

ON CERTAIN NEGLECTED FACTS RELATING
TO ENGLISH AUTHORS BURIED IN ST.
SAVIOUR'S COLLEGIATE CHURCH,
SOUTHWARK.

A paper read at a meeting of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society, at St. Saviour's Collegiate Church, Southwark, 18th October, 1902.

BY

F. G. FLEAY, Esq., M.A.

I WILLINGLY respond to the request conveyed to me, that I should say a few words on the illustrious dead who are connected with those parts of English literature with which I am most conversant, and who, being buried in the noble edifice which we are visiting to-day, afford a fitting theme for a short address on this occasion. I am conscious that it is an honour to me that you should select one so little conspicuous to the public eye, when so many endowed with greater gifts of oratory would gladly have filled the position assigned to me ; and I take the reason for your choice to be that you desire, not so much a momentary pleasure in listening to an eloquent encomium on the merits of great writers of old time, as a gleaning of facts, hitherto unknown or neglected, which may renew your interest in their careers, by proposing new problems for solution, or solving old ones which still offer difficulties to the student. Indeed, Mr. Shore has hinted to me that he should like me to give you something not unworthy of a place in your recorded transactions. I must therefore

restrict myself to such topics as have not been handled or have been handled incompletely by other men. I shall say nothing of the Shakespearian actors, Sander Cooke and Robert Gough, who are buried here ; nor of William Egglestone, who was married here ; nor of John Rice, who was curate here ; nor of Nathaniel Field and his controversy with Mr. Sutton the preacher here ; nor of William Kemp, who lived hard by ; nor even of Lawrence Fletcher, here buried ; tempting as this theme would be on account of his connection with the Essex troubles, the visit of Shakespeare to Scotland, and the writing of *Macbeth*. I shall treat only of three subjects : 1, Gower ; 2, Edmond Shakespeare ; 3, Fletcher and Massinger.

Firstly, then, of Gower. John Gower, the liberal contributor to the rebuilding of the Priory of St. Mary Overies, was born about 1333 ; little is known of him, and of that little I propose to treat of one point only ; the rest is accessible in the cheap edition of his works, or in any Biographical Dictionary : this point is the nature of his relations with Chaucer, the one thing that any modern English reader can be expected to care about ; as to his works : his "*Speculum Meditantis*" is in French ; his "*Vox Clamantis*" is in Latin ; and his "*Confessio Amantis*," with which we have some concern, is drearily monotonous ; it is true that he was in a sense a kind of laureate writing directly under the king's orders ; but if we had to study the writings of all poets of this kind it would be hard on us ; and on our posterity it would be something one avoids to think of. Let us then come to facts. In 1378, Chaucer, who was certainly five, some think seventeen, years younger than Gower, went to

Lombardy and had to appoint two persons to appear for him in the Courts if necessary during his absence : he appointed John Gower and Richard Forrester ; Chaucer and Gower were therefore intimate friends in that year.

In 1581, the assured date of the ending Chaucer's "Troilus and Cressida," Chaucer writes :

O moral Gower, this book I direct
 To thee and to the philosophic Strode.
 To vouchensafe, there need is, to correct
 Of your benignity's and zelè's good.

They were still fast friends ; "moral" is equivalent to author of "Vox Clamantis."

In or about 1383, Gower began his "Confessio Amantis ;" he tells us in his Prologue how, when rowing on the Thames, he met Richard II, into whose boat he was invited and bidden write a new thing for the king's sake, which he did in eight books, probably one book annually, ending it in 1390 : for in 1390 Richard granted "John Gower, clerk" (the description does not say priest), the rectory of Great Braxted in Essex. In book viii of the *Confessio*, he makes Venus say :

And greet well Chaucer when ye meet
 As my disciple and my poete ;
 For in the flowers of his youth
 In sundry wise, as he well couth,
 Of ditties and of songès glade
 The which he for my sakè made
 The land fulfilled is o'er all
 Whereof to him in speciäl
 Above all other I am most holdè.

They were still good friends then in 1390.

In the prologue to the Man of Law's tale (or as for brevity I shall write it the Lawyer's), there is a violent attack on Gower for writing "cursed stories." One important result of my subsequent investigation will be the fixing of the date of this by a consideration of Chaucer's career. Passing this over for the present, in 1392 (16 Rich. II, after 22nd June), Gower transferred his dedication of his *Confessio* from the king to the Duke of Lancaster, and omitted his notice of Chaucer altogether. There had been somehow a great change in their relations between the poets.

Thus far, I am in entire agreement with Skeat, who appears to me to have taken a more rational view of this matter than any preceding editor of Chaucer. But I cannot find in his edition any satisfactory explanation why such a change took place. This I shall try to elucidate, premising that the by-products of this operation may, as often happens, prove more valuable than the result especially sought for. To explain this change of relations between Chaucer and Gower will require a more minute examination of their literary careers than has been ever attempted until now; and before comparing the proceedings of the two poets I must give a sketch of the results of my investigations on two disputed questions. 1. The arrangement of the Canterbury Tales. 2. The chronology of Chaucer's works. I might indeed be content to assume the latter as settled, seeing that the dates of the commencement of the Legend of Good Women and the Canterbury Tales, with which I am mainly concerned, are practically undisputed; but, were I to do this, the main strength of my argument,

which lies in the completeness with which it explains the whole career of Chaucer, would be thrown aside. The arrangement of the tales is no difficult matter ; I give it now as I published it in 1877. The only objection to it, viz., that the Canon saw the pilgrims ride out of their hostelry "in the morrow tyde," from which some deduce that this must have happened in the early morning at Ospringe, is mere hair splitting.

