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Title: "The Literature of the Age of Elizabeth," by Samuel A. Harrison

Format: Commencement Oration

Date: July 9, 1840

Location: Orations-1840-H322l

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Harrison

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and we gaze with anticepating captures on the orl which
chall quickly illume the world of intellect. Seach was the ge
of Elizabeth; the bright down of a plevious day of tearning
It has long been remarked, that the frust ages of
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berning only then can soon above the vulgar hers, and stand
Jorth preminently; then she only can

When she is unrestrained; us cules of and confine her provers, but the burning thoughts plast forth with pre- den from the glowing laboratory of the means. Nature length from the pleasing laboratory of the means. Nature length inspires her periods, and pantie they much from lenting the inspires her privates, and pantie they much from lenting the impires their maddenes porys. Then young quies like one first parents, dispires foreign dreps or ornament, which seems but to conceal her form, but added in the sein. The fig-leaf covering of our first matter Econ, we made her sale beautions proportion, her wall turned lemby and

thought, a trips in carely playfulues through the bloom.

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ages of Seterature, Genius treads new paths, untiod by

mow, hears new founds un caught by other rais, sees

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Crizen juncies wild, and spreads for her a report, where

us cende surprit reigns " such was the age of Elizabett,

a green where reign was as lips distinguished for its

Vilenature, them for its policy and splender.

Odestory was a dorned by the mean brilliant and get mins that ever conform did the tory in of wow a permit a brilliant and get mins that shorts the vinerable philosophy of ages and rained as second Parassers on British soil. Bucon rent away the age grow ing from the anystic phylosophy of aristotte, expend its ed; temps, and healed it cracking to the dust what men otors gazing in wild astonishment upon its views the stately dained of Philosophy are apar their was dering visions reased by the great architect the English bacon, in the reign of Englands favorite gurrow.

and now Portre

The Soul of seines and the guring souls" Commenced her mild reign. Chances had seens, but the last er: brutions y his harp, has die away, and the winds of ages had played their Eolian measures whow its etrings, and now the bands and Trentaderis und the ode votairs y voy. Ob lan guage was young, our de ports y telijabeth taught that port. y was breather pour heart to heart; like the language y na . tene spoken without words, spoken in language fell not heard, in language soft as the selent whichers you en : captured soul. The Very ways was in its youth when the "Fairy Duew" came tripping forth, lisping in broken speech (her elfin numbers. Thenew" says and "is of all ports the most portical; the two world y reality and fice. tien one porced whom his wrugs; his vuse is a labor with of sweet sounds, that clay by their very sweetings" Welt him wo dwell in Jung land, recline on roses, Jeast on nector from the law-bell and diento the pure light of the stars; the realizes one rank dreams, and puilds the any cartles your youth. Iwas in this age that "Row Ben Jonson" the morning lend of lengtist letters. ture who his Early strains quit and low to which suo. Ereding ages shalo continue to pay their tribute of prain Such was was his very, that even Hapepean gaze with curing sign as he cound conding on high. And it was in this ago, I habepeand, "the great chemist of materie" acted on again the drama y human life; "Vivas in this ago Thakepeand Englands favorite land, unde "cheerful straing. We was in that the childs of mature, and wall be benew his power that the childs of mature, and wall be benew his powerly. This it was to praise her beautions smile, or write with peadown thought we darkend prome. Will be break the avenus of the Luman break, its passions, its affections, its affections, its affections, its decires; and he so read the hearts of men, that they then selves tooked wilds, as thengh by come darks and the heart he breaks the brought the heart in all its lively real colors before the ages again, and at his mayie touch, there long dead stalked puth from their gloomy abodes.

The raph energician of his own wild lay, bouth and her tribes his mystic wand obey. Oldo ocean tremble, themado craches the shirts. And terms with chapes and tele tale exectus in the Sight, pattering hags their people orgins heep and farthly guilt unseals the lip of sleep. Vines yirlds les trophies up, and death waters. The mendering victories of his ovicely shows.

The fireside legend and the factor pape The cuine that curette, the deed that bleped an ago ale-, all come just _

Obe was the unto whenes, how he is as the oception heing speaking in left and to crinying courties; now he is as the common general he treads the stage with thately steps. common meanding crowding flatterns. With the species and fairles he gentless. Plan in the sertlime he mingles and one heads grow digge looking from such a height; now he in beauty words and one ryps grow dim with highreps puch was ghat. speak and one ryps grow dim with highreps puch was ghat. speak, free as the air, subtime as the ocean, and beauty tiple as his own grow into Vanyays conjunct their well, and had en bonds for heim, nature was his meralet and mean his theme.

Seich was the age when the ingin genew Elizabeth reight own Britains eile; and ago though and and guttine in its character, yet one which stands forth as the joyons pereludo to the ruchanting sony of teterature of Seienes which after ages seems.

Sent A. Marijen

Jemo 15th 1840.

