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## ELIZABETHAN LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

By the time of Elizabeth the Renaissance as, it was called, had made itself strongly felt in England. In particular, there was an ardent revival in the study of Greek, which brought a dazzling light into many dark places of the intellect. The new passion for classical learning in itself a rich and worthy enthusiasm, became quite a danger to the language. In all branches of literature Greek and Latin usages began to force themselves upon English, with results not wholly beneficial. It said much for the native sturdiness of English that, after a brief and vexed period of transition, it threw off the worst effects of this decadenizing pressure. English did not emerge unscathed from the contest. But applied to this slight extent, the new classical influences were a great benefit, they tempered and polished the earlier rudeness of English literature.

After the lean years of the preceding epoch the prodigal issue of the Elizabethan age is almost embarrassing. As we have pointed out, the historical situation encouraged a healthy production. The interest shown in literary subjects is quite amazing to a more chastened generation. Pamphlets and treatises were freely written much abuse, often of a personal and scurrilous character, was indulged in and literary questions became almost of national importance. To a great extent the controversies of the day were puerile enough but at least they indicated a lively interest in the literature of the period. The romantic quest is for the remote the wonderful and the beautiful. All these desires were abundantly fed during the

develop into maturity. yet it had  
still many early difficulties to  
overcome. The actors themselves  
were at variance, so much so  
that outrageous brawls were  
frequent. On more than one occasion  
between 1590 and 1593 the theatre  
theatres were closed owing to  
disturbances caused by the  
actors. In 1594 the problem was  
solved by the licensing of two  
troupes of players the Lord

Abuse (1579) to which Sidney replied with his Apologie for Poetrie. In spite of such early difficulties the drama reached the splendid consummation of Shakespeare's art but period elapsed decline was apparent. Though the poetical production was not quite equal to the dramatic it was nevertheless of great and original beauty. No can be observed from the disputes of the time the passion for poetry was absorbing and the outcome of it was timed the equal to expectation. For the first time prose rises to a position of a first rate importance. The dead weight of the Latin tradition was passing away. English prose was acquiring a tradition and a universal application and so the rapid development was almost inevitable. A curious minor feature of the age was the disappearance of Scottish literature after its brief but remarkable appearance in the previous age. At this point it took to ground and did not reappear till late in the eighteenth century.