The number of Pilgrims assembled at the Tabard is thirty-one ; and each of these is to tell "tales tweye to Canterburyward," and homeward other two : but there is abundant evidence of continual change of plan in the conduct of this poem ; and in the Parson's prologue we find that every man but he had told his tale, when only twenty-three tales had been told. The five tradesmen of the prologue, who have no individual characteristics, and two of the three Nun's priests must be eliminated. The twenty-four tales actually extant are utterly confused as to order in the MSS., and until Mr. Bradshaw pointed out that they made up ten groups, the members of each group being inseparably connected, no attempt was made to settle the proper consecution. The order of seven of these groups is fixed by the order of the places named. As to the other three, we can only be guided by the time, noting one of prime (? 6 A.M.), one of 10 A.M., and another indicative of forenoon. As there is one other mention of prime, the whole journey naturally falls on two days, thus :—

FIRST DAY.

- | | | | |
|--------|----------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| (a) i. | Prologue | ... | Southwark, at the Tabard. |
| | 1 Knight | ... | Palamon and Arcite. |
| | 2 Miller | ... | Carpenter's wife. |
| | | | Deptford : passed prime, Greenwich. |

The groups i, ii, etc., are numbered in the order given in the best MSS. and Tyrwhitt's edition prior to Mr. Bradshaw's pointing out the necessary geographical order of seven groups: of the other three I leave ii attached to iii; and vii to viii; shifting v only (on account of its mention of Prime) to the beginning of the second day.

The other matter, the chronology of Chaucer's works, is far more intricate, and, although I find little to retract in my first attempt, I find much to add, especially a clear statement of the main principles, by which I am guided in this perplexed and difficult question. Firstly, I would point out that Chaucer's poems fall naturally into three groups; one written for men patrons, John of Gaunt, King Richard II, etc., in which women are satirised as unfaithful, or at least fickle, and marriage is derided; or, if the relation of the sexes do not enter into the plan of the poem, the author throws out sly, satirical remarks against them: of such are the House of Fame, Troilus and Cressida, many of the Canterbury Tales, etc. Next, there is a group in which women are praised as faithful and true, as in many other Canterbury Tales, and especially in the Legend of Good Women. Lastly, there is a smaller group of short poems, in which the poet writes of his own personal affairs, whether (*a*) of his love, platonic or otherwise, or (*b*) letters to his friends (Skogan, Bukton) and patrons (the King and the Princes). These are all short: Complaints, Ballads, Roundels, Envoys, and so forth. But three distinct series must be considered; and, as far as I know, every attempt at chronological arrangement that has hitherto been

made adopts one lineal succession only ; and has therefore failed.

My second main principle is hypothetical, and must be judged by its results. I hold that in every case where a poem is divided into books, parts, fits, etc., one part or book was presented annually to the patron for whom it was written. We know that this was so with the *Good Women*, in which a life was written "year by year," and presented to the queen. If this hypothesis is true, when a change of patrons took place, we may expect to find an unfinished poem, and we know there are several such extant in Chaucer's work. Moreover, if it be true we ought to find Chaucer producing something in most years of his career for his patrons and patronesses : and also some sequence in his personal poems ; though in the latter a full series cannot be expected : many are doubtless lost, and their production would be very irregular.

Let us then apply these principles. I begin with those written for women.

- 1367. Origen on the Magdalen. Translation.
- 1368. A.B.C.: Translation, for Blanche, wife of John of Gaunt.
- 1368. Melibee (a): translation.
- 1369. Sir Thopas (a): unfinished. Blanche died 12 Sept.
- 1370. Tragedies (a): Monk's tale.
- 1371-3. Penitence (a): Parson's translation.
- 1374. Cccile (a): Nun's : Query, for Constance, Gaunt's second wife.
- 1375-80. Grisel (a): Clerk's : in six parts.
- 1381-3. Constance (a): Lawyer's : in three parts (including parts of *De Contemptu Mundi*).
- 1384. Clergeoun (a): Prioress'.
- 1385. Tragedies (b): Monk's : modern additions.

- 1385-6. Cambynskan (a): Squire's: unfinished. Constance and Gaunt leave England in April.
 1386-94. Good Women: for Queen Anne; unfinished. Anne dies 1394.
 1395. Prologue to Good Women (b): for Alceste [Philippa de Courcy].
 1396. Chaucer enters old age.

Of these dates those for Cecile and beginning of Good Women have been proved by Ten Brink and others; and the only differences in the whole order from Skeat's conjectural order are (1) that I regard the Prioress' tale and Sir Thopas as early work; but Skeat admits (iii, 421) the similarities between the Prioress' and the Nun's and the A.B.C., and in iii, 424, seems half inclined to my view that Sir Thopas was early, and points out the want of strictness in the metre. (2) Skeat puts Melibee and Penitence after the Clerk's. I put all Chaucer's prose translations (including Boethius) before it. There is no positive evidence for either view. Now let us turn to the poems written for men patrons.

1367. Alys and Aloysius: "in his youth," *i.e.*, *et al.* 28.
 1367. The Rose: translation for Gaunt.
 1368. The Lion.
 1369. Death of Blanche (incorporating Ceyx): for Gaunt.
 1370-4. Boethius, in five books. Prose translation.
 1374-6. Fame, in three books: unfinished. Ch. employed for king, 1376-7.
 1377-81. Troilus and Cressida, in five books: for Gaunt.
 1382. Birds: for King.
 1383. Mars and Venus: for Gaunt.
 1383-6. Palamon (a), in four parts: for King.
 1387. Anelida: unfinished. Query, for Gaunt.
 1387-94. Canterbury Tales. Query, for King and Queen: unfinished. Queen dies 1394.

