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### 14th Century Poetry

Two important developments that took place during hundred and fifty years from 1200 A.D. to Chaucer and affected poetry much were (i) European or international and (ii) English or national. Throughout the middle ages poetry was common to all the civilised countries of Europe but it was by the close of the thirteenth century that the English numbers developed some originality in theme and treatment. The development continued and increased enormously in the latter half especially of the fourteenth century. By 1275 A.D. English poetry struck a new national pathos of its own in its political songs. "Rude and imperfect as is the vehicle of expression," says Courthope, "the popular songs of England in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries reveal a consciousness of united purpose and a corporate pride in the nation."

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"They have eyes, but see not!"  
For under her very nose, things  
are happening which she cannot  
see - or if she sees, she can-  
not diagnose correctly.  
Mrs. Malaprop occupies a promi-  
nent place in the portrait-gal-  
lery of comic characters in  
World-literature. Her violent  
outrages on language 'are ent-  
irely diverting'. She remains  
~~amongst~~ amongst a host of dra-  
matic predecessors and imita-  
tors, the unrivalled 'queen of  
dictionary' with her 'nice dera-  
ngement of epithets'. Her mud-  
dle-headedness, loquacity, self-  
conceit, egoism, vanity, conscio-  
usness of superior knowledge,  
arising out of what she considers  
use of learned words and above  
all, her frantic attempts at hus-  
band-hunting, followed by her  
discomfiture, make her an  
unforgettable character. Sheridan  
reaches the climax of farcical  
exaggeration in delineating her  
character which also marks the

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Triumph of effective dramatic  
art.

Both Mrs. Malaprop and Bob  
Aces are caricatures, grotesque  
and oddities and embodiments  
of stupendous fatuity. They are  
the work of genius. Like Aces  
Mrs. Malaprop has a great stage  
part to act. The main action  
is developed through a constant  
succession of effective stage-sit-  
uations in which Mrs. Malaprop  
has an important part to  
play. Although she is not the  
heroine of the play, she usurps  
the more attention and evokes  
more interest than any other  
character in the drama.

The end.

Munni Bhushan Sinha  
Deptt. of English  
S.S. College, Telkanchand