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## TOUCH US GENTLY, GENTLY, TIME.

In the spring of early years,  
With its budding hopes and fears;  
In the summer's glowing prime;  
In the autumn's lonely grief,  
Fading light and falling leaf;  
Touch us gently, gently, Time.

On the bed of promise sweet,  
Lavish no too fervent heat,—  
Clearly, purely, softly shine;  
Let not childhood lose too soon  
All its fresh, unconscious bloom;  
Touch us gently, gently, Time.

Let no maddening hiss or pain,  
Let no hot impatience stain  
A serenely golden prime:  
Soothe with cool, soft fingers now  
Throbbing heart and burning brow;  
Touch us gently, gently, Time.

Let no dark forebodings fill,  
Startle by no sudden chill  
Of a harsh, capricious clime;  
Lead us by thy quiet ways,  
Frosty nights, and mellow days;  
Touch us gently, gently, Time.

When our harvest's reaped at last,  
Hopes fulfilled, and labours past,  
Softly bright our year's decline;  
Let our spent life glide away  
Like an Indian Summer's day;  
Touch us gently, gently, Time.

Twilight shadows o'er us creep—  
We are weary; let us sleep:  
Farewell Earth: and all that's thine!  
Now, while here our eyelids close  
In a last, a long repose,  
Close them gently, gently, Time.

—*Composed by two little girls.*

## CHAUCER.

THE literature of the Anglo-Saxons differed from that of any other nation. Generally the earliest literary effusions of a country are in verse, and almost always historical in matter, but while these verses are intended for amusement, they are the chief means of instruction. The Anglo-Saxons, however, neglected their ancestral legends and national themes, and preferred to poetize ethical reflections. Their educated

men wrote in prose while the surrounding nations were entangled in the trammels of verse.

Their poetry was very rude and unattractive, but its object was to improve the social condition of the country, and the character of the people. The language of these people was synthetical or inflected.

The Danish invasion affected the dialects of the north and east of the island, making the inflections simpler and doubtless unsettling the state of the language. The change thus started was hastened by the Norman Conquest. The Normans despised the language of the people they had conquered, and for a time English ceased to be the speech of the court and literature. But the common people clung tenaciously to the language of their forefathers and after a long struggle were victorious and English again became the organ of literature and common speech. During this struggle there had been many foreign words introduced, through the influence of the nobles and the laws, but there was no more than a beginning until the 14th century, when several causes assisted in hastening on the work. The principle reason was that Chaucer's immortal works were penned in this century, and as he was educated in French, Italian and Latin, and was the greatest author of the time, he exerted a great influence in the introduction of foreign words.

Just such a man as Chaucer was needed then; the solid material was already there to work upon and he infested it with the airiness and vigor so characteristic of the Norman Literature. The poetry was chiefly narrative, guided by impulse, not by regular laws. Their earliest productions were founded on historical traditions of England, but the writers departed from the facts given and worked into their stories private exploits and actions which seemed to them the most poetical. In the early half of the century of Chaucer's life the genius of the nation seemed to have fallen asleep,