The order in this series, as in the former, differs from Skeat's in two points, but in this case they are *much more important*, and I *altogether reject* the gratuitous hypothesis that Chaucer wrote two versions of the Knight's tale. On the contrary, I hold with Tyrwhitt, that in his Palamon he carefully avoided making a second version of the Teseide portion of the Parliament of Birds (ll. 183–294); compressing in the Palamon these sixteen stanzas into as many lines (2809–2815); also that the coincidence between the lines 2809–2815 in Palamon and Troilus v 1807–1827, is so slight as to be of no value for such a hypothesis; while the only real repetition, viz., in Anelida, 22–46, from Palamon, 859–873, is intentional and intended to *emphasize the fact that in both cases Theseus and Hippolita are adumbrations of John of Gaunt and Constance of Spain*, of which more will be said presently.

2. I also reject Ten Brink's date for the House of Fame. There is no evidence as to the priority of either of the dream passages, Fame, 1–54, Troilus, v, 358–385; and the notion that Fame must have been written in a year in which 10th December fell on a Thursday, because Jupiter sends the eagle for Chaucer, can scarcely be seriously considered. The poem was written, I feel confident, in 1374–6, when Chaucer's first three years of labour at reckoning made a hermit of him, ii, 145, and so the king immediately gave him leisure in 1376 and 1377, sending him abroad on his affairs; his practical relief in these years when he must have employed a deputy, authorised or not, is far more to the purpose than the legal permission to appoint one in 1385.

shows that they form a connected series, and the only reason for an early date for this one is the figment of Chaucer's hopeless love for eight years (Blanche, l. 37). I believe the eight years' sickness to mean marriage, only to be remedied by death.

Having now completed the statement of the chronological order of production of all Chaucer's works except the Canterbury Tales, I will attempt to give a hypothetical statement also for them, although this has always been looked on as an insoluble problem, and certainly presents considerable difficulty. In the list of the Tales already given a division into eight groups is indicated by prefixed letters (*a*), (*b*), etc., always coincident with the Bradshaw groups, but omitting iii and ix. To these I shall now refer.

1387. This is certainly the date of the Prologue, 18th April.

1388. Chaucer revises Palamon (Knight) and appends Miller, Reeve, Cook; which are inseparable from it. Cook is unfinished, which indicates some change of plan. I think Skeat right in supposing that a version of Gamelyn was intended to follow here, *e.g.*, the Yeoman's Tale. This settles group (*a*).

1389. He picks up the old Parson's tale of 1371-5, the oldest he had by him (except Melibee and Thopas, which were written for Blanche, and of which more presently); then Cecile, Nun, *a*, of 1374, inserting l. 36-56, and writes Canon's Yeoman and Manciple; groups (*b*) and (*c*).

1390. He picks up Grisildis, Clerk, *a*, of 1375-9, inserts the Envoy and ll. 939-952, 1170-1176; and writes Merchant: group (*d*).

1391-2. He picks up Constance, Lawyer, a, of 1380-2 (including Prologue, ll. 99-133, and ll. 421-7 ; 771-7 ; 925-31 ; 1135-41, from Pope Innocent's *De Contemptu Mundi*) ; writes the Shipman's tale for the wife of Bath ; Friar, and Sumner ; thus completing group (e). He then picks up the unfinished *Cambynskan*, Squire, a, of 1385-6, and writes Franklin, group (f).

1393. He determines to give the Wife a more decent story ; writes the foul wife for her and transfers Dan John to the Shipman ; then, reverting to his former practice, he picks up the Clergeoun, Prioress, a, of 1384 ; then the two tales he wrote for Blanche, 1368-9, Melibee and Thopas ; then the Tragedies, Monk, a, of 1371, b, of 1385 ; adding ll. 561-736 ; and finally writes the Priest, making up group (g).

1394. He writes the Physician and Pardoner.

1395. He revises the Parson, which, in its original shape was probably *Wiclifite* (so written to please Gaunt), into an anti-Lollard treatise on Penance, and adds his Retractions.

This arrangement is necessarily conjectural ; but it offers an explanation of the absence of links between the groups, which no hypothesis of writing straight on from Knight to Parson can give ; and agrees with all known details concerning the dates of individual tales.

One important test of the whole chronology still remains. Does the proposed system give a fairly equable distribution of poetical work through Chaucer's career ? We have a right to expect this ; for Chaucer was a courtier depending on his patrons, and any neglect of them even for a year or two would have been fatal to him. He was as much bound to

keep himself in the constant eye of the Court as a modern novelist is in the eye of the public. Let us try this test: which is certainly not satisfied by any other scheme hitherto proposed.

A.D.	Lines.	Work.	Lines.	Work.	Lines.	Work.	Total.
136-	? Ceyx	Lion ...	—	Origen, Innocent	24	Rosamond ...	?
1367	1705	Rose +	184	A.B.C. ...	—	—	1889
1368		Blanche ...	Prose. 127	Melibee, a ...	—	—	(2 yrs.)
1369	1334	Boethius i ...	528	Thopas, a +	—	—	1989
1370	Prose.	Boethius i ...	528	Tragedies, a	—	—	(2 yrs.)
1371	"	" ii ...	Prose.	Parson, i, a...	—	—	Prose.
1372	"	" iii ...	"	" ii ...	—	—	Prose.
1373	"	" iv ...	"	" iii ...	—	—	—
1374	"	" v ...	"	—	—	—	—
—	508	Fame i ...	532	Cecile ...	64	Former Age	1104
1375	582	" ii ...	140	Grisildis i ...	—	—	722
1376	1080	" iii ...	252	" ii ...	—	—	1332
1377	1092	Trollus i ...	161	" iii ...	—	—	1253
1378	1757	" ii ...	175	" iv ...	—	—	1932
1379	1848	" iii ...	140	" v ...	—	—	1988
1380	1673	" iv ...	231	" vi ...	39	Roundel ...	1997
—	—	—	—	—	21	Inconstant W.	—
—	—	—	—	—	33	Noblesse ...	—
1381	1883	" v ...	203	Constance i *	21	Complaint ...	2114
—	7	Adam ...	—	—	—	—	—
1382	699	Birds ...	378	" ii	32	Wholly yours	1109
—	298	Mars ...	—	—	—	—	—
1383	496	Palamon i ...	273	" iii	49	Lodestar ...	1116
1384	526	" ii ...	238	Clergeoun ...	91	D'Amours ...	855
1385	602	" iii ...	88	Tragedies ...	119	Pity... ..	1167
—	—	—	358	Cambynskani	—	—	—
1386	626	" iv ...	326	" ii	133	My Lady ...	1730
—	—	—	—	—	705	ProI.G.W.Cleop	—

* NOTE.—Skeat, whom I here follow, has shown that the following lines were inserted at the revision of this tale: they are all accounted for in the reckoning in the text.

