

the well-known theological writer, and Mandeville, who, after thirty-four years wanderings in Eastern lands, wrote a book on his adventures and what he had seen. He did not escape the fate, common to subsequent writers of travels, of having his veracity much questioned. His works afford curious illustrations of the credulity of his time, when, for instance, he speaks of birds of Madagascar, which carried elephants through the air, and other tales equally absurd.

Despite all its crudities, despite all its incredible stories, this is a great literary age. It crystallized our language into its present form; to it we owe that flexible, vigorous speech called the English language, which, if it is not so already, is destined to become the dominant tongue throughout this wide world.

But, though the temptation is great, it will not do to linger over these old days. Great as this period of Chaucer was and worthy to be remembered, it, by no means, stands alone in our literary history.

This brilliant era was succeeded by a long, long, night in English Literature. One searches almost in vain, through the next 150 years or so, to find that Englishmen had thought or soul above the brutal love of slaughter. But God loved our Motherland and our Anglo-Saxon race, and the time came when the darkness was to pass away and, under His fostering care, a bright and noble day was to dawn. Then we had the Shakespearean era.

