The main obstacle in the right understanding of the English renaissance literature and life lies in the habit of the critics and readers in making a break between the medieval ages and the 16th century renaissance England, as if, the two were not only different but even antagonistic. The renaissance in England was an extension and a modification of the medieval past rather than a totally new age born under the Italian and continental influences. The medieval notions, concepts and modes of life and literature in the 16th century England remained vigorously alive. This was because the medieval ideas, about the world order and life, continued to serve the purpose of the renaissance England, and the medieval framework was generous and elastic enough to welcome and absorb the newer influences of the new era. Moreover, the Elizabethans were great syncretists. What we call the English renaissance, actually was a mingling of the new influences from the renaissance Italy and
France and the medieval ages. The renaissance England was not static; it was in a fluid state. A happy and a delicate balance, for a few lucky years, between the older and new epochs, was achieved which probably was responsible for the great Elizabethan achievements.

The picture of the world-order as it emerges out in Shakespeare, Hooker, Bacon and Milton is definitely of the medieval cast. The notion of Man, angels, God, the Great Chain of Being, the correspondences, and the concepts of order, the elements, stellar influences and Divine Justice remained more or less the same in the Elizabethan Age as they were in the medieval times. Humanism, instead of being a modernizing and a liberating force as generally assumed, was in reality a "priggish" and narrow movement careful of rules and stylistic attitudes. The Reformation and the breach with Rome no doubt brought big changes in religious notions and scriptural doctrines, but the church hierarchy and the moral norms continued to be virtually the same as they were in the medieval England. The importance of religion, as every
student of Elizabethan period knows, like the past, never came to be questioned. The authority of the mighty Aristotle whose teachings were the basis of medieval philosophical thought was unshaken throughout the renaissance. Platonism or Neo-Platonism, so much trumpeted up by the literary historians of the period did not replace Aristotelianism. Rather it modified Aristotelianism and was itself altered in the process. "Nothing in it was at variance with the laws of Nature or offensive to God, or injurious to religion". Hooker, always the most representative case, and whose philosophical thought, in matters of church and state, Nature and Man, is an amalgam of various strands of philosophies of the period is a shining example of 'enlightened Aristotelianism'.

The ascendancy of the Tudors after the wars of the Roses, and the rise of nationalism - the two great factors that entailed changes in the political and social organisation - did not usher in a new revolutionary era. Feudalism was not entirely dead; the new
king and the newly arisen aristocracy realized that they could legitimate their new positions better by linking themselves with the past. The practices of chivalry were revived with full enthusiasm; the love of display of the medieval times fulfilled the love of glamour of the renaissance; the medieval codes of love and loyalty served the needs of allegiance in terms of the new concepts of kingship and courtly ideals. The social theories of Starkey, Morrison, and Elyot surely were derived from the classical ages and modern Italy; but they were adjusted to the medieval concepts of the commonweal. And the body politic or the commonwealth as in the middle ages was an organisation comparable to the organism of the human body wherein each part was assigned a particular and especial role. The notion of public service, a catch-word of the Tudor gentry in the 16th century, in fact, was a legacy from the medieval concept of organisation of the commonwealth wherein the health and good of the whole were paramount and
private good or gain must give way to the public good.

The idea of nationalism itself was growing long before the Tudors came to the throne and Henry VIII decided to break with Rome. The growing trade and commerce in the 14th and 15th centuries, due to the great demand of English wool abroad, necessitated a centralized authority to regulate its affairs and protect its interests which fact in turn elicited for it reverence and regard. The idea of unity that grew up in the processes, the Englishmen understood, could be achieved by a common media of their own, that is to say, the English tongue. Thus the importance of one language for the nation and the related need of its growth and development were felt in the wake of 'the waning of the middle ages' in England, even before the renaissance, humanism and the renaissance with their newer demands reinforced the necessity of further growth and enrichment of the mother tongue, and the writers and poets
rightly set upon the task of its refinement and improvement.