- 98. Host's words, 1-98.
- 35. Prologue, 99-133 (from Pope Innocent). I. 35 lines.
- 14. 190- 203.
- 21. 295- 315. } 49 lines in part i.
- 14. 358- 371.
- 7. 421- 427. I. } 112 lines in part ii.
- 14. 449- 462.
- 28. 632- 658.
- 14. 701- 714.
- 7. 771- 778. I. } 14 lines in part iii.
- 42. 827- 868.
- 7. 925- 931. I. } 210 lines in all, besides the Host's 98.
- 7. 1135-1141. I. }

HERE BEGIN THE CANTERBURY TALES.

A.D.	Lines.	Work.	Lines.	Work.	Lines.	Work.	Total.
1387	858	Prologue ...	[357	Anelida] ...	218	Thisbe ...	1454
	—	—	—	—	21	Gentiless ...	—
1388	—	Knight, b ...	78	Prol. Miller	442	Dido ...	1756
—	668	Miller ...	66	„ Reeve	—	—	—
—	404	Reeve ...	40	„ Cook ...	—	—	—
—	58	Cook ...	—	—	—	—	—
1389	21	Nun, b ...	166	„ C. Yeoman	312	Hypsipyle ...	1695
—	762	C. Yeoman...	104	„ Manciple	—	Medea ...	—
—	258	Manciple ...	74	„ Parson	—	—	—
—	—	Parson ...	—	—	—	—	—
1390	14	Clerk ...	56	„ Clerk ...	206	Lucretia ...	1246
—	42	Envoy ...	32	„ Merchant	—	—	—
—	1174	Merchant ...	22	Epil. „	—	—	—
1391	—	—	98	Prol. Lawyer	342	Ariadne ...	4097
—	210	Lawyer, b ...	856	„ Wife ...	—	[Astrolabe]	(for
—	434	Wife (Johan)	34	„ Friar ...	—	—	two
—	366	Friar ...	44	„ Sumner	167	Philomena...	years)
—	586	Sumner ...	88	„ Squire	—	—	—
—	—	Squire, b ...	56	„ Franklin	—	—	—
—	896	Franklin ...	—	—	—	—	—
1393	—	—	28	„ Shipman	168	Phyllis ...	1738
—	434	“Foul wife”	18	„ Prioress	[49	Skogan] ...	—
—	—	Prioress, b...	21	„ Thopas	—	—	—
—	—	Thopas, b ...	48	„ Melibee	—	—	—
—	—	Melibee, b ...	102	„ Monk...	—	—	—
—	176	Monk, c ...	54	„ Priest	—	—	—
—	626	Priest ...	14	Epil. Yeoman	—	—	—
1394	286	Physician ...	176	Prol. Pardoner	162	Hypermnestra	1130
—	506	Pardoner ...	—	—	—	—	—
1395	Prose.	Parson, c ...	—	Ch. “Old”	c.100	Prol. G.W., b	100
				<i>Etat 57</i>			

HERE END THE CANTERBURY TALES.

1396	96.	To Bukton. S. ...	...	...	...	...	96
1397	79.	Fortune; 82 Venus. S.	3 B.E. to the Princes	...	...	...	161
1398	28.	To Rich. ii. C.B.E.	...	...	...	...	28
1399	26.	To Henry iv. C.B.E.	...	...	...	...	26
1400	28.	Flee from the Press. C.B.E.	...	...	...	...	28

These results, which are necessarily merely rough approximations, are quite satisfactory; they show minima of work in 1375 and 1384, the year in which we know that Chaucer's duties at the Customs were most irksome to him, and maxima in 1381, when he had come to a settlement with Cecilie de Champagne, and 1391, when he was excited by the quarrel with Gower. But the table will be useful to students for other purposes.

After this long but necessary preamble, we are at last in a position from which we can survey and compare the literary careers of Gower and Chaucer. I begin with Gower.

- 1383. Book i of the *Confessio Amantis* contains among others the stories of 1, Florentius ; 2, Nebuchadnezzar.
- 1384. Book ii. 3. Constance ; 4, Hercules ; 5, Briseis ; 6, Cressida.
- 1385. Book iii. 7, Canace ; 8, White Crow ; 9, Thisbe.
- 1386. Book iv. 10, Dido ; 11, Penelope ; 12, Phyllis ; 13, Deianira ; 14, Lavinia ; 15, Ceyx.
- 1387. Book v. 16, Mars and Venus ; 17, Medea ; 18, Ariadne ; 19, Philomena ; 20, Belshazzar ; 21, Helen.
- 1388. Book vi. 22, Iseult ; 23, Nero.
- 1389. Book vii. 24, Lucrecia ; 25, Virginia.
- 1390. Book viii. 26, Lucifer ; 27, Adam ; 28, Apollonius. 29, The notice of Chaucer, with whom we shall find all the twenty-eight tales enumerated to be more or less connected. These tales form about a quarter of Gower's whole work.

Now let us compare this list with the career of Chaucer.

