

The rise of Middle English: But it was no longer the Anglo-Saxon language, such a process had it undergone of what we must call organic evolution. With such an audience, literature left the heroic, and became sophisticated and "polite" in tone. The men responsible for the production of literature in England under the Normans were the *trouvres* and *troubadours* (minstrel) who sang narrative poems.

These medieval French epics are products of a feudal age, and as such are conceived in the conventions of chivalry, like *The Song of Roland*. The French narrative poems fall into three subject-groups: "The subjects about France" "about Britain", "about Rome" The subjects about France are to be

found in the epic poems dealing with the deeds of Charlemagne and his knights. Not less than five, perhaps more, racial strands make up the basis of the tongue which has produced English literature. The Neolithic peoples, the Celtic, the Anglo-Saxon, the Danish Norse and the Norman—each has a share in it, however small. Perhaps the Stone Age peoples passed on some power of symbols, the magic, of making inanimate things live by words? The Brythonic Celts brought to English their idealistic imagination, their passionate melancholy, their as passionate self-mockery; the Irish, directly or through Breton and Norman, supplied many of the richly various rhythms for its lyric poetry. The Anglo-Saxons gave the tongue suppleness, subtle restraint, reasonableness, philosophic capacity, but also an enduring sense of the sea, of storm, of grave, even sinister, peril and adventure always to be undertaken. And through the centuries up to today Celtic and Anglo-Saxon language and literature, tradition and change, in Scots, Irish, Welsh and English writers, have enriched each other and prevented each other from stagnating. After two centuries the wide gap between Norman and Englishmen became narrower and narrower and by the 14th century one language and escape from boredom, and he kept his minstrel to .entertain him and delight his guest by reciting poetry