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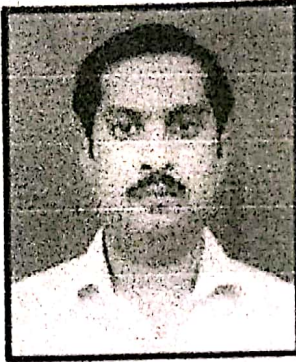
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THE SOCIAL CHRONICLE OF 14TH CENTURY ENGLAND: RE-READING CHAUCER'S THE PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES



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❖ ABSTRACT:

As an exponent and chronicler, Chaucer symbolizes the Medieval Period. He reveals the beauty and truth of life faithfully and realistically. Chaucer observes things as they are and delineates them as he discerns them. With his thirty pilgrims of the Canterbury Tales representing the various classes of 14th century English society, Chaucer appears to be a spectator of life. Chaucer is a social historian who has recorded a convincing account of the then social, cultural, political and religious conditions. Chaucer has depicted the religious condition of his time by creating ecclesiastical characters in the Prologue. Chaucer was aware of the weaknesses of the Churchmen- their love of money and materialism, deception and corruption. Chaucer's female characters are types as well as individuals. Chaucer's England was predominantly medieval in spirit. The most outstanding feature of the Middle Ages was chivalry. Chaucer's Knight is a true representative of the spirit of medieval chivalry which combined love, religion, and bravery. Though Chaucer's age was essentially medieval, some sort of a minor Renaissance was evident in the form of new intellectual culture. The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales can be termed as 'Human Comedy' owing to its sustained dramatic interest, expressive characterization and for its realistic representation of English society. This paper is intended to emphasize that Chaucer's Prologue is a social chronicle of 14th century England.

Keywords: Prologue, Chronicle, Medieval England, Socio-Political Document.