1366 or earlier. Chaucer "in his youth" wrote the story of Ceyx and Alcyone, which, in 1369, he incorporated with the death of Blanche. In 1386 Gower re-wrote this tale.

1371, or thereabout. In the *Tragedies*, Chaucer wrote short summaries of Hercules and Deianira, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar ; Gower re-wrote these in 1383, 1384 and 1387.

1378, May 21st. Chaucer procured letters of attorney for Gower and Forester to act for him during his absence from England.

1381. At the end of his *Troilus*, Chaucer addresses Gower :

O moral Gower this book I direct
 To thee and to the philosophical Strode
 To vouchensafe, there need is, to correct
 Of your benignity's and zelès good.

But in 1384 Gower wrote a rival version of the poem.

1381-3. Chaucer wrote the tale of Constance. In 1384 Gower produced a version, in which he borrows largely from Chaucer. Skeat, who discovered these appropriations, gives a list of sixteen of them (Vol. II, pp. 1-5).

1383. Chaucer wrote his *Mars and Venus* ; in 1387 Gower made a version of the myth which Chaucer had utilised for his *Satire*.

Up to 1386 I can find no instance of Chaucer writing any story which had been utilised by Gower, but the appropriation of so many of his own subjects by his contemporary, especially in the case of Constance, where his very language was stolen as well as the general treatment, must have been very irritating. Accordingly, he determined, as Gower had provoked by his plagiarism a comparison between them, to give further opportunities for such comparison to be made.

1386, May. In the ballad in the Prologue to *Good Women* he makes a list of nineteen, whose stories he means to tell year by year. Among these are *Thisbe*, *Canace*, *Dido*, *Phyllis*, *Lavinia*, and *Penelope* ; all of which had been narrated by Gower. He could not take up one of these in 1386, as the queen, through her intermediary *Alceste* (*Philippa de Vere*), had

ordered him to begin with Cleopatra ; but he did in the next year.

1387. Chaucer writes *Thisbe*. Gower's version dates 1385. In this same year in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* we have this description of the Clerk :

A Clerk there was of Oxenford also,
That unto logic hadde long ygo.
As lene was his horse as is a rake,
And he was not right fat I undertake,
But looked holw and thereto soberly.
Full threadbare was his overest courtepy,
For he had gotten him yet no benefice ;
Ne was so worldly for to have office.
For him was lever have at his beddes head
Twenty bookes clad in black or red
Of Aristotle and his philosophy
Than robes rich or fiddle or gay psaltry.
But, all for that he was *a philosopher*,
Yet hadde he but little gold in coffer ;
But all, that he might of his friendes hent,
On bookes and on learning he it spent ;
And busily gan for the soules pray
Of them that gave him wherewith to scholay.
Of study took he most cure and most heed ;
Not a word spake he more than was need,
And that was said in form and reverence
And short and quick and full of high sentence.
Souning in moral virtue was his speech
And gladly would he learn and *gladly teach*.

I have italicised the most striking similarities between this Clerk and Gower ; there is no line that may not have applied to him ; but the facts—that he had as yet no benefice ; that when he did get one he was described as Clerk, not as Priest ; that the whole of book vii. of his *Confessio Amantis* is concerned with

“How Alexander was taught of Aristotle”; that he was, as Morley says, “very much of a philosopher and liked life best in his own home”; that, six years before, Chaucer had summed him up as the “moral Gower”; that his poems were didactic, especially the “*Speculum Meditantis*,” written “to teach by a right path the way a sinner ought to return, etc.”;—all these facts taken together absolutely identify them. Is there any other man of whom these six statements can be predicted? If so, let him be named. I cannot find him. Moreover, the host in the Clerk’s Prologue, bids the Clerk not to study about sophisms, to tell a merry tale, not one that makes us sleep (as Gower’s tales certainly do), and to keep his tiring colors and figures in store,

till so be ye indite
High style, as when that men to kinges write.

Now, what living teller of tales was there who wrote to kings except Chaucer and Gower? I do not suppose anyone will identify the Clerk with Chaucer.

1388. Chaucer writes *Dido*, after Gower, 1386.

1389. Chaucer writes *Medea*, after Gower, 1387. Also the *Manciple’s Tale of the White Crow* and *Phœbus* after Gower, 1385.

1390. Chaucer writes *Lucrecia*, after Gower, 1389.

In this year Gower presents his complete poem to the king, and gets from him the living of Great Braxted, in Essex. The poem was begun in 1383, at the king’s request, and contains the following notice of Chaucer in book viii, written in 1390. Gower is

“old” ; therefore of 56 years at the lowest reckoning.
Venus says :

And greet well Chaucer, when ye meet,
As my disciple and my poete :
For in the flowers of *his youth*
In sundry wise, as he well couth,
Of ditties and of songes glade,
The which he for my sake made,
The land fulfilled is over all ;
Whereof to him in special
Above all other I am most holde,
Forthy now in *his dayes olde*
Thou shalt him telle this message,
That he, upon *his later age*,
To set *an end of all his work*,
That he, which is mine owne Clerk,
Do make his testament of love,
As thou hast do thy shrift above,
So that my court it may record.

After which comes a eulogy of Richard II.

Now, this is friendly enough in form ; but there is nothing more irritating than to be praised for one's worse work, while the better is ignored. Chaucer's real achievements were not the ditties and songs of his youth, before 1366, now almost entirely lost ; but the great poems of his manhood, 1347-1390, as enumerated at length in the earlier part of this paper ; it is still more irritating to be told that one is old before one's time ; that the epoch has come to put an end to work altogether, and make one's testament, whether of love or what else ; but to be told this by one, who acknowledges himself an old man, yet thinks himself able to show how kings should be taught and lovers should be shriven ; one who had introduced into his only English poem some half-dozen stories, which his

rival had announced an intention to narrate ; one who had, six years before, deliberately copied, and stolen from, one of his poems without any acknowledgment whatever ; one who, after this theft, quietly ignored this and all other great poems of Chaucer's manhood, damning him with a faint praise of his early virelais and roundels ; all this is more than irritating ; it is so insulting as to require a public castigation ; silence is no longer possible.