Commencement Oration of S.A. Harrison, Class of 1840
Transcribed by Chris Altieri, May 2008
Edited by Don Sailer, September 2009

The Literature of the age of Elizabeth

The progress of Literature like that of society has always been an interesting subject of contemplation, and the periods of its improvement have been designated with as much precision as the different epochs in a nations advancement. As at one time the state of society may be at the lowest ebb, the fabric of government shaking, anarchy and tyranny ruling, so darkness may sometimes robe the mind, the temple of science crumble to decay and learning be imprisoned in the gloomy monastic cell. There is no period in a nations history, which interests us more than the first ages of its existence; 'tis then we see the rude materials of its future greatness; tis then we behold the strong timbers of the political ship, waving in solemn grandeur in the wild gloomy forest. So in a nation's Literature the first periods attract our atten

tion most strongly; 'tis then we behold its sun of letters as it ascends with increasing brilliancy above the horizon of the mind, and we gaze with anticipating raptures on the orb which shall quickly illume the world of intellect. Such was the age of Elizabeth: the bright dawn of a glorious day of learning.

It has long been remarked, that the first ages of a nations literature present the greatest efforts of genius; this great Homer and moving Orpheus sang when Grecian art and Greece herself wasere young. And why? 'Tis Genius only [then?] can soar above the vulgar herd, and stand forth perminently, then she only [can?]

--"see the distant tops of thoughts which men of common stature never saw." Then she is unrestrained; no rules of art confine her powers, but the burning thoughts [blast?] forth with freedom from the glowing laboratory of the mind. Nature long unpraised seems anxious to have her beauties sung; she inspires her priests, and frantic they rush from her temple singing their maddened songs. Then young genius like our first parents, dispises foreign dress or ornament; which serves but to conceal her form, but robed in the simple fig-leaf covering of our first mother Eve, we mark her beauteous proportion, her well turned limbs and

strong muscels as she [illegible] through the wild wilderness of thought, a [trip?] in careless playfulness through the [blooming meadows?] of the paradise of the mind. In the early ages of Literature, Genius treads new paths, untrod by man, hears new sounds uncaught by other ears, sees new sights unseen by other eyes and tastes new sweets unsipped by other lips. "Nature plays around her in her [illegible] wild, and spreads for her a repast, where no crude surfeit reigns." Such was the age of Elizabeth, a queen whose reign was no less distinguished for its Literature, than for its policy and splendor.

Her reign, the brightest on the page of British History was adorned by the most brilliant array of genius that ever confounded the tongue of man or penned a burning line of song: genius that shook the venerable philosophy of ages and raised a second Parnassus on British soil. Bacon [rent?] away the age grown ivy from the mystic philosophy of Aristotle, exposed its [illegible], and hurled it crashing to the dust. While men stood gazing in wild astonishment upon

its ruins the stately dawn of Experimental Philosophy [rose?] upon their wondering vision [reared?] by the great architect the English Bacon, in the reign of England's favorite queen.

And now Poetry

"The soul of science and the queen of souls"

commenced her mild reign. Chaucer had sung, and the last vibrations of his harp, had died away, and the winds of ages had played their Eolian measures upon its strings, and now the bards and Troubadours were the sole votaries of song. The language was young, and the poets of Elizabeth taught that poetry was breathed from heart to heart, like the language of nature spoken without words, spoken in language felt not heard, in language soft as the silent whispers of an enraptured soul. The Language was in its youth when its "Fairy Queen" came tripping forth, lisping in broken speech her elfin numbers. "Spencer" says and "is of all poets the most poetical; the two world of reality and fiction are poised upon his wings; his verse is a labyrinth of sweet sounds, that cloy by their very sweetness" With him we dwell in fairy land, recline on [roses?], feast on nectar from the hari-bell and drink the pure light of the stars. He realizes our early dreams, and builds the airy castles of our youth. 'Twas in this age that "[Rose?] Ben Jonson" the morning lark of English literature [woke?] his early strains of wit and love to which succeeding ages shall continue to pay their tribute of praise

Such was his song, that even Shakespeare gazed with envious eye as he soared [illegible] on high. And it was in this age, Shakespeare, "the great chemist of nature," acted over again the drama of human life; 'Twas in this age Shakespeare England's favorite bard, wrote his cheerful strains. He was in truth the child of nature, and well he knew his parent; his it was to praise her beauteous smile, or write with saddened brow her darkened frown. Well he knew the avenues of the human breast, its passions, its affections, its desires; and he so read the hearts of men, that they themselves looked wild, as though by some dark art, he had [conned?] the hidden secrets of their breasts. He brought the past in all its lively real colors before the ages again, and at his magic touch, those long dead stalked forth from their gloomy abodes.

The rapt magician of his own wild lay, Earth and her tribes his mystic wand obey Old ocean trembles, thunder cracks the skies Air teems with shapes and tell-tale specters rise Nights paltering hags their fearful orgies keep And faithless guilt unseals the lip of sleep. Time yields his trophies up, and death restores The mouldering victims of his voiceless shores.

The fireside legend and the faded page
The crime that cursed, the deed that blessed an age
All, All came forth----

He was the world at once, now he is as the sceptered king speaking in lofty air to the cringing courties; now he is as the crowned queen he treads the stage with stately steps, commanding [crowding?] flatterers. With the spirits and fairies he gambols. Now in the sublime he [illegible]

and our heads grow dizzy looking from such a height; now he in beauty revels and our eyes grow dim with highness. Such was Shakespeare, free as the air, sublime as the ocean, and beautiful as his own green isle. Language confined him not; art had no bonds for him, nature was his [model?] and man his theme.

Such was the age when the virgin queen Elizabeth reigned over Britains isle; an age through out Augustine in its character, yet one which stands forth as the joyous prelude to the enchanting song of literature & Science which after ages sung.

Samuel A. Harrison

June 16th 1840.