But the language after the death of Chaucer partly due to the social disturbances consequent upon the internecine warfare, and partly due to the linguistic changes, had sharply degenerated and become unintelligible. It had to be reconstructed and developed and refined, if it was to serve as a medium of communication and a vehicle of imaginative thought. Luckily for the men of letters, medieval rhetorical tradition of writing was still very strong and medieval handbooks of rhetoric on the rules and methods of augmenting vocabulary and the use of tropes and, the disposition of the matter were fully current. These pamphlets and treatises, mostly in Latin, primarily dealt with style. The style implied everything necessary for the furtherance of the mother-tongue. The fact is that in the context of the circumstances the problem of acquiring a good style was the desideratum of the English writers and poets.

The two late medieval styles of writing, the "eloquent" and the "plain", the "plain" dealing with
'matter' and religions and ethical instruction written in 'plain' language; and the 'eloquent' style based on the "elocutio" section of the books of rhetoric and concerned with the ornamentation and embellishment of language, - came handy to the English poets. It is essential to remember that the two medieval styles of the English lyric during the late fifteenth, and through the 16th centuries, remained vigorously alive and directed the course of its development. The new influences of the renaissance Italy and France were simply adjusted and absorbed by it. It is the ignorance of this literary phenomenon and the disproportionate emphasis on the so-called newer influences from the continent in the wake of the renaissance that have blurred the objective evaluation of the great out-burst; to the unfortunate neglect of the lyric production as mostly contained in the Miscellanies.

The 'eloquent' and 'plain' styles, though they had different even opposite concerns, in the course of development in the 16th century, under the
influences of Renaissance and Reformation, interacted. The 'plain' style moved from instructional and didactic purposes, of the early stage, to embrace contemplative themes, and developed relatively complex structural and syntactical order which was the result of the effects of the 'eloquent' tradition. And the 'eloquent' mode progressed from its chief preoccupation with "embellishment" and 'ornamentation' and stereotyped treatment of themes of "court d' Amo'r" to the complex and elaborate use of the figures of speech under classical influences. Correspondingly it moved from the simpler methods of rhetorical structures to the analysis of complicated themes of the passion of love. In the course of this process the 'eloquent' style shed away its excessive verbal decoration and learnt from the 'contemplative' poems of the 'plain' mode of the improved structural devices for the better arrangement of the subject-matter. The loose syntax and form of the 'plain' mode was strengthened and improved from the lessons of the 'refutatio' of the rhetorical treatises.
The 'eloquent' style acquired cohesiveness and linguistic richness by the employment of the structure of the sonnet after its introduction by Wyatt. Under the Puritan attacks, and the anti-courtly attitude of the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the conventional love lyric of the 'eloquent' tradition was constrained to undergo modifications in order to escape the charges of frivolity and immorality. These factors resulted in its 'intellectualization' 'spiritualization' and dignity and gravity of tone.

The matter worth while remembering is that all through the 16th century the over-riding concern of the poets in lyric was style. The attendant matters of theme and structure were secondary; that is to say, the notion of style as derived from the medieval handbooks of rhetoric continued to determine the course of the lyric. This is evident from the fact that beginning with Wyatt & Surrey through Cascoigne to Jonson the poets are appreciated not for the subjectmatter of their productions as such but for what they have done
towards the refinement and enrichment of the mother tongue; the underlying notion was that it should be capable of giving expression to the highest poetical imaginings, and, stand on equal footing with the classical languages of Italy and Greece. The greatness of the mother tongue symbolized the greatness of the English nation, the idea which waxed so strong with the Englishmen during the Renaissance. It is interesting to note that the English tongue came to be regarded as one of the choicest possessions of the English, worthy to be sent as a present to the yet unborn nations of the occident.

Although Tottel published his famous Miscellany in 1557, he begins with Wyatt and his contemporaries roundabout the end of the first quarter of the 16th century; Davison's Rhapsody the last of the Miscellaneums published in 1602, contains poems, from the earlier part of the last quarter of the 16th century to its end. In between these two fell The Handful of Pleasant Delights (1566-84), The Paradise of Dainty Devices (1576).
The Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions (1578), The Brittons Bower of Delights (1591), The Phoenix Nest (1593) and The Englands Helicon 1600. It is evident that the whole course of the renaissance poetical activity in England is covered by these Miscellanies, of which, as it has been illustrated in this study, they are a true reflection.