Accordingly Chaucer, who, early in this very year had in his Clerk's Prologue identified his Clerk with Gower as one who writes to kings in high style, while at the same time poking a little harmless fun at him for his Lenten preaching, his terms, colours, and figures, and indirectly setting him in comparison with Petrarch, the other laureate poet, who "with high style enditeth," and even placing him above him in one respect for conveying his matter without impertinent details ; in the next year, 1391, bursts forth with a reply, in which he gives the lie direct to Gower's implications. In the Lawyer's Prologue, the Lawyer implies that Chaucer, in the many books written in his manhood, has told all the thrifty tales that he has ever met with ; he admits that of Ceyx, and that only, as a production of youth : but from the Good Women, in which he had been for years a direct rival of Gower, he gives a list of sixteen. Now, this list includes all the nine tales which Chaucer intended to write, as well as the seven which he had already written, and differs curiously from that in the Women Prologue ; he now inserts Hypsipyle (already written), Briseis, Deianire, and Hermione, which he means to write ; but omits Absalom, Jonathan, Esther, Marcia, Lavinia, Iseult, and

one other. The three inserted are all included in Ovid's "Epistles" (Heroides), the six omitted are not. He claims credit for "no than Ovid" because of Alceste, Cleopatra, Thisbe, Lucretia, Philomela, Polixena; although he omits the Ovidian Phædra, CEnone, Sappho, and Cydippe. So far well: the relations between Gower are hitherto evidently strained, but the tie between them is not broken, they might have ended with "tap for tap and so part fair."

But the one other tale italicised above was the tale of Canace, which, in 1385, Gower had written, and in 1386 Chaucer had said he would re-write, clearly in rivalry with Gower. Now, hear what he says in 1390 :

But certainly no word ne writeth he
 Of thilke *wikke ensample* of Canace,
 That loved her own brother sinfully :
 Of swiche *cursed stories* I say fy.
 Or else of Tyro Apollonius,
 How that the cursed King Antiochus
 Bereft his daughter of her maidenhead,
 That is so *horrible a tale* for to read,
 When he her threw upon the pavement.
 And therefore he of *full avisement*
 Nolde never write in none of his sermons
 Of swch *unkind abominations*,
 Ne I will none rehearse, if that I may.

"Cursed stories" and "tales horrible to read" are strong phrases when applied to a friend's work, however deservedly: and when used by one who for years before had proclaimed that he would write one of the cursed stories himself, are not very seemly. No wonder Gower was angered. Moreover, Chaucer, who at first intends to make his Lawyer "speak in prose" (perhaps the tale of Melibee, as has been

suggested by someone, I forget by whom), instead of a prose tale makes him recite Constance—the one tale in which Gower had stolen Chaucer's matter, as well as his subject—in elaborate metre of Chaucerian stanza. He has taken the utmost pains to indicate that it is Gower's attack, and no one's else, that has made him wince.

I may note, in parenthesis, that the Lawyer, who knows Chaucer's intentions so well, must have been a real personage. Who was he? Was he Richard Forrester?

In this year, 1391, Chaucer also wrote *Ariadne*, which Gower had treated of in 1371.

1392. Chaucer, who, in 1391, was so angry with Gower's cursed stories of unkind abominations, presents to the queen, the incestuous rape of Tereus on Philomela: a tale not included in the lists either of the *Women's Prologue* or the *Lawyer's*. Surely comment or explanation is unnecessary. He also writes more *Canterbury Tales*.

1392. The king for some reason (whether connected or not with the quarrel between the poets does not appear) had withdrawn his countenance from Gower, and in the sixteenth year of his reign, that is, after 22nd June in this year, the second version of the "*Confessio Amantis*" was issued with the dedication transferred from Richard II to John of Gaunt, and with the passages noticing Chaucer and praising the sovereign altogether expunged. It is usually stated that Gower had "turned his back upon an evil king" (Morley); but I think it more likely that the evil king had turned his back on Gower, who, however, did not for some years more turn his back on the evil

king's gift of the living in Essex. Chaucer pursued the even tenor of his way ; writing his versions of Phyllis (Gower's version dates 1386) and the White Crow story (Gower, 1385) in 1393 ; and his unfinished Hypermnestra (not treated by Gower) and Virginia (Gower, 1389) in the following year. His career practically ended with the death of the queen, June, 1394. His triumph over Gower was short lived, and the issue of this unfortunate quarrel may be summed up in one remark. Gower, though he gave the first occasion for offence, showed himself the truer friend ; but Chaucer was the better courtier.

I must not omit here to point out one strange misapprehension which has led to utter confusion in the chronology of Chaucer's work. All the greater Chaucerian critics with whose work I am acquainted agree in making the version of the Prologue to the Good Women MS. of Camb. Univ., Lib. Gg. 4-27, the earlier of the two. It is palpably the later : it puts Chaucer, l. 315, in the class of " old fools," where the earlier version has " wretches " : still more strongly in l. 261,

Thou beginnest dote
As olde fooles when their spirit failleth,

which has no corresponding passage in the other version, and it omits the mention of the queen. The date of this version is 1395, after the queen's death, when Chaucer's age was fifty-seven. The name Alceste is in this second version introduced in the ballad instead of " My Lady," and as so much of the evidence of the succession of Chaucer's poems depends on the right understanding of this change, I venture

on an explanatory digression. In *Troilus* i, 157, we read—

the tyme
Of Aperil, when clothed is the mede
With newe grene of lusty Ver the pryme,
And swete smelling flowres white and rede.

