

Chaucer as the Father of English Poetry

Chaucer is regarded as the father of English poetry and the first of the great moderns. In those dark days when the light of modernism had not yet been visible on the horizon. Chaucer anticipated the modern taste and the modern mind, and in his poetry introduced qualities far in advance of his time.

Though, Chaucer could not write a drama or a novel as we know it, yet his works contain the seeds both of the modern drama and the novel. If he had lived a few years more, he would certainly have been the first English dramatist and novelist just as he is the first national poet of England. Chaucer made several contributions to English poetry and his debt is so great that it can never be repaid even by the most exalted panegyrics that may be written for him. Chaucer

enlarged the scope and range of the poet, introduced minute observation of life around him, gave vivid and clear descriptions of the conditions of his times, excelled in characterisation, humour, pathos, made narration an art and above all gave a new form and shape to English language and versification. As E. Albert says, "All the Chaucerian features help to create this modern atmosphere, the shrewd and placidly humorous observation, the wide humanity, the quick aptness of phrase, the dexterous touch upon the metres, and above all, the fresh and formative spirit - the genius turning dross into gold." With these remarks let us examine the various features of Chaucer's poetry and his main contribution to English literature.

"Chaucer's best descriptions of man, manners and places are of the first rank in their

beauty, impressiveness and humour. Even when he follows the common example of his time, as when giving details of conventional spring mornings and flowery ~~gardens~~ gardens he has a vivacity that makes his poetry unique. His power of describing his fellowmen with all their merits and demerits, their tastes and temperaments was unique and 'The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales' is a picture gallery bringing in its scope all classes of people ranging from the Knight to the Miller and the Cook.

The end.

Munir Bhushan Sinha  
Deptt. of English  
S.S. College, Jehanabad