It is important to note that even the minor poets whose names do not appear elsewhere than in these Miscellanies contributed to the growth and development of the lyric in the 16th century; and some of them wrote very fine poems. In addition to a good number of poems by the minor authors concerned with the first elements of stylistic matters and rudimentary structural devices (like many other by better poets) there are poems by them like the Nos. 131 & 132 (Tottel's Miscellany) and Nos. 14, 18, 72, 104, 109 (The Paradise of Dainty Devices) which are exercises in 'refutatio'. Such poetical pieces helped order the verse carefully by the employment of the technique of classical logic and
paved the way for the reintroduction of Petrarchan Sonnet by the great Sidney. Further, the 'insignificant' poets of the *Handful* and the *Paradise* evince the first classical influences of the Latin narrative which led to the great historical narratives of Warner, Daniel, and Drayton. Perhaps of greater literary significance than these are the two elegies No. 103 & 120 in the *Paradise* by unknown poets which illustrate the earliest classical effects that by the end of the 16th century, completely transformed the 'native elegy' into great tragic muse. To the credit of the smaller figures, there are some scattered pieces of poetry which exemplify their contribution to the development of the English lyric not very much less important than that of the great figures: as for example Nos. 212 & 297 in *Tottel's Miscellany* and Nos. 8 & 125 in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, and the famous 'Beauty sat bathing by a spring by 'the wretched Munday' in *The England's Helicon* are by no means inferior to the best poems by the
great figures in the Miscellanies. And even in the worst of the Miscellanies *The Gorgeous Gallery* (1578) the minor poets contribute about a dozen verbal expressions which are the only and the earliest examples to be found in the New English Dictionary.

Wyatt, Surrey, Grimald and some minor poets as found in *Tottel's Miscellany* began improving the English poetic tradition by refining the diction from inflated and excessive embellishments and indiscriminate borrowings which was the fashion among the poets like Hawes and Skelton before them. The elimination refinement as well as dislike of the inkhorn / aureate terms impelled these poets to depend more and more on native vocabulary which because of its relative simplicity could be easily enriched by the use of figurative expressions. Much of this happening may be attributed to the influence of the revival of learning that had started effecting England
in the beginning of the 16th century.

By the time of the *Britton's Bower* (1591) and the *Phoenix Nest* (1593), owing to the continuous experimentation, English tongue had acquired remarkable fullness of growth. The "plain" style and overcome its syntactical disorder and lost its drabness by absorbing rhetorical modes; the ornate style under classical influences was pruned and pared of the superficial and excessive aureation. Not much distinction was felt between the two styles. Experimentation in metres, rhythms, stanzaic forms had lent elasticity and flexibility to the language. The employment and use of the various structural patterns over the years had made possible the embodiment of the complex and the complicated in organic structural forms. Style and structure had acquired such facility and efficiency as to reach such a stage when it is possible for the personality of the artists to sneak into their productions. Earlier mechanistic qualities
of the English verse disappeared and the celebrated poetry of the late Elizabethan epoch followed.

In the celebrated *England's Helicon* (1600), the height of Elizabethan pastoral verse has been achieved. Some of the immortal lyrical pieces of poetry are scattered throughout this volume. It is by far the best collection of the English pastoral lyric. It is the epitome of the fusion of the 'eloquent' and 'plain' modes of writing. And lastly, in the *Rhapsody* (1602) is epitomized the varied poetical lyric activity of the English Renaissance, and one can find here the echo of the unprecedented versatality for which the Elizabethan Age is well-known. The collection demonstrates how all the verse forms and modes of poetic activity—the ode, the dcy, the satire, the sonnet, the eclogue, the heroic poem—could be assimilated by the English poetic tradition within so short a period, and how far poetry had moved since Tottel published his *Miscellany*. 
New modes of expression were necessary now for the 17th century that had already begun. Yet some forebodings of the new century are to be found in the 'shaped' verses which became quite popular in the first decades of the 17th century.

Concluding it may be observed that a study of these Miscellanies can be not only an appraisal of individual and scattered poems collected together, but also a historical survey of the thoughts and ideas that went into the growth and development of the English lyric in general during the Elizabethan age.

This is what the present study has tried to achieve.