Skeat has no note on the passage, but in his glossary he has :

“Ver. the spring *T.*, i, 157.”

“Pryme. s. prime (of day), usually 9 a.m., *T.*, i, 157,”

and he inserts commas after “grene” and “pryme.” The meaning is, clothed with fresh green [leaves] and sweet-smelling white and red flowers of the *flor di primavera* ; the dazie floure (*Florio*), daisie (*Minsheu*). “Leaves” is implied in “clothed” ; *Minsheu*, under *Leafe*, tells us that *folia sunt arborum vestimenta*. It follows that the daisy in Chaucer is ver the prime clothed in (royal) green and (crowned with) flowers, red and white ; this is precisely the description of *Alceste*, who was turned into a daisy, *Prol. G.W.* 214-226, 512. But why should Chaucer use the uncouth expression of “Ver the prime,” instead of saying daisy in plain English ? I answer this by another question : Why does he use “wicked nest” for *Mauny* in *Monk*, l. 397 ? To conceal the name *Mauny* under the synonym of *mau-nid* answers Skeat, who made this ingenious discovery, and so, say I, under “Ver the pryme” he hides the name *Vere*, the lady of high degree, *Philippa*, wife of *Robert de Vere*, Earl of Oxford in 1371, Marquis of Dublin, 1385, Nov. (*Stow*), Duke of Ireland, 1388, Mar. 18th. This *Philippa*, née *de Courcey*, is Chaucer’s flower ; the pendant to *Deschamp’s Philippe* the “leaf” of his third

Ballade, daughter of John of Gaunt and Blanche. This ballad was written about the same time as Chaucer's Prologue to the Women, before her marriage in 1387 to John I of Portugal. See Chaucer Society Trial foreword to *Minor Poems*, p. 125; where, in the quotation from one of Deschamp's flower ballads, viii should not be altered into vii, but another "P" should be inserted in l. 3; as anyone must see who can scan French verse. This Philippa of Chaucer's was divorced by her husband in 1387, in order that he might marry Lancecrona; whence the troubles in that year, for which I must refer you to the chroniclers and historians; what we are concerned with is that the Squire's Tale, part ii, in which Philippa's story is begun (it was never finished), see lines 654 *seq.*, and which prophesies a reconciliation, must have been written before the divorce in 1387; while Anelida, which tells the same story, but stops with her appeal to Mars, must have come after it. This lady is also the lady of Chaucer's "Complaints," which contain no serious love-making but merely the chivalrous homage of an age in which Courts of Love, etc., were recognised institutions.

It does not come within the scope of this address to consider how far Chaucer introduced into his poems representations of actual contemporaries; but I cannot, in the face of the importance of this question and its intimate connection with the matter, already discussed, omit a statement of my views on this point; I attempt no proof on this occasion.

From 1377 to 1387 all the important poems are written with a personal reference; I divide them into groups thus:—

i. The adultery between the Duchess of York and John Holland. *Troilus* (1377-81) was written by command of John of Gaunt to set forth the general nature of the situation of the parties concerned, *Troilus*, *Creseyde*, and *Diomed* corresponding to the Duke of York, the Duchess, and Holland respectively ; but this application not being pointed enough to satisfy Gaunt, he ordered Chaucer to write the *Complaint of Mars*, in which (1383) they appear as *Vulcan*, *Venus*, and *Mars*. The story of *Palamon and Emily* (1383-6), on the other hand, obscurely adumbrates the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of York, as well as :

ii. That of John of Gaunt and his elder sister *Constance*: this latter is repeated in *Anelida* (1387).

iii. The neglect of *Philippa de Vere* by her husband the Earl of Oxford, is plainly told in the story of *Cambynskan* (1386), where they are the *tercelet* and the *falcon* ; *Canace* being for the nonce the good *Queen Anne*: in *Anelida* (1387), the story is more plainly told, as of *Anelida* and the false *Arcite* ; *Philippa* is also the *Alceste* of the *Prologue to Good Women* (1386, 1395).

iv, v. The celebration of actual events in the death of the Duchess (1369), and the assembly of *Birds* (1382), is not disputed by anyone.

I must not trespass further on your patience ; this Gower question has grown already into so tall a tree as to completely overshadow the little undergrowth of the other subjects to which I promised to call your attention. You can hardly have forgotten that one of the cursed stories with which Chaucer reproached Gower was that of *Apollonius of Tyre* ;

now, this tale remained so indissolubly attached to the memory of Gower that, when, in 1607, George Wilkins revived the story in the play of *Pericles* for the king's men at the Globe, he made Gower the presenter or chorus of the play. Shakespeare re-fashioned the play in 1608; and very properly rejected the incestuous portion of the story, confining himself to the adventures of Marina in the last three acts. This portion, complete in itself, was printed by me in the *N.S.S. transactions*, and, there being no reservation of copyright, will shortly be given to the public by one of our eminent critics. This by the way. Now, this same George Wilkins had, in 1604, written a play for the king's men called, *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, in which the career of Walter Calverley, of Calverley, in Yorkshire, was under a very thin disguise, exhibited on the stage; but, when, in 1605, these miseries culminated in murder, and Calverley was pressed to death, the murder story was represented on the stage, and separately published as the *Yorkshire Tragedy* by W. Shakespeare. I have in my history of the drama shown how this, with the Wilkins play, made up the four plays in one mentioned in the 1619 edition, where the title is "All's one, or one of the four plays in one, called a Yorkshire Tragedy"; but I had not, in 1891, formed a settled opinion as to its authorship. The problem is to find an author connected with the king's players in 1605, so closely connected with Shakespeare as to be allowed to use the name W. Shakespeare on his title-page without opposition, one who wrote in a style so like the great master's that many writers, from Steevens to Schlegel, maintained that it was his own production. The

mere fact that its date lies between Othello and Lear shows their mistake ; it is not conceivable that Shakespeare could have produced anything so crude, in spite of occasional powerful lines, at that stage of his career. Nor is there any known author to whom it can be attributed. I once thought Drayton might be the man ; but Drayton does not use the inordinate repetition of a word or phrase that this author does ; nor would Shakespeare's name have been allowed to remain on a play of Drayton's. But if Edmond Shakespeare, the player who was buried in this church with a forenoon knell of the great bell, 31st December, 1607, be assumed to be the missing author, all becomes clear. His brother William would naturally revise the text of his first production, and superintend its publication, and even allow the use of his own name ; and the family likeness of style is just like that in other instances where the home and the education of brothers has been the same ; for example, in the case of Tennyson and his brothers ; or of Walter Savage Landor and his brother Robert. Just to show that this likeness exists, I quote the following :

