradition formed anew in the sixteenth century has changed in some respects, but it has been continuous. That of the fifteenth century, so far as it still exists, does so less by direct survival than by perpetuation of part of it in the work of later men who are still read. Were the Shakespearean and Miltonic vocabularies to become as unfamiliar as the Lydgatian [1] and Skeltonic, they would present more oddities than, as a matter of fact, even to many cultivated readers, they do.

In consequence of such a break in tradition many words of the aureate vocabulary that had not a wide currency became obsolete entirely. Nor was this true of whole words only. Often the root of a word has survived, but with a different ending, as *abuse* instead of *abusion*, or *habitation* in preference to *habitacle*. Other words, like *abject*, are now found only in specialized senses. Even the orthography of the fif-

[1] Though Lydgate's vocabulary has been called "modern", in contradistinction to Chaucer's. *v.* Schick, *Temple of Glas*, E. E. T. S., Introd.

teenth century, its doublings, its use of *y* for *i*, and *c* for the "soft" sound of *t* (in *-cion*, now *-tion*), plays a part in alienizing its words from modern consciousness.

From a broader point of view, one may, after reading in the literature of the period, disregard circumstances like these as of little moment. In another respect, however, the tradition has been more effectually broken. Obsolete meanings may be recovered, but feeling, association, are more elusive. The fact is, our ideas of fitness have been modified. In the fifteenth century, a sense of fitness led authors to cultivate the pompous and the grandiose. Limitation of subject to abstract themes, or those remote from daily life, and to a rather select audience, inclined them that way all the more. In modern times, as in Shakespeare's and in Chaucer's, we are more sensitive to common human interests. More and more we neglect formal manners, and with them formal diction. Hence, to an impartial observer it would appear that though they professed to uphold the same principle, the two literary modes, ours and theirs, are mutually strange to each other.

In that principle of fitness is to be found the real explanation of aureate diction. Fostered for centuries in the schools, it took on more and more the color of its environment. Reciprocally it influenced the succeeding generations of clerks who used it until they, imbued with it, transmitted their taste to those princes, gentlemen and others whose education they had in charge. It is a striking instance of inbreeding's producing a special type of mentality and expression. So long as the educational system remained the same, the aureate tradition was bound to retain its particular tinge.

Such was the why of aureateness. It was part of the slowly-developed and carefully-guarded sense of propriety cherished by the clerkly and educated classes. It was, so to speak, part of the prerogative belonging in those days to rank. Like many other prerogatives, grown old and stiff, it disap-

peared before the arrogant onslaught of fresh popular ideas. It had its parallels, of course, in later times, but these were never quite the same. It is more easily to be connected with what went before than with what came after.

Its ultimate cause, then, is psychological. Men had it because they wanted it. The aureate school was expressive as well as impressive. It could not so insist on fitness and confuse that notion with oddity, foreign derivation, rhyme, or whatever. A word was chosen; it was written; it was acceptable to those who considered themselves trained judges. That was aureate diction. It aimed at setting forth its matter worthily, according to a great tradition. If indeed it failed and ceased, it was not because its ideal was bad, but because men got out of touch and out of sympathy with the fifteenth century.

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II. Texts

A.—Collections used

Note.—The following collections have been completely examined. The parts more particularly used are listed below, with abbreviations as indicated.

B. C. Bannantyne Club, Edinburgh 1825-1848.

C. S. Chaucer Society, Series 1 and 2, London, 1867.

Ca. So. Caxton Society, London, etc., vols. 1-16, 1844-1854.

E. E. T. S. Early English Text Society, Original Series, 1864 to date; Extra Series, 1867 to date. London.

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P. S. Percy Society.
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S. A. T. F. Société des Anciennes Textes Francaises, Paris, 1875 on.
S. T. S. Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh and London.

B.—WORKS AND AUTHORS

NOTE.—The following list is bound ultimately to develop into a catalogue of medieval literature. At present it includes only those authors whose works were fully reviewed in expectation of more direct or obvious stylistic references. Doubtless some have been forgotten.

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ABBREVIATIONS

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