*I see how Ruin with a palsied hand
 Begins to shake this ancient seat to dust. Scene 3.
 But you are playing in the angels' laps
 And will not look on me. Scene 10.
 This voice into all places will be hurled
 Thou and the devil have deceived the world. Scene 2.*

From Shakespeare to Fletcher is a much smaller stride than from Gower to Shakespeare ; in fact, Fletcher, with his great coadjutor Beaumont, was the immediate successor of Shakespeare in writing for the king's men ; this only lasted for a couple of years,

1611-12. In 1613 Beaumont retired from play-writing, and Fletcher joined Field and Massinger in play production for another company; but in 1616 all three were writing for the king's men, and except a year or two of Massinger's work, all three were so engaged till their deaths. It would be useless for me to enlarge on the merits of these men after such critics as Lamb, Dyce, and Swinburne. My tribute to their memory has been paid by separating the work of each of these poets and determining the chronological succession of the plays; a task which even Dyce had declared it was impossible to perform; and the only way that occurs to me of continuing this tribute on this occasion is to offer, through your Society, to students of dramatic literature a restoration of the dramatic repertoire of the *Globe theatre in Southwark*; which is identical with that of the *Blackfriars private house for 1616-1625*, and includes the time during which Fletcher and Massinger were working together. This also has been pronounced an impossible feat; and I feel justified in challenging our Shakespearian critics to do the like for any other theatre during the reigns of Elizabeth, James, and the first Charles; or in default of this to show that I am in more than one year's error in the date of any play.

In this table (M) means that Massinger revised and produced the play at a later date; he may, or may not, have been one of the original authors of it. Besides the plays here mentioned, Fletcher and Massinger (F. and M.) were concerned in the *Honest Man's Fortune*, 1613; and after Fletcher's death, Jonson completed and produced, in 1626, January 22nd,

The Fair Maid of the Inn (by F. and M.) left unfinished at Fletcher's death.

1616.	—	—	—	Jonson ...	Devil's an ass.
	—	F.	—	—	Bonduca.
	—	F.	—	—	Valentinian.
	—	—	(M.)	Field ...	Fatal Dowry.
1617.	—	F.	M.	Field ...	Jeweller of Amsterdam.
	—	F.	M.	—	Bloody Brother.
	—	F.	M.	—	Henry VIII.
	—	F.	M.	Field ...	Thierry and Theodoret.
1618.	March...	F.	M.	Field ...	Queen of Corinth.
	—	F.	M.	Field ...	Knight of Malta.
	—	F.	—	—	Mad Lover.
	Nov. 16	F.	—	—	Loyal Subject.
1619.	—	F.	—	—	Humorous Lieutenant.
	—	—	(M.)	Jonson ...	City Madam (? acted).
	—	F.	M.	—	Custom of the Country.
	Aug. 14	F.	M.	—	Barnaveldt.
	—	F.	M.	—	Laws of Candy.
1620.	—	F.	M.	—	Little French Lawyer.
	—	F.	M.	—	False One.
	—	F.	(M.)	—	Double Marriage.
	—	F.	—	—	Women pleased.
1621.	—	—	—	Middleton ...	Witch.
	—	F.	—	—	Island Princess.
	—	F.	—	—	Pilgrim.
	—	F.	—	—	Wildgoose Chase.
1622.	—	—	—	Middleton ...	More dissemblers besides Women.
	May 14	F.	M.	—	Prophetess.
	Jun. 22	F.	M.	—	Sea Voyage.
	Oct. 24	F.	M.	—	Spanish Curate.
1623.	—	—	—	Md. & Rowley	Anything for a quiet life.
	Aug. 29	F.	—	Rowley ...	Maid of the Mill.
	Oct. 17	F.	—	Rowley ...	Devil of Dowgate.
	Dec. 6.	F.	(M.)	—	Wandering Lovers.
1624.	—	—	—	Middleton ...	Mayor of Quinboro.
	May 27	F.	—	—	Wife for a month.
	Aug. 3	—	—	Middleton ...	Game at Chess.
	Oct. 19	F.	—	—	Rule a wife, &c.

It will be seen from this table that, while Fletcher wrote only in nine plays at most with Beaumont, he joins Massinger in producing eighteen ; and while I should deeply regret any disturbance of the traditional linking of Beaumont and Fletcher, I should certainly like occasionally to hear of Fletcher and Massinger. Next to Jonson, they were the greatest dramatists of the latter half of the reign of

James I, 1614–25 ; and in this place, at any rate, they should not be divided, however estranged they may have been in the last few years of Fletcher's life.

29th August, 1625. John Fletcher, described in three separate documents as a man, a gentleman, and a poet, was buried in the church, 20*s*.

18th March, 1638. Philip Massinger, a stranger (*i.e.*, of another parish), in the church, £2.

REQUIESCANT.

NOTE.—For explanation of abbreviations of metrical terms, etc., see my
“ Guide to Chaucer and Spenser.” (Collins & Co., 1*s*.)
